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The e-newsletter of the Lymington and District Chamber of Commerce & Industry

March 2009



Call to unlock Lymington's tourism potential

LOCAL businesses should be actively promoting Lymington in order to unlock the town's tourism potential, according to New Forest District Council's Head of Employment and Tourism Anthony Climpson.

Anthony was addressing Chamber members and guests of Lymington and District Chamber of Commerce & Industry at a breakfast meeting held last autumn.

He said that he felt businesses are not encouraging tourists to visit and spend – to travel, stay, eat and play – in Lymington and should be working with each other and with New Forest District Council to promote the town.

Since then, Anthony Climpson has had an exploratory meeting with Chamber representatives Peter Leyland-Jones (Lanes Restaurant) and Duncan Wright (Top Marques) to discuss his comments.

At this meeting Anthony

shared his view that Lymington "has lots going on and should be seen as the tourism capital of the New Forest".

As will be reported at our AGM on 19 March, the Board is committed to developing a higher profile, external presence. Examples of action already taken include regular press reports in the *Lymington Times* covering breakfast meetings and financial support for both Lymington's Christmas lights and Lymington-Brockenhurst Community Rail Partnership (the Chamber is also a stakeholder).

Opportunity to act as a catalyst

Following the meeting with Anthony Climpson, the Chamber Board is now considering how best to proceed. It recognises that the formal development of tourism may well provide a further opportunity to act as a catalyst in boosting initiatives which are of direct benefit to the local economy.

This will see the appointment of a Board member with responsibility for tourism – liaising with the New Forest Tourism Association, Lymington Society and local authorities as well as with hotels, restaurants, guest houses and local attractions such as St Barbe Museum.



YOU'D BE (FOOTBALL?) CRAZY TO MISS HIM!

TICKETS have gone on sale – and are already being snapped up – for An evening with ... Lawrie McMenemy MBE, on Thursday 2 April.

The event is being held at Lymington Town Sailing Club (a Chamber member) and all proceeds will go to its major project to increase access to its first floor premises by installing a lift as well as a toilet for the disabled.

Although well-known as a colourful character in the football world, Lawrie is an accomplished and entertaining after-dinner speaker .

Mike Denny, Head of Fundraising at Oakhaven Hospice, has heard the former Southampton manager speak at another fundraising event. "Although some of the ladies expected Lawrie to talk just about football, they were soon proved wrong and thoroughly enjoyed listening to him."

Tickets cost £25 (including a two-course dinner with coffee and a bottle of wine between four) and are available from the LTSC office or via Ann Jarman (01590 677965) or Duncan Wright (01590 674001).



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

SINCE the beginning of 2009, despite the current economic gloom and doom, we are delighted to report a healthy level of renewals by members of Lymington and District Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

We are also very pleased to welcome the following new member:

AB Designs (interior design and project management for re-fits and renovations) Tiptoe. Contact: Amanda Betts
Tel: 01590 682150

Encouraging start to year

Ann Jarman, who organises our breakfast networking meetings and has responsibility for membership enquiries, told *Lymington.biz*: "Within the last couple of weeks we have received about 10 new expressions of interest. The main reason given was that, while there are economic difficulties, it is more important than ever to network with other local businesses."

BE THERE ... OR BE SQUARE!

THE Chamber's 2009 AGM will be held on **Thursday, 19 March** at 7.30am at Lymington Town Sailing Club.

The agenda will include a review of the year by President Jenny Welker and the election of the Board.

To make sure of your place at this important event, please contact Ann Jarman on 01590 677965 or Dudley Temple on 07886 031412.

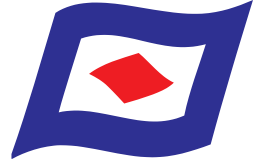
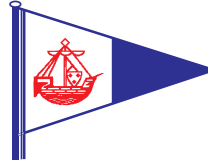
Looking further ahead, Wightlink Ferries will be providing the speaker at the next breakfast meeting to be held on **Thursday 23 April** at St Thomas Church hall, Lymington.

As we go to press, details for future networking

breakfasts on **Thursday 21 May** and **Thursday 18 June** are being finalised. Visit www.lymington.biz for event updates.

Business Link is organising three business events over the next few months.

Visit Lyndhurst Park Hotel on **Wednesday 18 March**



and you'll have a choice of two seminars; Plan Your Business Success and How to Accelerate Ahead of the Competition will both run from 5.30pm-7.30pm.

And on **Wednesday 22 April** Lymington Town Hall will be the venue for one-to-one business review meetings run by Business Link advisers who specialise in issues

facing small businesses. For details of all Business Link events, call 0845 600 9006.

Ignoring superstition, the New Forest Business Partnership is holding a 'Question Time' event on **Friday 13 March**. The event at Hangar Farm in Totton will start at 5pm. For more details, call Matt Callaghan on 023 8028 5371.

Dealing with disputes at work

IT IS often very difficult to explain to the owner of a small business why he or she must follow exactly the same procedure for resolving disputes at work as a multi million pound multi national company.

But, according to **Anna Feast of Scott Bailey**, the law is to change on 6 April 2009. This will affect how employees are disciplined or dismissed and how they raise grievances. What's more, it should allow employers to tailor their procedures to a way that works for their business.

Currently, in most cases where an employee raises a grievance or an employer is contemplating dismissing an employee, the standard grievance or dismissal and disciplinary 'three step' procedures should be followed.



From 6 April these formal requirements will be relaxed. Most importantly, the failure to follow the statutory procedure will not automatically render any subsequent dismissal (apart from a dismissal by reason of redundancy) unfair.

However, this does not give employers the green light to resolve disputes or dismiss employees in any way that they see fit. The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has set out a Code of Practice which should be followed when resolving disputes at work. Failure to follow this may result in a tribunal award being increased by up to 25%.

Employers should be aware that any disciplinary or grievance cases started before 6 April must follow the old procedure.

The new procedure places emphasis on the following points:

- Flexibility in resolving problems in a way that suits the particular employer and employee best
- Encouraging better workplace

communication so that hopefully problems are resolved at an earlier stage which prevents them from escalating

- Greater emphasis on mediation and conciliation as an alternative to resolving disputes

So what should you do as an employer to prepare yourself for these changes?

Firstly, you should review your disciplinary and dismissal procedures that are currently in force. Even under the new law, employers are encouraged to hold meetings with the employee and confirm the outcome of meetings in writing. Employees should also be informed of their right to appeal.

Secondly, supervisors and managers should be trained to deal with problems at an early stage to stop them from escalating. This will inevitably also require employees to be encouraged to report any problems they are having at an early stage and be open and honest with their employer. Employers may also want to consider introducing a mediation stage in to the dispute resolution process.

Only time will tell whether the new dispute resolution procedures will be successful, though they should certainly be more user friendly.

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