

SUMMER 2011



Welcome

For this issue I thought I would reflect on the achievements of the Business & Economic Partnership (BEP) over the last twelve months in its drive to help and support you. It has been a busy year and very productive. The platform we now have will move the Partnership to the next level.

Debbie Baker my vice chair was appointed onto the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Development Board influencing a number of key decisions and ensuring that business will continue to have a voice from Tamworth and Lichfield.

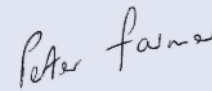
The final completion of The Business Engagement Strategy Plan has now been endorsed by both Tamworth and Lichfield Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) which has already seen the successful implementation of the Business Networks Forum.

The development of an Economic Strategy for Tamworth and Lichfield is nearly complete and will be presented to the Partnership Board in July.

The BEP has been instrumental in driving forward the Think Local 4 Business concept and website which will become an important business support tool with the demise of Business Link.

And finally, the continuing success of the Business Brief which following a recent survey shows that 33% of businesses appearing in the newsletter were contacted by prospective customers.

A big thank you to everyone who has contributed towards this.



Peter Farmer
(Chair of the Business & Economic Partnership)



Local businesses have their say!

The Business Networks Forum (BNF) is made up of local businesses, networking groups and representative bodies. It provides a vital business communication link between public and governmental bodies, local residents and business people.

Tracy Pound and Karen Nicholls have taken on the role of Co-Chairs to organise and run the meetings. The second meeting was on 6th April in Tamworth.

The main topic was car parking in Tamworth and Lichfield. An officer from Tamworth Borough Council responsible for 9 car parks in Tamworth attended the meeting. Taking questions from the floor she explained the principles behind car parking, charging and car park strategies. BNF ambassadors made suggestions including requesting a study assessing car parking needs of the public and businesses. Feedback

will be circulated to BNF ambassadors prior to the next meeting. Other topics included the business benefits of planning developments in Tamworth and Lichfield.

The main topic at the next meeting on 25th May in Lichfield will be "Using local contractors for major development work and how to encourage local businesses to use local suppliers".



Left to right: Business Networks Forum Co-Chairs Karen Nicholls (Roar Marketing) and Tracy Pound (MaximlTy)

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Business news in brief



Sponsorship blooms

A larger-than-life-size Saxon warrior made of flowers and the famous Tamworth pigs at the railway station are just two of the displays that businesses can sponsor in this year's Tamworth In Bloom. Businesses of all sizes across the borough are being urged to get on board and show their support by sponsoring a display. Street banners, lamppost banners, planters, troughs and flowerbeds are available to brand with names and logos. Contact Melvyn Clark on 01827 709 362 or email Melvyn-clark@tamworth.gov.uk

Top award for Lichfield builder

Massey Ltd based in Lichfield received the top award at the Staffordshire Building Excellence awards, beating off competition from major developers. The awards were presented by the Staffordshire Local Authority Building Control Group, for a two-house development in Sycamore Green, Cannock. The houses were manufactured using the very latest off-site construction methods. See a time-lapse film of the houses being constructed at www.youtube.com, enter "Sycamore Green".



Nigel Massey outside the prize winning Sycamore Green houses

Bettaquip launches new website

Lichfield based specialist commercial kitchen design and installation company, Bettaquip, has launched a new website to showcase its work and new branding.

The website uses the latest technology, includes a rotating homepage slideshow, a number of photo galleries and videos to help visually showcase its products and services. Case studies detail the unique solutions Bettaquip has designed to meet the needs and challenges of various projects. BETTAquip's specialist design and installation services are carried out nationally to a number of different sectors within the foodservice industry including healthcare, higher education, restaurants, and private sector companies.



With a little help from our friends...



Left to right: Alan Rowe, (Blossom Digital), Helen Betts, (Vice Chair of the Friends of Lichfield Cathedral) and Graham Green, (Reeves Green)

Thanks to the help of the Friends of Lichfield Cathedral, www.lichfield-cathedral.org is now the gateway to everything you need to know about the city's medieval Cathedral. This new website was re-designed to provide better access and more up to date information for Cathedral audiences around the world.

The website was the creation of two local businesses - web design company Blossom Digital and in consultation with advertising, design and PR agency, Reeves Green. The partnership ensured that the new site created visual impact plus more concise menus, to ensure that users can navigate around the site more easily. Site users can now easily see what services they would like to attend by browsing the latest Music List, they can find out how to book a ticket for the Staffordshire Hoard this summer or just plan a day trip to the Cathedral and the city for the first time.

ISC engineers new contract

One of Birmingham's oldest engineering companies has appointed Lichfield consultancy Ian Strachan Communications Ltd to handle its press relations.

Hopkins, based in Aston, specialises in manufacturing and supplying high quality, bespoke blind, awning and shutter rollers and associated components. The company, which has been in Birmingham since 1750, also has a precision engineering division. Hopkins managing director Alex Hopkins said "We chose Ian Strachan Communications because of its wide-ranging experience and contacts and its no-nonsense, value-for-money approach to PR, which will fit this company's culture well."



Ian Strachan, Ian Strachan Communications Ltd

Business news in brief

Double award success for Staffordshire law firm

Lichfield law firm Ansons Solicitors, is celebrating after being awarded the Lexcel quality assurance accreditation and Investors in People award. The Lexcel quality assurance accreditation is awarded to law firms who satisfy the requirements of The Law Society in implementing the highest standard of internal management and client care. Investors in People is a recognised quality standard for the development of a business through its employees. Partner Sarah Popp said: "We are very proud to have achieved both awards every year since Ansons was formed back in 2004".



Sarah Popp, Partner at Ansons Solicitors

Business crime reduces

Storenet radio users in Lichfield have been told that the recent "Operation Steel" carried out by the police over the Christmas period will be repeated this year. Over the two months of the operation business crime dropped by over 16% compared to the previous year. This trend appears to have continued into 2011 with shoplifting incidents significantly down in the first two months.



South Staffs College Principal Graham Morley and students at new IT academy launch

New academy opens its doors

South Staffordshire College recently hosted the official launch of a new IT Academy at its Tamworth campus. The College is working with NiTP (National IT Partnership) to offer Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeships to students wishing to achieve the level of skills needed to compete for jobs at the higher end of the industry including IT Technician, IT and Telecoms Engineer, Network Engineer, Network Administrator and Call Centre IT Help

Desk Systems Analyst. Veronica Smith, NiTP National Academy Set-Up Manager said "The NiTP Apprenticeship has received excellent feedback from learners and employers alike and many have commented on the quality and relevant course content and the high calibre of learners placed in the workplace".

Mechatronics wins tenders in Oman

Mechatronics International based in Lichfield has won two tenders for the supply, installation and commissioning of engineering training equipment to the Royal Guard of Oman Technical College in al Seeb, Muscat, Oman. The college was founded in 1976 by Sultan Qaboos Al Saeed to improve technical and vocational education in the country. The tenders were for a Fluid Power laboratory and an Industrial Automation and Control training system. The equipment was delivered within the required time frame with the installation, commissioning and staff training taking place at the facility in early 2011.



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Mechatronics equipment for Royal Guard of Oman Technical College

Business news in brief



Staffordshire hoard means business



A major boost for the local economies of Lichfield and Tamworth is on its way. The Staffordshire Hoard exhibition will be at Lichfield Cathedral from 30th July to 21st August and at Tamworth Castle from 27th August to 18th September. Businesses can capitalise on this by running promotions celebrating the return of the Hoard to Staffordshire as long as they **do not** use the official logo. Following the interest in the Staffordshire Hoard exhibition when some of the pieces were on show in Birmingham, and people queued for hours to see them, there is expected to be an up-lift in visitors to both Lichfield City Centre and Tamworth Town Centre plus an increase in media interest in the area as a whole. Don't let this unique occasion pass your business by!

Photographs courtesy of Staffordshire County Council



Louie Clegg, driving thebestoflichfield Mini

Louie's mini adventure

Louie Clegg from thebestoflichfield is determined to shout about the best local businesses in town, with the launch of their very own Mini advertisement. "Here at thebestoflichfield we are "spreading the word" in more ways than one with the launch of our new Mini." Says Louie Clegg "Our Mini proudly promotes some of the best recommended local businesses in Lichfield so residents can have peace of mind when they use their services."

Need help getting planning approval quickly and without problems?

The Planning Departments at Tamworth & Lichfield Councils aim to provide an efficient and timely service to deal with all your development requirements.

When you're first thinking of carrying out any development we advise you to contact the respective planning department so that we can tell you what permissions you might require and what is required to submit a formal planning application to facilitate a speedier process.

We will tell you whether planning permission is required, and if so, we will engage in pre-application discussions with you. Pre-application discussions will enable you to formulate your proposals, in consultation with the Planning Department, in a manner that meet your requirements, but at the same time identifying any possible issues early on. The discussions will also help to identify what information will need to be gathered to support your application.

Effective pre-application will give you some comfort that you are working in the right direction, thereby avoiding abortive and costly work.

The Planning Authorities at both Tamworth and Lichfield supports sustainable development that benefits the economy of the area, and by working together we can ensure that we create the right environment for growth.

Should you wish to discuss any development proposals please do not hesitate to contact:

Tamworth Borough Council

John Gunn
Development Control Manager
Tel: 01827 709 288
E-mail: john-gunn@tamworth.gov.uk

Lichfield District Council

Claire Billings
Development Control Manager
Tel: 01543 308 171
E-mail: claire.billings@lichfielddc.gov.uk
or the Duty Planning Officer via the Switchboard 01543 308000

Tax rates app launched

With offices in Tamworth, accountants Haines Watts has launched a new mobile app giving instant and continuous access to the latest UK Tax Rates. The app is free to download from the app store by searching 'UK Tax Rates'.

The app will initially be available for use on iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad. It will list a large proportion of UK tax rates, including Income Tax, Car & Fuel Benefits, Corporation Tax, VAT, Capital Gains Tax and National Insurance – amongst others.



Business news in brief

And the survey said!

In the last edition of the Business Brief we asked for your feedback on the publication and we had a great response - so thank you to all the local businesses that let us know your thoughts!

- Over 90% of you found the business brief to be a useful publication
- The new stories, general information and "What's on" sections were considered the most useful parts of the publication.

Some of the comments and suggestions were:

"It is informative without being long winded. It gives businesses an insight into how and what other local businesses are doing."

"I like that it is a quick read, more stories about local businesses would be good to include."

"Rather too many ads for comfort, I would prefer an electronic publication with direct web links....most of the expert info it contains I can get elsewhere in greater depth."

All your feedback will all be taken into consideration and used to improve future editions.

If you'd like to get in touch on how we can improve the Business Brief please contact Matt Fletcher 01827 709 382 or matthew-fletcher@tamworth.gov.uk

Local Enterprise Partnership Update

The Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP now includes the following areas: Birmingham, Solihull, Tamworth, Lichfield, East Staffs, Cannock Chase with Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest joining in the last two months. A Development Board has been in place since November 2010 comprising business (Debbie Baker Vice Chair of the BEP representing Tamworth and Lichfield businesses), Local Authorities and Leaders of Councils who have concentrated on putting into place a number of key objectives which will become the platform for moving forward when the new Board is in place in May.

The main objective, which will underpin everything that the LEP strives to fulfil, is an economic strategy for the area. An interim strategy has therefore been developed and has 5 key components to success:

1. Supporting business using existing tools such as Think Local 4 Business
2. Supporting innovation and high growth companies
3. Ensuring the skills that businesses need are available
4. Connecting the LEP to the world with better transport infrastructure

5. Providing the infrastructure and events to stimulate investment and growth

Delivery of each of these 5 key components will be dependent on a number of different initiatives some of which are already in existence or others which are waiting on the sidelines to come into play.

Think Local 4 Business is already there and could become a major player in helping to alleviate the black hole that is being left by the demise of Business Link especially with the business support aspect.

An Employment and Skills Board is to be set up for the LEP area and will build on the success that was achieved by the existing Birmingham and Solihull Skills Board ensuring that colleges and universities are creating the skills that business want.

The creation of a new Enterprise Zone in Birmingham City Centre and an Enterprise Belt covering a significant part of the rest of the LEP area (including Tamworth and Lichfield) is being put forward to Government which will generate considerable private investment and jobs.

The LEP will continue to support all Regional Growth Fund bids that



Andy Street – Chief Executive of John Lewis Partnership, Chair of Greater Birmingham & Solihull LEP

support the overall economic strategy including the Finance Birmingham (loans to SME's) which could be expanded to cover all of the LEP area. The development of a website for the LEP is currently ongoing and it is proposed that it will be launched in May and will enhance the communication mechanisms to all businesses.

The Business & Economic Partnership will continue to play an active role with the new Board in the development of all these objectives ensuring that the voice of business for Tamworth and Lichfield is always heard.

Business what's on is sponsored by:



The highly qualified team of IT experts at brokenStones in Lichfield are on a mission to help businesses make their IT work harder and smarter.

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Business what's on

Maximum leads through networking

Networking is a fantastic and low-cost way to market your business. If networking is not working for you book a place on this half day course from MaximITy and find out how to succeed at networking.

The cost is £75 plus VAT and the courses are being run on 10th June, 8th July and 12th August 2011. Email tracy@maximity.co.uk or call 01827 312 278 for more information or to book.

What IS your point?

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Business Networks Forum

Put forward your business issues and get local business information from the Business Economic Partnership. The next scheduled meetings are 13th July, 14th September and 30th November.

For more information or to book a place contact Matt Fletcher on 01827 709 382 or email matthew-fletcher@tamworth.gov.uk

If you have a business networking event or other business related event taking place please send the details to Matt Fletcher at Tamworth Borough Council. Promote your events here for the benefit all local businesses

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Business networking groups

B2B Tamworth – www.b2bclubnetworking.co.uk

BNI – www.bni-europe.com/uk

Business 1st – www.business-1st.org

Business A.M. – www.businessam.net

Connect – www.connectingwomen.co.uk

Four Counties Networking Group – www.fcng.co.uk

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

South Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce – www.sssci.co.uk

Synergy4Business – www.synergy4business.co.uk

Tamworth Breakfast Group – www.tamworthbusinessbreakfastclub.org.uk

Thebestof Lichfield – www.thebestof.co.uk/lichfield



Ask the experts – about the best way to set up a new business

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Pickerings Solicitors LLP is a Tamworth-based law firm offering a wide range of services to businesses and individuals throughout the Midlands and beyond. Martin Clifford, Corporate & Commercial Solicitor answers your queries about setting up in business.



Q I'm looking at going into business with a former colleague of mine. We've decided to run the new business as a partnership but I'm not sure what my liabilities are and if there are any formal requirements?

A A partnership is where a number of individuals are in business together (as opposed to employer and employee) and they share the right to take part in making decisions which affect the business.

Like a sole trader, there are few formalities in setting up a partnership and it can be an inexpensive way of setting up in business.

There is also the disadvantage of the partners being personally liable for the debts of the partnership, so partners should be aware of the exposure to their personal assets and potentially bankruptcy.

The law governing partnership is the Partnership Act 1890. If there is no alternative agreement between the partners, then under the Act, they are deemed to divide the profits and losses of the business between them equally. However, this is not always appropriate for the parties involved and we would recommend that the partners enter into a written partnership agreement which regulates the relationship between them - particularly if they have any other specific agreement between them.

Q I'm looking at buying a business that is run as a franchise but I'm not sure exactly what franchising means?

A Franchising is an increasingly popular way of running a business and many familiar high street names are run in this way. A franchise occurs when the owner of a business (the franchisor) grants a licence to another person or business (the franchisee) to use their existing brand and/or product.

Whilst the franchisee runs their own business, the manner in which they sell the franchisor's products or services are controlled by the franchisor. The franchisee will also be permitted to operate only in a specific geographical area.

In return for the licence granted to the franchisee, along with ongoing advice and training from the franchisor, the franchisee usually pays an initial fee to the franchisor as well as a percentage of the sales revenue.

Setting up in business is a major commitment, so it's far better to get things right from the start than to have to unravel a mess at a later stage. At Pickerings we strongly recommend seeking proper legal advice before entering into any contracts. Martin Clifford may be contacted on 01827 317 089 or mclifford@pickerings-solicitors.com

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Business information contacts

Hi, I'm Matt Fletcher. My department is the 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 look forward to hearing from you!!



BEP sponsors the Lambs

The Business & Economic Partnership was delighted to sponsor the matchball at the game between Tamworth FC and Southampton on 23rd April.



Left to right: James Roberts (Tamworth Borough Council) Peter Farmer (BEP Chair) Jenny Cartwright (West Midlands Chair of the FSB) Nick Lunn (Tamworth FC) and David Lillis (FSB)

Copper thieves beware!



Rugeley based RedWeb Technologies has developed a pioneering tool using Advanced Molecular Taggent Technology (AMTT) to help link criminals to the scene of their crime. Chris Smith, RedWeb Sales Director said "With metal and copper theft at an all-time high, RedWeb's AMTT can be a god-send to companies across the UK." RedWeb also has burglary and robbery applications where the tagging technology is deployed onto the offender.

ASDA awards farm

For the second year running family run soft fruits grower Manor Farm in Hints, Tamworth has been awarded the coveted ASDA Award for Most Consistent Quality. The award recognises the quality and taste of the fruit supplied to the multiple throughout 2009 and 2010.



Tamworth marketing consultancy, Roar Marketing Limited 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.

This issue has been delivered to 7,500 local business and public sector organisations and has a much wider readership. It's collated, written, designed and printed in Tamworth and Lichfield so join in and give a boost to all local businesses.

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