

Tamworth & Lichfield

Business Brief

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Winter 2009

Welcome



to the Winter edition of the Business Brief. This year has been particularly hard for local businesses and residents alike, we've all faced challenges unlike those of the past. Over the last year the BEP has been busy, and has:

- Expanded the business brief and its distribution to 5500 local businesses
- Established a Business Forum to allow local businesses the chance to influence economic growth
- Developed an action plan to focus on local economic priorities
- Been influential in the expansion of www.think-local.biz, to cover over 24,000 businesses across Staffordshire
- Organised Winning Business 09 at Drayton Manor and Sponsored the Midlands Business Awards.

With your help and support, we hope to deliver even more projects and events in the New Year. On behalf of the BEP I'd like to wish all local businesses a prosperous and successful year ahead!

Neil Lancaster (Chair of the BEP)

(Disclaimer: The Business and Economic Partnership has taken all reasonable precautions to ensure that information contained in this document is accurate but stresses that the content is not intended to be legally comprehensive. It is recommended that no action be taken on matters covered in this document without taking full advice.)

Tamworth and Lichfield pledge to "Think Local"



Staffordshire's biggest employers and buyers of goods and services, including Tamworth Borough and Lichfield District have signed up to a pledge which aims to promote local trade.

The Think Local network aims to support the local economy and jobs by creating a network of local economic activity. It is good for the environment too, cutting travel and transport by trading locally and reducing climate changing carbon dioxide pollution.

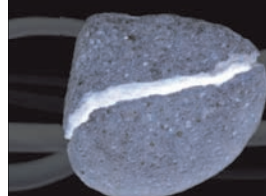
Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Economy, Skills and Enterprise Mike Lawrence said that Think Local was about making the connections that would yield real benefits for Staffordshire people. "By keeping it local first we can support each other and generate a network of expertise and innovation that will

build the foundations for future prosperity and keep local jobs." Mark Adcock, Chair of Think Local, said Think Local was just what Staffordshire needs, especially during an economic downturn. "Everyone wins, and now having the District Councils, the County Council and the Chambers signed up to their pledges, the project gets an enormous boost." For more information please visit www.think-local.biz.



■ Staffordshire Councils and Chambers of Commerce sign Think Local Pledge

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Business news in brief

Foxy lady takes helm at Bevan Fox

Messrs Bevan and Fox retired this year from the Tamworth business they founded in 1978. Expert insurance broker, Cath Ward is now at the helm. In her career Cath has arranged many challenging insurance policies including insurance for the pods on the London Eye when they were refurbished. Cath said "We offer competitive premiums but there is more to insurance than the price and we know our expert service and professional advice has saved our local clients many thousands of pounds."



Pull the udder one!

Tamworth based exhibition design and build company Vogue Display Limited had an unusual request from Ecolab, one of the world's largest chemical companies, for a realistic cow's udder to demonstrate a milking parlour cleaning system. Vogue director Anna Laight said "As a small



■ Cow's Udder Demonstration Model

family run business we are usually able to devote more of our time developing our clients' requests."

Shooter flies high with Redrow

Tamworth based commercial, industrial and PR photographer Don Hardy got his client Redrow homes a bonus when he took the opportunity offered by another pilot to hop aboard. From the second balloon he was able to take some spectacular air-to-air shots. Redrow's competition winners got a flight of a lifetime and Redrow got some amazing air-to-air shots which now hang in their Tamworth head office.



■ Redrow Balloon over Rugeley Power Station by Don Hardy

Thanks to simple software....

Lichfield Software Solutions, headed by former computer lecturer Brian Foster, is helping a regional networking group automate time-consuming tasks and communicate more effectively with their 300+ members. Brian said "Some companies provide software that is too complicated. Most companies are not aware of the power of their own software and very often we can programme spreadsheets to do in minutes repetitive tasks that take days."

Tripple success for Musical Signers

A teacher from Musical Signers, the Tamworth company specialising in enhancing communication through sign language, has been declared the Teacher of the Year in the Regional Signature Annual Awards and is now through to the UK final. Signature is the examining board for sign language and related courses. The company, who also trades as HAC Training Services, has been shortlisted for the BT Remote Business Awards and both parts of the business have been nominated for the Midlands Business Awards.



Twin accolades for MaximITy

With sales up by 30% in the last six months and net profits out-performing other businesses in their sector, information communications technology training and consultancy business MaximITy, based in Tamworth has been awarded the coveted Accredited UK quality assurance standard and shortlisted in the Most Improved Business Award category at the annual ICT Excellence Awards. Proprietor, Tracy Pound puts their success down to applying the principles of the Accredited UK Standard throughout the business and investing time and resources in her own leadership and management skills.



■ MaximITy's Tracy Pound

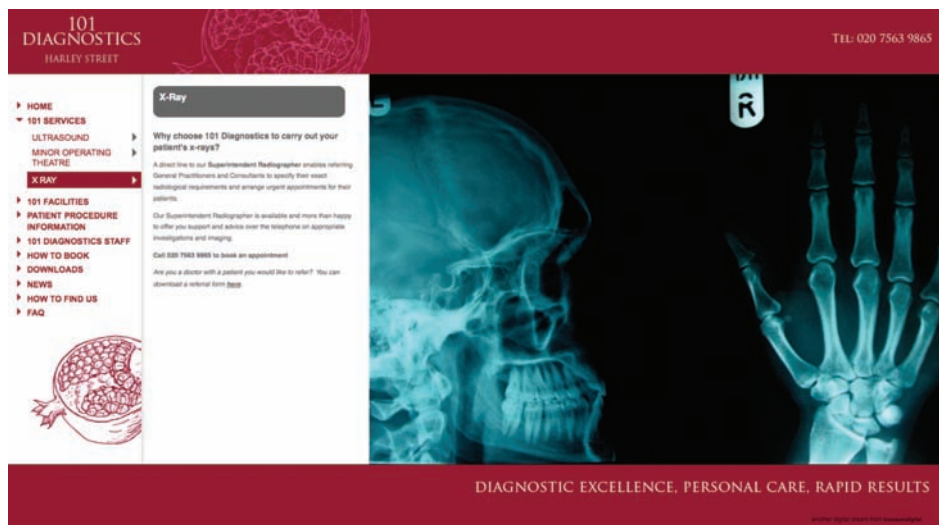
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Designers check - in at Harley Street clinic

Blossom Digital are a five strong team of designers and web developers based in Station Road, Lichfield. They recently handled the re-branding of a leading Harley Street clinic and designed and built a new state-of-the-art website. Danielle Honyands at the clinic, 101 Diagnostics, comments "We are delighted with our new look and feel. It captures the essence of 101: modern facilities housed in one of the most elegant properties in Harley Street."



■ 101 Diagnostics Website by Blossom Digital

Footsteps keeps the Lambs on their toes

A number of Tamworth FC players (and even Manager Gary Mills) have been visiting the Footsteps Podiatry and Chiropody Clinic for treatment of their feet. This is the third season that Footsteps has been part of the background medical team and as well as treating the players; Footsteps has also sponsored Defender Richard Blackwood and the Supporters Coach this season.



■ Alex Rodman, Tamworth FC (left) and Jonathan Shearer, Footsteps (right)

Lichfield clinic braces itself

DJO, the leading global provider of high quality orthopaedic devices are pleased to announce the appointment of Sports Medicine Partners (SMP) in Lichfield as their first official brace fitting centre outside of London. Andrew Balderston, Lead Physiotherapist at SMP, is excited to team up with Donjoy. "We have already helped a number of patients to continue playing their sport with the help of a Donjoy knee brace, as well as using them to support patients prior to surgery and assisting their recovery."

Celebrations at White Rose Bridals

Local bridal shop, White Rose Bridals based in Lichfield is celebrating the opening of their second shop in Rugeley. Director, Nicola Barrett says "When times are a little tough weddings tend to pull friends and family together."

Ask the experts – about business and the deaf community

Sponsored by: **HAC**
TRAINING

Many business owners don't know how to communicate with deaf customers or employees and miss out on valuable sales and resources.

Our Expert, Rebecca Boulton, at sign language and deaf awareness training company HAC Training Services, answers some of your questions.

Q I need to book an interpreter for a deaf staff member/client, how do I do this?

A There are many agency and freelance interpreters. The NRCPD website (The National Register of Communication Professionals Working with Deaf and Deafblind People) gives advice and holds a database of interpreters with recognised qualifications, adhere to a code of practice and have professional indemnity insurance. Often, a deaf person can get funding through Access To Work, to pay for an interpreter during training and in the workplace. Contact Access To Work via Jobcentre plus.

Q How do I interact with a deaf person?

A All deaf people are not the same. Many deaf people use sign language, but not all. Many deaf people can speak clearly, but many can't. A common myth is all deaf people can lipread.

As a general rule, face the person you're talking to. Speak clearly but not too slowly. If you over emphasise the lips it distorts the lip pattern and makes it harder for the deaf person to lipread you. Facial expressions, body language, mime or pointing give meaning to what you're saying. Don't feel embarrassed to write things down, this can be really helpful and most deaf people will be pleased that you're trying to communicate with them!

Contact Rebecca for a confidential conversation on 01827 893 981 or email Rebecca@musicalsigners.co.uk

1 in every 7 people in the UK are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Don't miss out on employing or selling to this valuable group.

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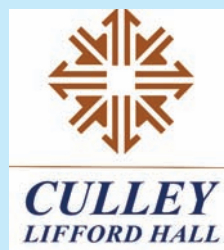
20 is the magic number for Culley Lifford Hall

Culley Lifford Hall (CLH) is celebrating providing accountancy, tax and business advice to local businesses for 20 years in Lichfield and 25 years in Walsall.

Val Culley is a well known and trusted figure in the local business community, but is keen to point out it's very much a team effort that has led to CLH's success and longevity; with a local man recently joining them in

a new role.

Val says "We have a holistic approach to serving our clients and every member of our senior team is a chartered certified accountant. We have always adapted the way we work to satisfy the demands and needs of our clients moving from specialists to one senior person looking after each client. For small businesses this approach is very effective, we



■ Culley Lifford Hall Team

quickly spot warning signs; good or bad and give timely advice. Some of our early clients have grown into multi-million pound national businesses and this kind of success is what we strive to help all our clients achieve."

**www.culleyliffordhall.co.uk
Tel: 01543 421 841**

Business what's on

Sponsored by: **studiodm**

Innovative Future Conference - 10 December 2009

This conference looks at innovative ways to cut carbon emissions in the next decade focussing on matters important to local businesses such as waste reduction, transport and new technologies. For more information, visit www.regenwm.org/event/events_calendar.asp.

Link-IN Event - 26th January 2010, 9am

A FREE EVENT purposely designed to link regional companies, is fast becoming very successful helping businesses network, exchange best practice, obtain new contacts and access the support needed to grow your business. To book or for more details see the local events section at www.businesslinkwm.co.uk and select January 2010 from the Date menu.

Christmas Open Evening at Simply THE Spa, The Belfry

Beauty Developments, the specialist spa management division of Tamworth beauty product manufacturer Hive of Beauty Ltd, took over the running of THE Spa at The Belfry earlier this year and is holding an open evening on 7th December. The £5 entrance fee includes mulled wine and mince pies, free entry into a prize draw, discounts off many treatments and a choice of a free taster treatment. To book contact THE Spa 01675 477024 or email simplythespa@hiveofbeauty.com.



■ THE Spa at the Belfry

Events

10 December 2009

Introduction to Local Economic Development, 10am -1pm at Millennium Point.
www.regenwm.org/event.

13 December 2009

The Chamber of Trade Christmas Fayre & Nativity, Market Square & around the city starts 10am

16 December 2009

Young Professionals Networking, Christmas Drinks Night, So Bar, Tamworth. 5.30pm onwards.
Contact
youngprofessionals@pickering-solicitors.com

18 January 2010

Young Professionals Networking, Back to Work Quiz Night, So Bar, Tamworth. 5.30pm onwards.
Contact
youngprofessionals@pickering-solicitors.com

26 January 2010

Pension Obligations and Employment Update – 9.15am at SSCI Offices, Barton under Needwood.

3 February 2010

BEP Sub Group 1 – Business Development and Support, 10am at Tamworth Borough Council.

10 February 2010

BEP Sub Group 2 – Employability and Skills, 10am at Lichfield District Council.

12 February 2010

London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics procurement training workshop. SSCI Offices, Barton under Needwood. For more details visit www.businesslinkwm.co.uk

17 February 2010

BEP Main Partnership – 10am at Tamworth Borough Council.

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Business networking groups

Professionals at Cathedral House – www.cathedral-house.co.uk

Business A.M. - www.businessam.net

B2B Tamworth - www.b2bclubnetworking.co.uk

BRX – www.brxnet.co.uk

BNI – www.bni-europe.com/uk

Connect – www.connectingwomen.co.uk

Business 1st – www.business-1st.org

Southern Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce – www.ssccl.co.uk



Tamworth Town Centre News

Things are happening in Tamworth Town Centre, with stores opening and more activities taking place.

Retailer Home Bargains has recently opened a completely refitted new store in the old Woolworths premises, bringing back into use one of the bigger stores in the Town Centre and adding more vibrancy to George Street. Opticians Specsavers has relocated from Sainsbury's, to Ankerside, leaving very few significant vacancies in the Town Centre. The popular market has been expanded from Colehill up to Gungate.

Shop owners in the Town have also had the opportunity join in the seasonal cheer and put Christmas trees on their premises and on the night of the Christmas Lights switch on, have a stall, as long as staff dress in festive costume.

The planned redevelopment of the old Gungate precinct is now a step closer. Outline planning permission, which defines the idea for the new scheme, in principle, has been submitted by developers Henry Boot. This scheme is likely to consist of a large retail provision with appropriate car parking, though that will be subject to final full



■ Market Street, Tamworth Town Centre

planning permission.

A Town Centre Partnership has now been established bringing together key people involved in the future of the Town. Although this partnership is in its early stages it's hoped by working together, the whole Town Centre will benefit. For more information or to get involved with the Town Centre Partnership, please contact Matt Fletcher, 01827 709 382.

More business news in brief

All aboard! New agency for local firm

WM Liner Agencies Limited, based in Tamworth, is pleased to announce their appointment as Agents for Trans Caribbean Line. The new carrier offers fast and direct sailings to various Caribbean destinations. The appointment is welcome news for the holding company WM Shipping Ltd. The independently owned freight forwarder, line agent and NVOCC is in its 20th year and offers worldwide shipping solutions to manufacturers and freight forwarders alike.



■ First sailing on the Trans Caribbean Line service

"There's always room for a good pub"

Ken Gardner landlord at the Fox & Hounds in Shenston is one landlord that is confident that "There's always room for a good pub." He has now ventured into a second pub, The Crown at Handsacre, and is pleased to report that things are going very well. "It was a bit of a gamble

taking over at The Crown. It had struggled for a while and needed a major refurbishment before we could re-open it. However, I was sure that a good, local community pub serving first class beers and no-nonsense food would be a success and I am being proved right."



■ Ken Gardner and wife Doreen at The Fox & Hounds

Lichfield City News

Things are looking better in Lichfield City Centre with the opening of new stores in the last month or so and the promise of a few more premises being let prior to Christmas.

Midlands retailer B&M Bargains has opened a store at the old Woolworths site on Market Street, Hawkins Bazaar, Gimme Gizmos and CMD Ladies wear have all opened in the Three Spires Shopping Centre. In addition there are a further six units around the town which now have a business trading within them. Unfortunately, five others have closed, including, most recently, Millets.

Compared to November 2008 there are five more empty stores but Lichfield may be faring better than the national average and neighbouring towns due to its strong tourist base, its excellent markets and its ability to attract niche retailers.

Lichfield Chamber of Trade & Commerce President, Richard



Lewis said “Because Lichfield does not have some of the big name national chains that have suffered closures in many towns the overall appearance in the centre is that there are not many vacant units. This is good as more businesses will be attracted to the City Centre as it looks as if it is holding up well in these recessionary times”.



■ Lichfield Market

Business information contacts

Hi, my name is Matt Fletcher. My department acts as a central link between the public sector and local businesses, so if you have any queries or just don't know who to speak to on business issues, give me a call on 01827 709 382 or email matthew-fletcher@tamworth.gov.uk.

I am also the main contact to receive news and business stories for this publication, the Tamworth & Lichfield Business Brief.

I look forward to hearing from you!!



College working with local SME's & global giant UPS

Recent analysis shows that South Staffordshire College has a much higher learner profile in the manufacturing, engineering and construction sectors than the national average. So it comes as little surprise that South Staffordshire College's Workforce Development Team works with many of the country's leading businesses in these sectors as partners in recruiting, training and staff development.

Major businesses and SME's alike take advantage of the free advice service which identifies training needs and provides a bespoke response. Just one successful example of a twin partnership approach is with UPS, one of the world's biggest operators in shipping, tracking and freight.

South Staffordshire College has been working with UPS to deliver level 2 qualifications in both Carry and Deliver and Warehouse and Storage modules. There are significant benefits to the employer in having staff that are loyal, well-trained and well motivated. As is frequently said, a company's greatest asset is its people.

Call 0300 456 2424 and speak to the Workforce Development Team.

Turnover up 60% at local firm

Tamworth based Past Limited reported an unprecedented 60% increase in turnover in the last 12 months. This growth has resulted in them moving to larger premises, taking on new staff and offering a new while-you-wait/overnight service.

Past provides portable and fixed appliance testing and commercial electrical installations. Past's Alan Moore says "All businesses have a duty of care to employees and customers and electrical testing is an essential part of this. We know of a business that paid a £120,000 claim when someone got an electric shock, fell back and broke their arm."

Moore says their success is down to their marketing activity. They do not advertise, instead they focus on

sponsoring groups and events such as the Tamworth Film Festival, Dosthill Colts 1st Team and this issue of the Business Brief and are active in business to business networking.

Past's clients include household names such as Coors Brewery, local businesses of all sizes and Tamworth Borough Council.

**Website: www.pastltd.co.uk
Tel: 01827 60050**



■ Alan Moore, Past Ltd



Roar Marketing Limited, based in Tamworth works in partnership with the Business & Economic Partnership to produce the Tamworth and Lichfield Business Brief four times a year. Please send your news stories and pictures to Matt Fletcher at Tamworth Borough Council matthew-

fletcher@tamworth.gov.uk. To advertise or insert leaflets contact Karen Nicholls at Roar Marketing karen@roarmarketing.co.uk

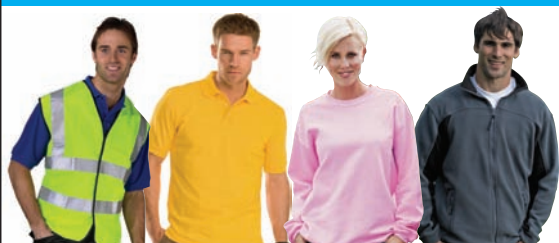
The Spring 2010 issue will be received by 5,500 local business and public sector organisations w/c 1st March.

This issue has been collated, written and designed in Tamworth and Lichfield, so join in and give a boost to all local businesses.

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