

DIDCOT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MARCH/APRIL 2010 NEWSLETTER

Introduction

Spring greetings to all and welcome to our bi-monthly newsletter. Please mail your articles or news to our Editor and Vice President, Fiona Smart at

newsletter@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk

2010 issues	Deadline for newsletter copy	Newsletter circulation
May	Friday 14 th May	Wk commencing 24 th May
July	Friday 16 th July	Wk commencing 26 th July
September	Friday 17 th September	Wk commencing 27 th Sept
November	Friday 12 th November	Wk commencing 22 nd Nov

Chamber Business Meetings are held bi-monthly and details are listed on the Chamber website: www.didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk

President's Report

Dear All

I'd like to start by thanking Proskills for allowing us to use their premises for our last meeting. We hope they will present to us later in the year on the funding that may be available to our members.

The new Committee is in place but we would always welcome new members so if you feel you could be of help or act as a supporter, we will become a stronger voice in Didcot. We are in particular need of a Membership Secretary at present, a key Committee role in 2010.

Speaking of 'voice', the Committee recently met to discuss the recruitment and retention of Didcot Chamber members. In summary our thoughts are outlined below but we welcome your input on these Chamber Benefits. We're keen that Members should buy into these and in turn help encourage newcomers to join the Chamber.

Support - Helping and enabling businesses in the Didcot locality.

Promotion - Encouraging local trade among businesses and the promotion of Didcot businesses to a wider audience.

Voice – Hearing and speaking out on issues of importance to the local business community.

News - Updating members on local news and events that may be of benefit or interest.

Offers – Providing a platform for members to promote special offers or discounts to other members.

Community – Galvanising the business community to reach out and support the wider residential community of Didcot, helping to foster a reciprocal ‘keep it local’ mentality

Soon I will ask all Chamber Member to introduce one new member over the next 6 months, which would more than double our membership and strengthen our representation of businesses in the area.

This year’s Street Fair planning has begun in earnest – more of that to follow and I hope you will all participate in the many fundraising activities that make this event possible. The Street Fair belongs to the Chamber of Commerce and the Chair of the Street Fair Committee, Jeanette Howse would welcome any support that members can offer during the year and on the day.

The John Eldridge Awards once again highlighted what Didcot people are capable of and I’d like to propose that a proactive Chamber could make a suitable nomination for an award this year.

Regular attendance at Town Council meetings has helped me to fully appreciate the broad range of activities they are engaged in. The Town Council has written to us to request financial support for the Christmas lights in the town. We will consider this, however we believe the lights belong to the town for the month of December and not just the night of the Street Fair. Your views on the topic are welcome.

If you would like us consider something for the budget next year please let us know well in advance of December’s AGM.

I recently attended a meeting at the Civic Hall about its refurbishment and can confirm that it will be closed from June 2010 – March 2011, necessitating the re-arrangement of some booked events. The Civic Hall is providing a comprehensive list of alternative venues. Please go to

<http://www.didcot.gov.uk/leisure/civichall.asp> for information.

We recently met with Didcot First to agree ways in which we could collaborate to support events such as this year’s BACA Awards. I am pleased that we are working together for the good of the town.

Taking a leaf out Didcot First’s book for running an idea generator meeting comprising Movers and Shakers in the town, I think it would be a good idea for Chamber to run a similar session to find out what Members would like from their Chamber.

Some of you may know that Fiona and I are business mentors to the Didcot Sixth Form Young Enterprise 2010 team who are staging a ‘Didcot’s Got Talent Contest’ on Saturday 24th April at the Civic Hall aimed at families. We both ask you to support the team if you can by purchasing tickets for the event. Please contact either myself or Fiona if you need more details.

The Community Lunch I attended recently was very pleasant and I recommend these as they are a great way to connect with to the local community. The next Lunch is on Friday 11 June with the venue to be confirmed but likely to be the Applegart. Bookings are via Vic Clinch at vic@clinch.free-online.co.uk or 01235 819757.

During March the Chamber made a donation of £500 to the Didcot Citizens Advice Bureau which received local press coverage.

<http://www.oxfordjournal.co.uk/news/community/chamber-of-commerce-steps-in-to-help-didcot-cab-597>

Banging on my drum again, Didcot has changed and is continuing to change fast so we need to be more proactive than ever to meet the future demands of the town and to benefit from it as businesses. We could be supplying a potential 20,000 additional residents over the next 10 years and there will be 15,000 more people working at the OX11 Harwell site, where 5,000 workers are already located.

If just 25,000 people spent an average of £1000 a year locally it would amount to a staggering £25 million injection into the local business community. It's key that we understand what their needs will be so we can gear up for this fantastic opportunity now.

One final challenge, why not ask retailers if they are Chamber Members when you visit their shop? Many are not Members and we would welcome them into the Chamber.

A business bouquet goes to white knights, SolveTek (recommended to me by Dave Roberts) who recently rode to my rescue to save and restore my data, an example of how the "Power of the Chamber" can be harnessed to support each other!

Finally if you are not a member, please join, come along to meetings, get to know other members, buy locally and spread the good word about businesses you feel comfortable recommending to others.

What do you have to lose and some of that goodwill could help your own business.

Thank you

Glyn Hall, President of Didcot Chamber of Commerce

Treasurer's Report

A quick reminder to all that membership renewal fees for 2010 are now due. Renewal letters and invoices have been mailed which we hope you have safely received.

If you have not yet paid and would like to renew, then please send me your cheques payable to Didcot Chamber of Commerce to Mike Foster, 88 Roding Way, Didcot, Oxon OX11 7RQ.

You can also pay by BACs, direct to our bank account and the details are quoted on the renewal notice.

Tourism South East will now have contacted all joint members directly for membership renewal. Any Members who wish to take up the excellent joint Membership offer, please go to <http://www.didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk/join.php> for further details. It represents great value for money and extends your networking opportunities out to new sectors and geography extending across Berks, Bucks and Oxon.

If you are not currently a member and would like to join the Chamber, then please visit the [web site](#) for an application form. You can either pay direct to our bank account or send a cheque payable to 'Didcot Chamber of Commerce' to me at Mike Foster, 88 Roding Way, Didcot, OX11 7RQ.

Didcot Chamber of Commerce Events

The Chamber Networking event takes place at Calnan Bros on the Hagbourne Rd on Thursday 1st April, with our hosts providing delicious tasters. Please contact me if you would like to come along (my contact details are below). The event is also open to non-members and costs £3 with proceeds going to the Street Fair.

I recently mailed out a questionnaire to ask for feedback on Chamber events in general and what you would like to see more of. I received a disappointing 14 replies out of 62 and would urge you all to let me know what networking events, speakers and topics you would like to see on the Chamber calendar by e-mailing me direct, so I can build an appealing event plan for the year.

Julia Williams, Event Co-ordinator

e-mail: events@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk

Didcot Christmas Street Fair

The theme for the Street Fair this year will be Steam, celebrating 175 years of the Great Western Railway. We hope to have all things steam - cars, fire engines, traction engines, fair ground rides, mini engines etc . If you know anyone who has a steam engine and would like to take part then please let us know. The Street Fair Committee will be fund raising at a variety of events again this year and are looking for bric a brac and items for tombolas.

The Street Fair will be on Thursday 25th November from 4-9pm in the Broadway and Orchard Centre. Booking forms for stalls are now available. If you feel you can help in any way or wish to take part then please contact Jeanette Howse publicity@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk

The Didcot Craft Fair which has traditionally been held in the Civic Hall for over 30 years and now raises funds for the Didcot Christmas Street Fair will be held at the Leisure Centre in Mereland Road this year due to the Civic Hall temporary closure. The new venue has some additional logistical challenges so we are flagging early that we would very much appreciate everyone's support to promote the new event venue and to help before and on the day itself.

2010 Oxford Marketing Conference

Details have just been released of the 2010 Oxford Marketing Conference, and it will take place at the Kassam Stadium on 10th June 2010 this year. The Conference covers a raft of useful marketing topics and prices have been held at the 2009 rate of £50 per delegate. Expert facilitators including our own Didcot Chamber members will be presenting at the event. For more details and to book a place early please go to:

http://www.a1-marketing.co.uk/Marketing_Conference.asp#

New BNI Chapter launches in Didcot

A new BNI chapter is launching in April at Milton Hill House. Organiser Dominic Marlow requests that you contact him if you would like more details about how BNI could help your business or if you want to find out how to get involved. BNI is one of the most successful business networks of its type in the world and referral marketing is a great way to generate new business, especially locally.

Please call Dominic Marlow for more information on 07894 164200 or e-mail him at dominic.marlow@sunbeltnetwork.com

Call for new Chamber volunteers

The Chamber is actively seeking a volunteer for the role of membership coordinator. Please contact Fiona Smart newsletter@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk if you would like a copy of the role description.

What's on in Didcot

For Chamber events please go to www.didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk or for current event listings please go to the Didcot First website: www.didcotfirst.org.uk

Employment advice on dealing with the adverse effects of weather conditions on the workforce

Withy King's Employment Team has issued some useful advice for businesses on dealing with the recent weather conditions in relation to employees. To download the document please go to:

www.withyking.co.uk/cms/document/Dealing_with_effects_of_adverse_weather.pdf

Sponsorship of the bi-monthly Chamber Newsletter

If your business would like to sponsor the newsletter for £25, please contact newsletter@didcotchamberofcommerce.co.uk to register your interest. Future sponsors are being held on a first come, first serve basis.