



Wellingborough Chamber News

Spring 2014

President's Blog – Recovery on track?



All of the national indicators seem to be suggesting that the country is in the grip of a sustained recovery? There may be disagreement between political parties on how this is being experienced by different sections of society but in general things look to be on the up!

Locally, for Wellingborough, this is the precise time to make sure that all of the plans which have been put in place over the last decade and have stalled due to the recession are now delivered. Unfortunately funding restrictions and viability issues meant that many projects were shelved or put on hold but what is now encouraging is that some of these look on the point of being built. They also reflect most of the priorities that you have said are important for the town.

Tresham College redevelopment – An application for the redevelopment of the Church Street site is being progressed which would see a new campus opened for students in September 2015.

Station Interchange - A proposal to extend Midland Road across the railway and River Ise is to be delivered to provide access to Stanton Cross development and new station facilities.

Wellingborough North – A start on major housing development to the north of Niort Way is anticipated.

On the back of this anticipated start of construction activity increased lobbying should occur to ensure that the development of Wellingborough can be sustained and particularly that infrastructure to allow the early release of employment land is prioritised.

James Wilson – Chamber President

Wellingborough Business Improvement District (BID)

The Wellingborough BID has been working to improve the economic prospects of the town centre since 2009. The term of this BID is now coming to an end and businesses within the BID area are being consulted to see if they will support a further BID which will extend for a 5 year period.

The businesses within the BID area all pay a levy which is based on a percentage of the business rateable value. In the first 3 years the BID has concentrated on marketing activities and events to increase the footfall within Wellingborough and providing activities which people will come into town for. Events such as the Summer beach on Market Street, Medieval Festival, Continental Market and Christmas lights switch on have all contributed to pulling more people into the town. The BID has also provided free commercial waste collection to all the businesses which has saved hundreds of pounds for many companies.

The Chamber supports the consultation and process to establish the BID for a second period which will reflect the priorities of the local businesses. Without a BID all of the marketing and promotional activity for the town will not continue and the current programme of events will cease as Wellingborough Council continues to have to find savings and will not be able to invest in this type of support for the town centre.





Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Officer & Executive Team Responsibilities for 2013/2014

James Wilson Chamber President 01604 812115
Direct & Manage Chamber Business & Activity

David Cross Chamber Secretary 01933 652252
Administration Activity/Ambassador Project & TCP Board Member

Alan Piggot Deputy President 01933 624222
Manage the Chambers Ambassador Project

Andrew McNaught Treasurer Via Secretary
Chamber Financial Stability/Subscriptions/Invoicing

Steve Rees Vice President 07957 598317
Manage Chambers crm/data/e-news-letters

Stewart Childs 01933 651863
Manage Chambers Website

Oliver Jelly 07803 003811
Manage Chambers Publicity/Press Releases

Margaret Baldry 01933 223909
Manage Chambers Events Co-ordination

Bob Allen Past President 01933 383316
Support Chamber Activity

Alan Warwick Past President 01933 224981
Support Chamber Activity (TC Business Reports)

Caroline Pink Committee Member 01933 229000

Paul Adams Committee Member 01933 670984

Ben Thomas Committee Member 01604 259900

Rob Hart Committee Member 01933 228324

As we are each aware, it is paramount that together we achieve greater influence, involvement and publicity in all areas of importance to the Chamber, its members & the business community within Wellingborough & District. This will only be attained by the Executive Committee being purposeful & committed, through participating in Chamber activity now & in the future.



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Chamber Advice Lines

We are pleased to announce that six of our professional members have agreed to offer an advice line facility for members. This will allow an initial consultation of around thirty minutes free of any charge but to qualify members **MUST IDENTIFY** themselves as members of THIS CHAMBER.

The businesses offering their services are:

Wilson Browne Solicitors

Oxford Street
Contact Dick Smart on all matters except criminal law on 01933 279000

Marshman Price Business Rescue & Insolvency

Wellingborough
Contact Alan Price on 01933 270918

Isis Business Solutions

Venture Court, 2 Debdale Road, Wellingborough
Contact Mark Hollyman on all financial matters on 0845 345 7785

R.J.A. Designs Architectural Services

Wellingborough
Contact Bob Allen on building projects (both new and alterations) on 01933 383316

BRI Business Recovery and Insolvency

St James Road, Northampton
Contact John Warburton for any business recovery matters on 01604 754352

prop-search.com – Commercial Property Agents/Consultants

Venture Court, 2 Debdale Road, Wellingborough
Contact Simon Toseland/Chris Billon on 01933 223300

Viewpoint

You are invited to have your say on appropriate topics concerning business, local matters, social etc. Contact Jane Olds on 01933 440077. Next issue February 2014, copy to be received by end of January.





Beer Festival

The weandal Wellingborough Beer Festival hosted by the Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce will open its doors on Thursday 8th May and run until midnight on Saturday 10th May. As with previous year's we will be offering many ales from Northamptonshire's own micro-breweries and there will be a few new ales launched at the festival, so keep an eye on the Chamber website for details.

The festival will run from 4pm until midnight on Thursday 8th, and from 12 midday until Midnight on 9th and 10th May. A full programme of live entertainment will also be running on all three evenings with live music and on Saturday our entertainment will start at 3pm. For those who like us think the beer festival is incomplete without Dr Busker and his Village Idiots, fear not as he is booked to appear on the Friday evening.

Harts Family Brewers have already agreed to launch a commemorative beer at the festival to celebrate the achievements of one of Wellingborough's WW1 heroes.

The famous collectors glasses we produce at every festival have already been fully sponsored, however there is a chance for businesses to entertain their customers, workers etc by sponsoring a barrel of beer (details of which can be got from Alan Piggot – Deputy President of the Chamber on 01933 624222). This is an ever increasing popular opportunity and allows all sponsors to have prominence at the event and within the full colour programme.

Please be a part of this fantastic annual event by either attending or sponsoring and remember there will be hundreds of visitors in the town during the event for the Weandel Walk..



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The Editor.





Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce

Business Survey Feedback

The Chamber undertook its largest business survey in November as part of the 'Enterprising Wellingborough' campaign to help it understand current issues and views. We have fed these results into the consultation that Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership is conducting in their bid to secure £100m for infrastructure and economic development funding.

The following are the highlights from our survey and what you told us.

How do you expect your company to perform over the next 12 months?

We have all been heartened by recent economic indicators which seem to be suggesting a sustained recovery and the confidence is echoed locally. You said that 82% of you expected to grow in the next 12 month and 50% intended to take on more employees.

What are the biggest constraints to future growth?

The top issues which you felt were holding you back were cost of utilities and general competition. Lack of skills and the impact of business rates were close behind as being inhibitors of future growth.

Which areas would you like to see more support from NEP?

The main area for increased support was for business growth beyond 3 years, 12% of those surveyed thought that this would be helpful for expanding small businesses. You also thought that support was needed for more research and development capital investment (8%) and to support the better use of ICT for SMEs (8%).

What are the key infrastructure priorities for Wellingborough?

We provided you with a long list of infrastructure projects that are likely to come forward as a result of the planned growth for Wellingborough. You told us that at the top of your list was the regeneration of the town centre. Following this was the improvements to the station associated with the Stanton Cross development and then the redevelopment of the Tresham Campus on Church Street. The provision of superfast broadband was also seen as a priority.

What is the one thing that would make your business grow and flourish?

A fifth of people surveyed stated that access to finance was the key issue to help their business grow. Availability to

grant funding and loans for investment was next together with reducing business rates.

The Chamber will continue to respond to and engage in the consultation with Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership to represent the needs and wishes of Wellingborough businesses.

Don't forget that certain grants and support through NEP are already available such as the INV-ENT programme which can provide up to £20,000 for innovative and job creating growth proposals – more details available at <http://www.northamptonshireep.co.uk/INV-ENT/>

The Northamptonshire Growth Hub is also the new one stop business support service for Northamptonshire who can be contacted on **0844 556 0101** or <http://www.northamptonshiregrowthhub.co.uk/>

Government Retail Business Rate Relief Scheme

The government is seeking to support small retail high street businesses by providing automatic business rate relief of £1,000 for 2014-15 and 2015-16. These businesses must be occupied and have a rateable value of £50,000 or below.

The announcement was made in last year in the Autumn Statement and details have recently been published on how this scheme will be administered. This reduction in business rates will be welcomed by many retailers and it supports further action by the government to help high street businesses in a £1bn support package including:

- capping the annual Retail Price Index (RPI) increase in bills at 2% in 2014 to 2015 - businesses were expecting a 3.2% rise
- extending the doubling of the small business rates relief to April 2015
- small business rate relief has also been extended to include small firms taking on an additional second property (for up to a year), helping an estimated 3,000 businesses expand
- a reoccupation discount of 50% off business rates bill for 18 months for new occupants of retail premises previously empty for a year or more
- allowing businesses to pay their bills over 12 months, rather than 10, to help every firm with their monthly cash flow

We hope this has the effect of strengthening Wellingborough's excellent independent retail outlets and encouraging more budding retailers to open within the town centre.



Tax relief for employees

If you are an employee you may be entitled to claim tax relief on certain qualifying expenses. You can do this even if you don't have to fill in a tax return and HMRC may also allow you to make a claim for these expenses in the last four years that you were employed. Have I got your attention now?

Below are the most common expenses that HMRC allow you to claim for but if the expense is 'incurred wholly, exclusively & necessarily in the performance of your work duties it is likely to also be allowed:

Using your own car for work journeys

1. If your employer doesn't allow you to claim for mileage when you use your own car for a work related journey you can make a claim for tax relief based on the number of qualifying miles you have done in a tax year.
2. If your employer does pay for you work miles you may still be able to make a claim but only if the amount they pay you it is not the approved mileage allowance that HMRC set. These rates are currently £0.45p for the first 10,000 miles in a year and £0.25p thereafter. Rates for motorcycles, bicycles and carrying passengers can be found at: HMRC

Business trips

If you are working away and have to pay the accommodation and meal costs yourself, you can make a claim based on how much you spend.

Professional or trade subscriptions

If you bear the cost of these and it relates to the work you do, you can claim for this cost.

Tools or equipment

If you have purchased any tools or equipment that you use for mainly your work duties you will be entitled to some tax relief.

To get the relief you will need to keep a copy of the invoice to prove the amount you have spent.

If you do not have the invoice you may still be able to make a claim for the repair and replacement of the item by claiming a flat rate expense. These expenses are negotiated between HMRC and trade unions and only apply to certain classes of manual employees. The amount you can claim and list of employee classes are listed at: HMRC

Uniforms & protective clothing

1. Tax relief is allowed for clothing that is recognisably a uniform or part of a uniform which you are required to wear for work and must bear the cost yourself. If your employer pays for your uniform you are still entitled to relief for the upkeep of it i.e. for keeping it clean. If you pay for laundry costs then this is the amount you can claim but if you wash your uniform at home HMRC currently accept that £60 per year is a reasonable estimate of the additional costs you incur. The amount for nurses is £100.

2. Protective clothing is also an allowable expense provided that it is worn mainly during work hours and is needed for the protection for the job you do. Again tax relief is available for the upkeep.

Working from home

If you work either at home or from home you may be able to get tax relief on some of your household expenses. HMRC allow £208 to be claimed without the need for you to keep any records. If you have a separately identifiable office at home and believe that your utility costs have increased more than this amount you will need to provide such evidence to make your claim.

Wellingborough's Own Brewery from STRENGTH to STRENGTH



2013 proved to be a fantastic year for Hart Family Brewers based at Nene Court in Wellingborough culminating in sales for December doubling versus their first Christmas in 2012. In order to

maintain growth into 2014 and beyond the young business has already had to expand its operation with the construction of an extension to the brewhouse and the commissioning of two new vessels which will see extra capacity coming on stream in February. This has seen a capital investment of almost £40k to ensure that Wellingborough's beer drinkers are kept refreshed for several years to come.

The range of PURE BEERS continues to grow also with new permanent and seasonal beers planned for the coming 12 months. In December their new Porter 6.4% was released in bottle to a fantastic reception with the first bottling selling out in just two days. The 1833 India Pale Ale 6.6% netted the brewers their first Gold Medal in October taking top place in the Artisan Local Drink category at the Carlsberg Northants Food & Drink Awards.

The business benefits from its position at the Nene Court Retail Park on The Embankment and their BREWERY OPEN DAYS every Saturday between 9 and 5 are great opportunities to pop down, look round a working brewery and enjoy a free tasting of their unique beers.





Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce

Cameratec Ltd - New Member Article



Cameratec started trading in August 2013 as a company specialising in bespoke electronic security systems for both domestic and commercial customers.

Rob Harrison, the company founder, has worked in the electronic security industry for over 20 years, working for large international companies designing and fitting electronic security systems. Rob had always dreamed of starting his

own company and when 2013 provided him the opportunity he grasped it with both hands.

Cameratec can design, supply, install and maintain systems that include CCTV, Access Control and Perimeter Detector Systems. Despite being in its infancy Cameratec is already gaining a reputation for quality and professional service, value for money and reliability. They pride themselves on providing a bespoke system that is tailored to the needs of each job and individual customer. Servicing The Midlands, East Anglia, The Three Counties and North London, their customers range from local schools and businesses to private individuals.

**For more information call
01933 689222 or 07902 816543
or email Rob Harrison at info@cameratec.co.uk**

Great Expectations



Prop-Search is forecasting a stronger year for commercial property across Northamptonshire.

So what do we believe will define the market in 2014? We start with what some might say is a heroic prediction given the continued uncertainty around the economy, that the year ahead will see the bottom of the commercial property sector. Tell-tale signs of improving fortunes were seen during the latter months of 2013 and we believe there are compelling reasons why this will continue during the year ahead.

Simon Toseland, a Director at Prop-Search, says: "We have already witnessed investors looking and bidding for opportunities outside the narrow focus of prime property, particularly in London, that we have seen over the past year or two. We also believe that there will be a rise in values, which will mark the bottom of the cycle of the widespread falls that all sectors have experienced since the recession hit."

There is a tangible shortage of quality industrial stock across the County as the non-existent levels of development activity compound falling availability levels. This is causing concern from occupiers and agents that there is relatively little quality space now available

for them to choose from. For those landlords, investors and developers with well-located sites, there are good opportunities ahead and we do expect to see gradual rental growth with incentives hardening.

The office market is slowly also seeing signs of improvement, albeit at a slower rate, and this looks likely to continue during 2014. Office take-up improved during 2013, predominately driven by a return to Grade A lettings, with stock levels falling as the overall development pipeline continues to be restrained. Office occupiers traditionally consume speculatively built vacant products rather than pre-let or design and build options, and it is likely that as stocks deplete, many landlords will look to refurbish existing stock. New build office deals remain unviable, given build costs against residual values.

Simon Toseland concludes: "So whilst there are still some uncertainties in the market, we anticipate that activity will continue to increase throughout 2014 and lead to commercial developers having the confidence to start putting spades back in the earth."

**Further information or advice can be obtained from
Prop-Search - Tel: 01933 223300 / 01604 492000
or its website: www.prop-search.com**



Rail Holidays with Baileys Travel



There was a time when my opinion of one Michael Denzil Xavier Portillo was, to say the least, unflattering. These days, I've mellowed somewhat and Mr Portillo has given up politics in favour of TV presenting. His recent series on rail journeys around the UK and Europe has turned me into an admirer of his relaxed and well-informed reportage.

It would be unfair to say that Michael Portillo has single-handedly transformed the rail holiday market, but his contribution to the renaissance of holidays and travel by train has been dramatic!

Train holidays around the UK are now well-established. The big player in this area is Great Rail Journeys. Along with sister brand, Treyn, GRJ offers a wide choice of itineraries. Scotland features strongly. The West Highland Line, known as the "Iron Road to the Isles", is as spectacular a route as you'll find, travelling through countryside untouched by any road. Alternatives include holidays to Yorkshire and Northumberland, Wales, the Lake District, Norfolk, Kent, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. Ireland is included, as is the Isle of Man, home to a strange collection of vintage railways.

Venturing across the Channel opens up a world of possibilities. Take the train to the Italian Lakes, or down as far south as Puglia and Basilicata. Wind your way through the Alps in Switzerland or take the long route down all the way to Nice and the Cote d'Azur. Travel cross-continent to the Grand Imperial Cities of Vienna, Prague, Budapest and Berlin. For those with a taste for more extreme environments, there is the Grand Arctic Circle Explorer or the Marrakech Express?

Of course it doesn't stop there. World-wide train experiences await you. Agreed, it is necessary to get on an aeroplane to experience many of them, but surely worth the effort. The Rocky Mountaineer in Canada, for example, has been voted the best train journey in the world. Other epic rail journeys in North America include a number of signature routes on Amtrak's network. How about 42 hours from Los Angeles to Chicago on the Southwest Chief, winding through spectacular canyons and across vast swathes of America's prairie heartland? The Maple Leaf service runs from New York, via Niagara Falls, to Toronto. Once there, you could board a VIA Rail train and travel the breadth of Canada all the way to Vancouver.

Down-under, railway journeys are no less spectacular. Trundling through the Outback on the Indian-Pacific service from Perth to Adelaide is one for the more hardened rail enthusiast, as is the trip north from Adelaide to Darwin on the famous Ghan, named for the Afghan Traders who drove their camel trains along this historic route 150 years ago. For a more tourist-focussed offering, set off from Brisbane on the Queenslander service up to Cairns, with views of the Great Barrier Reef from your window.

The rail-based possibilities around the globe are endless. At one end of the comfort scale are the Hill railways in India. At the other you can choose between the Blue Train and Rovos Rail in South Africa or Orient Express in Europe and Asia. The Trans-Siberian and Trans-Mongolian railways are for the more intrepid. For speed freaks, Bullet trains in Japan, and the astonishing Mag-Lev train in Shanghai, currently the world's fastest @ 268 mph!!!, offer the fastest land-based transport.

The world's railways could keep Michael Portillo on our TV screens for the next twenty years, if the BBC continues to fund him. I hope they do.

The train now departing from Platform 6 is the 10:34 to.....? Well, you decide.

By Chris Bailey

6 Pebble Lane, Wellingborough, NN8 1AS
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chris@baileysttravel.com
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Your Business Profile

To all Chamber Members, this is Your Newsletter.

Why not promote your business activities, new contracts gained, increased staff levels, successes etc, why not let everyone know, perhaps they may wish to do business with you! Or perhaps you have a business need and wish to request input from other Chamber Members!

Produce your 'business profile' for inclusion in the next or following editions, with your logo/photos, etc

Please make contact with the Chamber Secretary.





Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce

Your Doctor does it, your bank does it, Wellingborough Chamber are doing it, are you?

We all have to see the Doctor occasionally and visit the bank. Without up to date 'Customer Relationship Management' (CRM) records these organisations could not function and yet it's amazing how many businesses think CRM is complicated, expensive and something only big companies should do.

The Wellingborough Chamber is a good example of an organisation that will flourish through use of the Activate CRM as they have a significant number of contacts to stay in touch with each month through their new e-newsletter and website.

CRM is not complex and when done well, makes your business look professional and ahead of the game. Could you imagine going into your bank and them not knowing when you last took money out or when you last spoke to them? Or going to see your doctor and them having no idea of your past medical history! If this happened then I am sure you would be very un-impressed and yet many organisations are poor when it comes to their own customers and their own recording of information.

Customer Relationship Management is a very simple idea really. It allows you to store information about your **Customers**, the **Relationship** you have with them and then **Manage** them easily! Imagine having all of your customer contact details, past emails, notes and histories in one place accessible via the internet. Imagine being able to add tasks or even assign tasks to other team members and being able to track what everyone is doing with each contact. Activate CRM is a great tool for any small business but it really comes into its own when you have more than one person who needs to access your contacts. The really great thing about the Activate CRM is the range of things you can do from it such as; send an email newsletter, create a survey, broadcast a text, message post to Facebook and Twitter and even record your leads and sales!



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Our finishing departments are no less impressive! Sheet graining and the ability to powder coat ‘in house’ add many advantages when the product flows through the factory. We are always in control – subcontracting very little provides this control and maintains our high quality philosophy and fast turn rounds – vital in today’s world.

On the product side, Metal Craft Industries prides itself as the manufacturers of a stylish and unique range of catering equipment that stands out and sold into Hotels, Kitchens, Supermarkets and Restaurants. From our ‘flat pack’ Cuisine Range through to fully fabricated units. From sinks to preparation tables to wall and floor cupboards – we cover it all.

Our ‘Stock Replenishment’ collection of trolleys can be seen in many businesses – moving stock and products safely and efficiently. From major supermarkets through to local independent stores – we supply them all. Every type of trolley covering every type of operation – we have them. This range of trolleys has materialised from working very closely with the businesses that use them – that’s what we do – give the customer what they want!

The subcontracting side of the business provides a unique service to customers who are looking for individual components through to fully fabricated units – customer driven projects ranging from a single unit through to small, medium or large batch quantities. Involving us from the start, how can a certain product be made – we will advise, can you build a prototype then roll it out – of course we can. Seeing a project through from start to finish, keeping everything in control, delivering to tight timescales and driving quality even higher – That is Metal Craft Industries of Wellingborough.

To see our product ranges please visit www.store-equipment.co.uk just the tip of the iceberg.

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Wellingborough Chamber of Commerce

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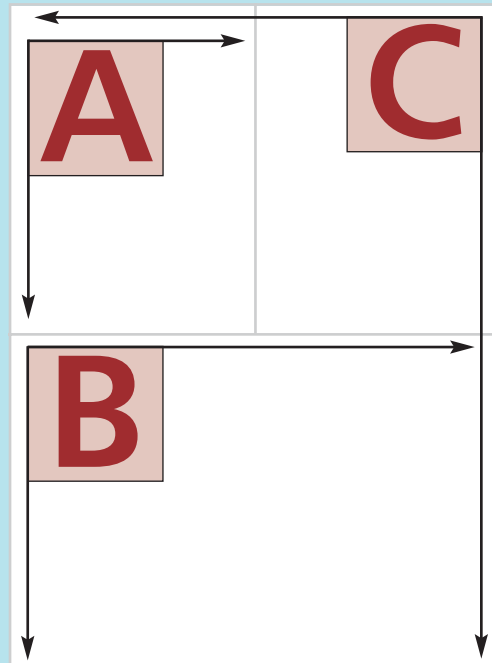
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Given sufficient notice, you may change each advertisement as you need and arrange an advert at any time. Annual invoices will be sent in April for the issues produced during the previous year.

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