

IN BUSINESS



Check our website for information www.sevenoakschamber.com E-mail: info@sevenoakschamber.com Tel: 01732 455188

SEVENOAKS PLAYHOUSE

As you are all now aware, it is with deep sadness that the Sevenoaks Playhouse closed on Friday 28th July, 2006. There have been conflicting reports in the media. On the one hand it was reported that a New Organisation would be formed to raise funds, long-term for the new theatre and cinema and at the same time the Playhouse building's owner has said it cannot make any promises that the venue will open. There has been a tremendous response to the consultation on the future of the Sevenoaks Playhouse that ran in the foyer of the complex and on-line. Hopefully after all the facts are in there will be a positive outcome and we can all look forward to having the Playhouse open again in the near future. We definitely need this type of venue in Sevenoaks, so hope the opinions of the local community will be taken into account. Following on the above, it was reported that Council chiefs were running out of words to describe the public response to the month-long Sevenoaks Playhouse consultation which ended on Thursday 31st August. More than 2,100 people visited the building's foyer to register their views plus 1,500 paper questionnaires and 566 people on-line, so this bodes well for the future of the Playhouse. Hopefully we will see the re-opening of the Playhouse very soon.

CCTV IS NEXT PRACTICAL STEP

Unfortunately, due to several incidents at The Vine, Sevenoaks, it has been proposed to install CCTV. It would be a shame for this beautiful and historic site to be spoiled by just a few, so hopefully if the CCTV comes to pass, the Vine will carry on giving so much pleasure to all who frequent it.

SEVENOAKS HOSPITAL

Uncertainty over the longevity of Sevenoaks Hospital has once again leapt to the fore, with health chiefs refusing to say whether the new man in charge will keep the promises made by his predecessor. In July David Meikle, chief executive of the cash-strapped South West Kent Primary Care Trust alleviated fears that the hospital would be closed by declaring "The future of Sevenoaks Hospital is secure." The relief that swept through Sevenoaks has been replaced by unease once more. From October the South West Kent PCT will cease to exist, and will be incorporated into the much larger West Kent PCT. This new organisation will be led by chief executive Steve Phoenix, with David Griffiths as Chairman, Mr. Meikle lost out on the top spot. MP Michael Fallon, who was a key player in galvanising townfolk to fight for the hospital, said: "I am seeking an early meeting with the new PCT chief executive. The people of Sevenoaks were very clear that they wanted their hospital's future secured and not subject to continual review." We will wait to see what transpires as this facility is vital for people in the Sevenoaks area, especially the elderly, who will find it very difficult to travel greater distances for treatment.

On the spot fines to tackle neighbourhood nuisances

Sevenoaks District Council has agreed to adopt new powers to hand out on-the-spot fines to those caught littering, fly posting, carrying out graffiti, failing to keep their dogs under control and making a neighbourhood noise nuisance.

The new fines can be issued by both the Council and by the District's ten existing Police Community Support Officers, which is expected to further increase over the coming years. Sevenoaks District Council is already in discussion with West Kent Police about the new arrangement that could begin in the next few weeks. Cllr Felicity Broomby, the Council's cabinet Member with responsibility for the environment, says: "The overwhelming majority of our residents take pride in living in a clean neighbourhood and they will welcome these new powers. We hope that these penalties will change the behaviour that can disproportionately impact on peoples' quality of life."

ROGUE TRADERS

For any complaints on Rogue Traders, Contact Trading Standards Rogue Hotline: 0845 450210.

High Street Roadworks

After all the turmoil in the High Street, it was at last re-opened on 1st September, to the relief of all the shop-owners. It was very difficult to access that part of town, even as a pedestrian, as one had to walk right down the barrier to cross over to the other side of the street. But saying that, many intrepid shoppers were seen out and about during this period! Hopefully this is the end of all the disruptions.

COMING SOON:

A21 Misery ahead, motorists warned

Motorist using the A21 between Sevenoaks & Tonbridge will soon be facing possible disruption until the end of the year. On September 11th the Highways Agency will begin a three-month project to shore up the Medway Viaduct which takes traffic on the trunk road across the River Medway. To cut congestion the works will be carried out overnight, leading to frequent lane closures between 10pm and 6am. The main disruption will be during a 16-day period when all southbound traffic will be diverted through Tonbridge for eight days, immediately followed by the same scenario for motorists heading north. The Highways Agency is replacing four of the parapets on the bridge over a 2km stretch. The works are due to be completed by 4th December but the Agency has said disruption should be kept to a minimum but urged people to be patient and careful during the works.

Humour Corner

The not-present present

At a recent social gathering, my friend said, "It's my husband's birthday today. This is his present."

I wondered what it was, as her hands were empty.

She laughed and told me, "My being here is the present he chose. He wants to watch sport on television without me interrupting."

(Read in a 'Woman's' magazine recently!)

Borough Green Bypass

This matter is still on-going. The Deputy Managing Director of H&H Celcon has said he remains positive about the prospect of defending its new factory plans at the forthcoming public inquiry, which could pave the way for the Borough Green bypass. Kent County Council gave firm approval for the plans on May 16th, but the Government Office for the South East announced on August 9th that communities secretary Ruth Kelly had decided to call-in the application because of its potential conflict with national planning policy. The Company is due to submit a "statement of case" to the Planning Inspectorate by mid-September. Despite the company's focus on expanding the business, many local Borough Green residents want the relief road which hinges on the success of H&H Celcon's plans. But on the other hand many residents of Wrotham & Ightham feel the Green Belt land should be sacrosanct and strongly reject the development of the factory even if it means the road won't be built. Michael Fallon is keeping an eye on this matter and will notify us of any developments.

Council adopts new air quality management areas

After concern over the 'hot spots' in the 'Air Quality Management Area' in:

- High Street, Sevenoaks
- High Street, Seal
- Bat & Ball (junction with A25 & A225), Sevenoaks
- Swanley Town centre including the High Street, London Road (east) and Bartholomew Way
- High Street, London Road, Market Square & Vicarage Hill in Westerham

The Council has now declared AQMAs, in these areas. The Council will draw up and implement an Action Plan by March 2008 to improve air quality within them.

Perhaps the reason that there is this problem, especially at the Bat & Ball, is because the traffic lights are set at such long periods and motorists sit with their engines running, which surely contributes to the high levels of NO2 (Nitrogen dioxide)!

Recycling

It is not only weather records that have been broken in the summer, recently released figures show that residents of the District have achieved a new recycling record. Figures for May 2006 showed that residents recycled nearly 34% of their household waste during the month – the highest rate ever achieved, exceeding Central Government's current target for Sevenoaks District of 30% and national average of 25%. The Council has now set itself an ambitious local target of recycling 35% of the District's household waster every month by March 2007.

Cllr Felicity Broomby, the Council's Cabinet member responsible for recycling says: "Our residents have always shown great enthusiasm for recycling but have surpassed their own excellent efforts with these results." So let's keep recycling!

AGE DISCRIMINATION

From October this year it will become unlawful to discriminate against an employee or job applicant on the grounds of age. The legislation, which will cover employment and vocational training, will impact on every business throughout the United Kingdom, including your own.

For info: call 0845 715 2000

Email: apg@trgeuropeplc.com

Holding out for a Green Hero

One of Britain's first ever 'Green Hero' awards was presented to the Council for its wide-ranging work to improve the local environment. The award was presented by The Green Organisation, an independent international environmental group dedicated to recognising, rewarding and promoting environmental best practice around the world.

The Council was recognised for its 'Go Wild in the Garden' scheme that helps residents better understand and appreciate wildlife, and the 'Walk this Way to School' programme that helps local children to understand the positive impact that walking can have on people and the environment.

Cllr Felicity Broomby, Sevenoaks District Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for the environment, says: "I am delighted that once again we have been recognised for our work to help improve our local environment.

This award may not have been possible without the help of our green thinking residents, who have enthusiastically taken part in a number of initiatives."

Sevenoaks Summer Festival

The Sevenoaks Summer Festival was a great success with all the local residents and with people coming from further a field. The Town centre seemed to be very busy over this period, so hopefully all the tills were ringing constantly! Let's hope this excellent event will continue for many years to come to show what a great place Sevenoaks is to live, visit and enjoy.

Hanging baskets

Despite the water shortage, Sevenoaks looked really beautiful during our lovely hot summer. The hanging baskets were a welcome, colourful sight.

Plans to convert listed building into restaurant

The new owners of a Grade II listed building in Sevenoaks town centre are looking to convert it into a restaurant. Formerly the Job Centre, which receives listed status due to its age, has been bought by Blighs Meadow Ltd. The company is hoping to create a ground floor restaurant with a newly constructed terrace extending out towards London Road. An overwhelming number of Sevenoaks residents think that there are already too many restaurants in the Sevenoaks town centre. A final decision will be made between late September and early October.

The Vine Restaurant

The Vine Restaurant has opened at The Old Vine Tavern, after months of redevelopment which has been of great interest to the people of Sevenoaks. The restaurant is run by Kathleen & Bernt Bouverie with the Chef de Cuisine, Richard Lee, formerly of the renowned Circus Restaurant in London. The restaurant will serve a French & European a la carte menu with daily specials and Sunday roasts.

We wish them every success in their venture and hope to persuade them to become Chamber Members in the near future.

Sevenoaks Library

The Sevenoaks Library is to reopen on Monday 30th October which is great news for the people of Sevenoaks. The project cost £1.7 million and was given a grant of nearly £1 million by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Library will provide all the services previously available and has been opened up to join the library, museum and art gallery together. The main entrance is now opposite the bus station with a second entrance facing the Leisure Centre. £50,000 has been spent on new books and the public access computers giving free access to the internet have been upgraded.

The library has a good range of resources for businesses, both in book form and on-line. Telephone & Yellow Pages plus Dunn & Bradstreet Kent Business Register are available. A range of newspapers including the Financial Times are held plus the Economist & Investors Chronicle are also taken weekly.

There is free access for library members to source information via the library website

www.kent.gov.uk/onlinelibrary at home, your business or in the library.

We hope that the new library will be greatly appreciated by all who use it and wish everyone at the Library the best of luck for the future.

Have you looked at the Chamber web site recently?

See the Links – on line business information “ONE SOURCE”

BUSINESS TO BUSINESS BROCHURE

It's not too late to let us have your A5 flyer. We are constantly sending out the brochure to new businesses coming into the area and numerous other enquiries. Promote your business and include your information in the “Business to Business” pack.

If you need further information, contact the office.

MAKE A NOTE IN YOUR DIARY

NEXT CHAMBER LUNCH WEDNESDAY 27th September, 2006 at The Royal Oak, Sevenoaks.

WHY NOT BRING A COLLEAGUE ALONG AND INTRODUCE A NEW MEMBER.

EARN £10 DISCOUNT

**TO JOIN THE CHAMBER IT COSTS
£7.10P PER MONTH!**

Open Evenings

It was suggested at the Chamber Board Meeting in July that we have informal Open Evening get-togethers hosted by Chamber Members to generate more Membership. The first of these was hosted by Helen Breeze of HelenBreeze Property Management on 24th July. It was a beautiful, warm summer evening and was greatly enjoyed by Members and friends who attended. The second one was hosted by Helen Page of Sevenoaks Business Centre on the 14th September and was a very enjoyable event, as Helen had organized a whiskey tasting evening. This was attended by over 40 people, some members and lots of new faces. Hopefully some new Members for the Sevenoaks Chamber. We have had a very positive response to these events and have evenings lined up for October and November, hosted by Theresa Wallace of Savills and Jenny Ambler of Floss Agency. See Events Calendar for information.

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

www.europages.com gives access to the full EUROPAGES database: 600,000 businesses in 36 European countries.



NEW MEMBERS FOR 2006 - WELCOME

Walker & Walker Solicitors Brian & Marlene Walker of Walker & Walker are situated at 35 High Street, Sevenoaks. Telephone 01732 450699 or email solicitors@walker&walker.co.uk

Tiga Creative Marketing Limited – Alan Bracken – for all your graphic design requirements. Telephone: 01732 779111 or email alan@tigauk.com Also see your Business brochure which includes their information.

House on the Hill Restaurant/Bar We wish to welcome Andre Woodward of House on the Hill to the Chamber of Commerce. Give them a call on: 01732 450120 or visit them at: 115 London Road, Sevenoaks. We held a Chamber lunch there a short time ago and all agreed it was excellent.

Full Circle Property Services Ltd Contact: Mick Thompson for all your requirements - as the name suggests all aspects of build to extensions, in fact a complete “full circle property service” is offered. Telephone 01732 461225 or email: mick@fullcircle-psl.co.uk

Action International For all your Business Coaching call Jonathon Peat at: 0845 1305477 or email: Jonathonpeat@action-international.com

The Flowersmith For all your floral needs. Contact Sandra Belton: 01732 741927 or email: sandrachisatlp@aol.com or call in at the delightful shop at 30 London Road, Sevenoaks