

# IN BUSINESS



Check our website for information [www.sevenoakschamber.com](http://www.sevenoakschamber.com) E-mail: [info@sevenoakschamber.com](mailto:info@sevenoakschamber.com) Tel: 01732 455188

## Kent Police Authority

### Give us your input

The Government is proposing a restructure of Police forces in England and Wales. The case has been set out in a report by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary Dennis O'Connor titled "Closing the Gap" – a review of the "fitness for purpose" of the current structure of Policing in England and Wales.

The background to the commissioning of the report begins with the tragic events in Soham and subsequent inquiries into the action of both the Cambridgeshire and Humberside forces. The London bombings have since intensified the government's concerns for restructuring.

The report concludes that forces employing more than 4,000 Police officers or 6,000 total staff tend to deal with what are termed "protective services" more effectively than smaller forces. Protective services include major, serious and organised crime and counter-terrorism.

Kent has a workforce of 6,124 including 3,630 officers and 2,508 support staff.

The report recommends restructuring nationally, with smaller forces merging. Chief Constables and Police Authorities have been asked to put together options for the future structure of Forces within each region of England and Wales.

The full report can be read on:-  
<http://inspectorates.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/docs/docs/closinggap.pdf>

The Authority would welcome views on the Government's proposals and the statement by the Chief Constable and Chair. You can comment emailing [kpaclerk@kent.pnn.police.uk](mailto:kpaclerk@kent.pnn.police.uk)

## Employment Law

### Changes to the National Minimum Wage

With effect from the 1 October 2005 the national minimum wage has been increased. The Adult rate for workers over 22 years increases from £4.85 per hour to £5.05 per hour. For workers aged between 18 and 21 years, the minimum rate of pay increases from £4.10 per hour to £4.25 per hour. The rate for workers aged 16 and 17 years was not changed and remains at £3.00 per hour.

## Have your say at Sevenoaks Forum

Residents and businesses of Sevenoaks can have their say on the issues that are important to them when the Sevenoaks Forum meets.

The Sevenoaks Forum meets every four months to discuss issues relevant to people in the District.

The meeting of the Sevenoaks Forum provides an excellent chance for Sevenoaks residents to have their say on issues that are important to them. Anyone is welcome to attend and it is an ideal opportunity for the local council to listen to what is important to local people.

If you are interested in attending the next meeting please contact Kate Hamlin-Hawes at Sevenoaks District Council on 01732 227247 for more information – or Steve Mandaluff on [steven.mandaluff@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:steven.mandaluff@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

## Sex Discrimination Act – New Rules

The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) has been amended with the change coming into force from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2005. The SDA has been updated to bring it into line with European wide rules on sex Discrimination law. Included in the changes are new definitions of "harassment" which will cover both harassment on the grounds of a person's sex and which need not be sexual in its nature. An eight week time limit for responding to a questionnaire in cases of discrimination and harassment has also been introduced. There is now also a prohibition against discrimination in all forms of unpaid practical work experience.

Employment Law Information courtesy of Warner's Tel 01732 747900

---

## **Kent Trading Standards**

Kent Trading Standards is advising to be wary of a cold-calling trader who offers to fix loose or missing slates, and then allegedly loosens tiles on adjoining properties to charge for more work.

Several consumers have been targeted by the conman, who calls himself John and is described as being of medium build, slim, dark and has tattoos on both arms.

Another scam to be aware of – if you receive a bill for Sky TV Offering a protection plan DO NOT PAY unless you are positive it is genuine and check with your Sky TV account first.

Contact Trading Standards on the Rogue Hotline: 0845 3450210

## **CCTV Comes up trumps again**

Sevenoaks District Council's CCTV cameras have again been instrumental in the fights against crime after their footage helped the police charge two people in connection with an incident on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October.

The incident occurred after the CCTV control room received a broadcast from West Kent Police notifying them that a vehicle had been stolen from the Kemsing area.

Shortly afterwards, minutes before midnight, one of the CCTV operators spotted the stolen car outside Sevenoaks train station and footage was taken which showed four youths in the vehicle. West Kent Police was informed before the vehicle drove off towards Riverhead and out of the range of the camera.

Just under an hour later the vehicle was found burnt out in Sevenoaks Weald.

A West Kent Police Officer visited the CCTV control room and viewed the footage before carrying out a search of the area. The four youths were subsequently spotted outside Sevenoaks School and arrested after the CCTV footage was used to confirm their identities.

Two of the youths were subsequently charged, and the other two were released on Police bail.

Cllr Keith Loney, the Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Safety, says; "This incident shows how effective the relationship between our CCTV control room and the police can be, and how by working together with our partnership agencies we can make the District even safer".

Inspector Robert Chitham of West Kent Police adds "We are always very grateful for the assistance we receive from our colleagues in CCTV".

Sevenoaks District Council's CCTV system has 91 cameras covering priority areas in Westerham, Edenbridge, Swanley, New Ash Green and in Sevenoaks.

The system is manned 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by trained and highly skilled staff. It is operated and paid for by Sevenoaks District Council together with some funding from Kent Police.

## **Recycling site in Sevenoaks**

Another recycling site has been added in the Bat and Ball area of

## **Sevenoaks Playhouse**

.....and the winner of the Best Marketing Campaign 2005 goes to.....  
The Sevenoaks Playhouse!!

After only 15 months in operation Sevenoaks Playhouse has been presented with a top business award for Best Marketing Campaign at the Best of Business Awards 2005. The Oscar – style awards ceremony held at Addington Palace, Croydon hosted by ITN's Nicholas Owen saw the Playhouse scoop the trophy for its marketing campaign to re-launch the town's entertainment venue and its subsequent work throughout its first year.

After initially applying to the awards back in July, and having got through the initial preliminary round, the Sevenoaks Playhouse management were invited to give a presentation to the judges in September. The judges were impressed with the marketing strategy for the re-launch and the results that followed particularly with the 25.1% increase in audience attendance and the growth of the venue's database by 34.1%

Sales and Marketing Manager, Peter Hunt said "This award is something everyone in Sevenoaks can be proud of. We were the only Sevenoaks Company represented at the ceremony, and for an arts organisation to be able to compete against top businesses from the area and win, is an amazing achievement. The award recognises the hard work of all the staff and our suppliers of whom I would like to thank. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our patrons for their continuing support".

### **Hole lot of Cash**

The Kent Air Ambulance Charity Golf Day at Nizels raised almost £10,000 for the emergency services on Monday September 9<sup>th</sup>.

The gold event was organised by Chamber member Sam Goode of [www.S3golf.com](http://www.S3golf.com) and featured more than 100 golfers at the Hildenborough club including England wicket-keepers Geraint Jones.

The Ashes hero was joined by Kent cricket team mates Min Patel and Martin Siggers.

Other sports stars taking part included former county favourite John Shepherd, Spurs and England goalkeeper Paul Robinson, 1966 World Cup winner George Cohen and Olympic javelin thrower Steve Backley.

The event was sponsored by Savills Private Finance, and included a Q&A with Mr Cohen and a charity sporting auction with big prize, a round of golf at Hamburg Manor, being won by the two England keepers – Jones and Robinson – at a price of £1300.00

---

Sevenoaks to make recycling easier for local residents.

Sevenoaks District Council has added another glass recycling site situated in Watercress Flats on the north side of Watercress Drive in Bat and Ball. Residents in the area can recycle brown, clear and green glass bottles and jars at the site.

This site is positioned on West Kent Housing owned land.

For more information on your nearest site please call the Council on 01732 227000 or e-mail [recycling@sevenoaks.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@sevenoaks.gov.uk)

## **Citizens Advice Bureau**

### **Licences for seizure of cars**

There are new rules which make it a criminal offence to immobilise or remove without a licence a vehicle which is not on a public road. These rules regulating private wheel-clampers may also cover private bailiffs when they seize vehicles for debts such as fines, road traffic penalties and unpaid council tax, but only when the vehicles are not on a public road and when the bailiffs intend to charge a specific fee for their release.

It appears that hardly any bailiffs have applied for licences, as they did not realise the new legislation applied to them. People could ask bailiffs who are removing vehicles for their licence number and report them to the Security Industry Authority (SIA) if they do not have a licence. More information is available from SIA website at [www.the-sia.org.uk](http://www.the-sia.org.uk)

Information supplied by the citizens Advice Bureau.

### **Legal Round Up Working Time Opt Out**

The UK's right to opt out of the maximum working week of 48 hours has been preserved for the foreseeable future. The European Parliament had voted that the UK would come into line with the other EU countries and relinquish the opt out. Following objections by the industry and the Government the proposal was rejected and is unlikely to feature on the European agenda again this year. The opt out is, however, likely to be reviewed next year.

Employment Law Information courtesy of Warner's Tel 01732 747900

### **Introducing – “Store for you”**

Highland Print Management has come up with a brilliant cost effective way to help take the pressure off of businesses needing extra storage space.

The cost of office space is always at a premium and the need is to maximise profit. Let them store your printing. They will help you with a FREE “Store for You” service.

Contact Julian Gilchrist on 01732 762131 for more info

## **Handling back pain**

Employers in the Sevenoaks District have been given lessons on how to avoid back injuries at work as part of the Backs! 2005 Campaign run by the Health and Safety Executive.

As part of the initiative, Environmental Health Officers from the District council visited local businesses to promote lifting and handling aids. Back pain is a major cause of absence from work and one in five of those who suffer job-related ill health have back pain.

Cr Keith Loney, Cabinet member with responsibility for Safe Community, said “Back pain is bad, both for people and businesses, and by taking part in this initiative everyone benefited”.

Well done to those Chamber Members who took part!!

## **Overzealous Charity Collectors**

Some areas in Kent are suffering from over zealous agents collecting on behalf of a local cause, or using pressure tactics to try and force people to sign up to establishing monthly direct debits for the cause. The advice to householders is, if they wish, they have the absolute right to say NO. There is no need to suffer being bullied on your own doorstep. Whilst the company have been legitimately engaged to carry out door to door collections, their tactics have caused a number of complaints and serious concerns.

Contact Kent Trading Standards on : 0845 3450210

## **BT TRAFFIC PLANS**

At last the BT Building is occupied, but again there are concerns about parking and congestion. BT has announced plans to spend thousands of pounds to alleviate the highway problems in the area. What will the changes be to make the surrounding roads & junction less of a nightmare? Will the phasing of the traffic lights be changed? What about the station parking or should I say lack of it, which is spreading to the surrounding residential areas. There is much to be debated and we await the plans from BT with great interest.

## SEVENOAKS IT CENTRE

Are you missing out on business opportunities? Sevenoaks IT Centre can get you "up and running" with your own e-commerce website in just a few hours using UK plc's site generator. IT training courses also run throughout the year plus half-day training for individuals and groups. For more information contact Tim Clark on 01732 458071 Email: [sevenoaksit@wkc.ac.uk](mailto:sevenoaksit@wkc.ac.uk)

## THE "R" WORD

Much is being talked about a subject that affects us all  
RETIREMENT

PENSIONS. We are not saving enough to keep us in our old age. If we have saved, be sure the government will tax us and take away as much as they can (I am now speaking from experience). The utilities such as gas & electricity, not forgetting Council Tax and water bills are all on the increase so what is the answer! The Dept for Work & Pensions has set up a website to provide information & examples of good practice in how to provide workplace pensions. It contains real life examples from a variety of employers using innovative methods to help their employees save for their retirement. It also contains contributions from the TUC & CBI.  
[www.pensionsatwork.gov.uk](http://www.pensionsatwork.gov.uk)

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE £10 OFF YOUR CHAMBER SUBSCRIPTION? All

you need to do is introduce a NEW MEMBER. £10 could buy a decent bottle of wine to enjoy with "a good friend"!

EUROPAGES is a working tool for businesses with an international vocation, helping them to buy better and sell more in Europe.

[www.europages.com](http://www.europages.com) gives access to the full EUROPAGES database: 600,000 businesses in 35 European countries.

## "Potholing is not a Sport"

Road maintenance must be at an all time low, with poor road surfaces & potholes everywhere - why is so little maintenance being carried out. Apparently because funding hit a shortfall of around £1bn in 2004. Repair bills for suspension and axle damage, which may mean a claim to the insurance company, have increased by 42 percent over the past 12 months. Significantly more and more motorists are claiming against local authorities for damage to their vehicles due to poor road conditions.

Last year local authorities in England alone paid out more than £810,000 in compensation.

Is there a pothole on a road you travel, make sure it is reported before damage is done, contact:

[steve.smith@kent.gov.uk](mailto:steve.smith@kent.gov.uk)

## PARKING REVIEW GROUP

We continue to press for improvements in parking around Sevenoaks and attend the meetings on a regular basis. We now see the Town Council is expressing concern on a number of related issues and suggests yet another survey is undertaken by the Parking Review Group. Sevenoaks is a small town and according to retailers is constantly fighting for survival. With free parking at out of town supermarkets & Bluewater, isn't it time the authorities "grasped the nettle" & really did some forward planning to ensure a thriving town centre for business & residents?

## NEW MEMBERS

**The Heritage Window Company** is the Chambers latest new member. They are based at 145 High Street, Sevenoaks Telephone 01732 461919 or email [oliver.dolan@thwc.co.uk](mailto:oliver.dolan@thwc.co.uk)

**CASA Independent Financial Advice** – proprietor Samantha Secomb is very keen to offer her advice on many financial Services that she offers. Samantha is based in Westerham. Her telephone number is 07866 555933 or email her on [CASAIFA@TISCALI.co.uk](mailto:CASAIFA@TISCALI.co.uk)

**Spring Cottage Cleaning Services Ltd** – Robert and Toni Young specialize in the cleaning of commercial and residential properties, window cleaning and carpet cleaning. Give them a call on 01732 760650  
[www.springcottagecleaning.co.uk](http://www.springcottagecleaning.co.uk)

**Chez Vous Events Limited** – We wish to welcome Teresa Howlett of Chez Vous to the Chamber of Commerce. Teresa arranges outside and events catering. Give her a call on 0845 601 6607 or look at her website  
[www.chezvous.co.uk](http://www.chezvous.co.uk)

**S3golf.com** – Same Goode of S3 golf is happy to help out in arranging corporate sporting events. Phone him on 01732 451554 or his mobile 07710741616 – [www.s3golf.com](http://www.s3golf.com)

