



Brentwood Chamber of Commerce Newsletter

February 2017

www.brentwoodchambers.co.uk

Dear Member

We recently held a **Budget Consultation meeting** with the Council officials responsible for the 2017/18 budget.



We learned about the challenges faced by Brentwood, as with all Councils, as central government squeezes local authority finance. The main

weapon seems to be huge reductions in the support grants received as the efforts to balance the national books continue.

Nevertheless we received an assurance that Council support for the local business community remains a top priority as they recognise the key contribution made by local businesses to the wellbeing of Brentwood.

Members have raised concerns about the continuing increases in business rates and ask what the Council proposes to do about it to help businesses, particularly as central government is in the process of transferring responsibility for and control over business rates to local authorities.

The Finance Director of the Council has given us a statement intended to help us understand the position and it is reproduced on page 2

Brentwood Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee

The Annual General Meeting on 18th May 2017, which is being kindly hosted by Brentwood School, will see several vacancies arising on the Executive Committee due to retirements etc.

We would encourage members who feel they have something to contribute to the running of Chamber to put your names forward please, so that they can be included in the ballot at the AGM.

We would welcome the fresh perspectives and expertise which new Executive Committee members can bring to an already vibrant and proactive committee – dedicated to the advancement of business in the borough.

If you are interested please get in touch with me at the office as soon as possible and in any case before mid-April.

Next month we have one of our **regular meetings with Council Leaders**. If you have any topics or issues you would like us to raise please let me know – preferably by the end of February.

Mike Hawkins
Chief Executive

SPONSORSHIP SPECIAL OFFER

Have you considered sponsoring one of our Newsletters or Business Breakfasts? The cost individually for each of those sponsorships is £100, but we have a special offer whereby a member can sponsor both for only £150.

If this appeals to you please get in touch with the office to book your month.

For the Newsletter sponsorship you will have your company logo and contact details prominently on the front page in this very space and the whole of page 2 for your colour article/advertorial.

For details of what you get for sponsoring a Business Breakfast please see page 2.

Just contact us to take up this special offer or if you simply want to sponsor one of these opportunities at info@brentwoodchambers.co.uk

Business Breakfast Exclusive Sponsorship Package

An exclusive high-profile Sponsorship Package is available for our Business Breakfast each month, which includes:

- A one-minute introduction at the previous month's Breakfast
- 5 free places at your sponsored Business Breakfast for your clients or employees
- A ten-minute introduction and presentation slot for your company at the Business Breakfast
- An opportunity to display publicity at the event
- Publicity in the previous month's Chamber of Commerce newsletter
- Publicity on the Chamber of Commerce website

All of the above for the price of £100, which represents an excellent opportunity to promote your organisation to the business people of Brentwood.

For more information or to reserve your month, contact Colin Barber
Colin.Barber@BrentwoodChambers.co.uk



Tour of Marsh Farm

Those of you who attended the Christmas Lunch will recall how inspirational the guest speaker was – James Sinclair of The Partyman Group. He is a highly successful entrepreneur who is extremely good at passing on his knowledge to other businesses. He has invited us to visit him at Marsh Farm, South Woodham Ferrers, CM3 5WP on Wednesday 1st March 2017.

Arrival from 9am, for a 10am start

10am - "Tour of the Marsh Farm business by owner and one of the UK's leading business authorities, James Sinclair. James takes you on a detailed tour of the farm, talking you through his rules for business and shows you real life examples of how he has applied these throughout the Marsh Farm business".

11am - Coffee and chat with James Sinclair and his Entrepreneurs Network team

11:30am - depart



In October 2015, the Government announced that, by the end of this Parliament, local authorities will be able to keep 100 per cent of the business rates they raise locally. This is a fundamental change to the way local government is financed. Since the announcement there has been a consultation piece on how this should work. To date there is no definitive release about the final position.

Coupled with this 'good news' there is the bad news about the abolition of the revenue support grant and the reductions to the new homes bonus grant, which have been instrumental in propping up local government finance for some years now. There is a real possibility that Brentwood Council will lose overall under the new arrangement. Our medium term financial plans reflect a bad news scenario which is not uncommon amongst other local council plans on the financial outlook.

Generally, finance directors are skeptical about the benefit of this apparent localism shift because it remains unclear as to what additional burdens may fall upon local councils as part of the 100% retention scheme. These may be administrative burdens or may be affected by a national formula to, in part, even out winner and losers – we wait to see. For Brentwood, we currently retain only £1.5m of the local business rates collected, which represents a fraction of the £32million collected locally. With the present tariff arrangements in place it's difficult to see how any changes would benefit the council and there are too many unknowns about the new proposals. One small crumb of hope would be the news that local authorities could keep all of the growth related to new business under the new scheme so the emphasis needs to be on economic development in the borough, as ever!

Statement by John Chance, Finance Director, Brentwood Borough Council

Members' News



Networking beyond the Borough of Brentwood

If your business could benefit from networking outside Brentwood, you may well be interested in the Stansted Airport Chamber of Commerce 'Meet the Neighbours' event on 23rd March 2017, 3.00pm to 6.00pm at Hilton London Stansted, Round Coppice Road, Stansted, CM24 1SF.

This follows the successful 'Meet the Neighbours' event which was held last year and was well attended by people who evidently agreed with their assertion that business does not recognise borders.

If this sort of event is for you, please take advantage of the special price offer available to Brentwood Chamber members of £15 + VAT (reduced from £25 + VAT). You can book your place via <http://ow.ly/soBk308OeA7> and use promotion code BCC0604 for the special price.

Why not promote your own events on Chamber's website?

This is a reminder that our website includes a facility for members to advertise your own events. All you have to do is visit www.brentwoodchambers.co.uk click on the 'Events' tab and select 'Add a Member Event' from the drop down box and complete the form. This service is free of charge and is a good way of advertising your events to other members and anyone who visits our website.



CAN YOU HELP?

Rachel Cleverley, the Communications Officer for Brentwood School, organises the annual Careers Convention which takes place each March.

This year it is to take place on Thursday 16th March, 6.00pm to 8.30pm. The evening is attended by all Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Form Students and their parents, and advisors attend from all different industries, universities and companies to host a stand and pitch their knowledge and experience. The aim of the Convention is to help students get a clearer idea of what they would like to do when they leave School.

So far they have around 60 advisors booked in, but they could accommodate about 40 more.

Would this be something you are able to help with? Brentwood School is looking to find local businesses, companies or individuals to host stands and talk to students about their experience and opportunities.

If you would like to host a stand at the 2017 Careers Convention, please email Miss Rachel Cleverley mitchell@brentwood.essex.sch.uk

Are you able to offer high school students work experience?

Most of the secondary schools in Brentwood, we are pleased to say, are members of Brentwood Chamber of Commerce. This is the time of year when senior students at the schools will be looking for work experience. We know that Shenfield School have specific dates in mind – 3rd to 14th July. It is likely that all the schools in the borough will be aiming for similar dates.

If you are able to offer work experience placements during the summer for around a fortnight, please contact the schools direct or let us know here in the office so that we can put you in touch with the appropriate departments in the schools.

Dates for your Diary

Executive Committee Meeting Dates for 2017

16th February, 16th March, 20th April, 18th May – AGM, 15th June
20th July, 17th August, 21st September, 19th October & 16th November 2017

If you have any issues you want to be raised at an Executive Committee meeting, please contact the Chamber office a week or so before the relevant meeting and we will put it on the agenda

Email: info@brentwoodchambers.co.uk

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **EVENTS 2017** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Tour of Marsh Farm (The Partyman Group)

9.00am to 11.30am Wednesday 1st March

Marsh Farm, South Woodham Ferrers, CM3 5WP

Following James Sinclair's inspirational speech at the Christmas Lunch, he is kindly hosting a Chamber members visit to his headquarters, to learn more about his 'Rules for business'

Business Breakfast, 7.30am to 9.00am Friday 10th March

Marygreen Manor Hotel, London Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4NR

Sponsored by Wortley Byers Law

Stansted Airport Chamber of Commerce 'Meet the Neighbours'

3.00pm to 6.00pm Thursday 23rd March

Hilton London Stansted, Round Coppice Road, Stansted, CM24 1SF

Brentwood Brewery Beer Tasting & Brewery Tour

7.00pm to 9.00pm Wednesday 26th April

Calcott Hall Farm, Ongar Road, Brentwood, Essex CM15 9HS

Annual Members Meeting & AGM, 6.30pm Thursday 18th May

Brentwood School, Bayman Gate, Middleton Hall Lane, Brentwood, Essex CM15 8EE

**See Events on our website www.brentwoodchambers.co.uk
where you can book & pay online**

If you would like to sponsor a future Business Breakfast please contact
Colin Barber - Colin.Barber@BrentwoodChambers.co.uk

Sign Off

As you may have read in some previous editions, Brentwood Chamber of Commerce has a strong link with the Brentwood Renaissance Group, on which I have been representing Chamber for some years.

The Brentwood Renaissance Group is funded by the Council, but is independent, with representatives from local businesses and residents as well as Councillors and officials; with a brief to influence and help shape the Council's vision for Brentwood borough's shopping centres as well as the visitor economy and initiatives to stimulate economic growth.

It has an independent Chairman and I have just been elected to that position, with the firm intention of strengthening the links with Chamber for the benefit of members and the business community generally. From time to time I will update you with progress.

Mike Hawkins

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