



Noticeboard

Manufacturing Growth Programme

Hertfordshire manufacturers can benefit from a grant programme to help them access expertise and consultancy. The Manufacturing Growth Programme from Economic Growth Solutions part-funds projects such as marketing, improving cyber-security, coaching, developing and implementing business strategy and leadership. (See <http://www.manufacturinggrowthprogramme.co.uk/about-the-programme/> for the background to the programme.)

The range of eligible projects is wide, and applying for the grant is easy and quick. This scheme is for SME manufacturers; the definition of manufacturing is quite broad, including companies who design products but outsource their making, and also firms who buy in and assemble components manufactured elsewhere.

The flexibility of this grant means firms can simply use a consultant already known to them, or get help to find someone with the specific expertise required. External specialist help means getting precisely the right expertise,

just when it's needed, from someone with real experience in understanding and achieving the business's goals.

Consultants don't have to get onto an Approved Supplier list, and the client only needs to submit one quotation – no further quotations are needed.

Manufacturing Growth Manager, Amanda Freeland, can help with any clarification required. Amanda formerly headed up the Hertfordshire Growth Hub, so has in-depth knowledge of local small and medium-sized businesses, what kinds of support they may need and how to help them access it. Amanda says "With over twenty years in SME business support, I am 100% committed to helping small firms to prosper and grow, so please don't hesitate to ask me for help. I do all the paperwork, saving clients and consultants lots of time and this really is the fastest grant application (and payment) process I've ever seen! Just email me at amanda.freeland@egs.live or call 07973 946529 to discuss your project."

Chamber Centenary

The Chamber is 100 years old this year and to celebrate, we are holding a Charity Ball. The date is 22 June 2018. More details to follow. Put it in your diary.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Chamber will take place at 6pm on Monday 26th March 2018. It will be held at the Rhodes Centre in Bishop's Stortford. There will be elections of the officers,

Social Media

Please add the Chamber Twitter and Facebook accounts to your connections. We will be promoting the Members businesses through them.

If you want the Chamber to broadcast your messages on social media - do let us know.

Please find us on facebook, the Twitter account is StortfordCC,



Chamber Business Lunch with

Sir Alan Haselhurst
Renewal of Parliament

Friday 16th March 12pm for 12.30pm
Bishop's Stortford Golf Club

Price
£25 Members

£30 Non Members
Includes VAT

Open to members and non-members
Places are strictly limited, to book yours, please email Chamber Secretary, Daliah at secretary@bschamber.org

Chamber Lunch 1 December 2017

Guest Speaker Mark Prisk MP, Member of Parliament for Hertford and Stortford

The Chamber was immensely fortunate and grateful to once again welcome back Mark Prisk MP, Member of Parliament for Hertford and Stortford, to take up his now annual spot to speak at our December Quarterly Business Lunch, the tenth in the series. As you know, the Chamber aims at the quarterly lunches to keep you, the local businesses, up to speed with the important, relevant and pressing regional matters and so the Chamber couldn't ask for a better speaker than Mark to round off the year.

The Committee hope you find these lunches both useful and enjoyable and if any members have ideas or suggestions for speakers, the Committee would be delighted to hear from you.

As many of you will know Mark has been a Member of Parliament since 2001, first contesting an election in 1992. Mark has held numerous ministerial briefs as well as being active in the local community. Most recently he has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Investment Envoy to the Nordic and Baltic nations. Mark also sits on the Communities and Local Government Select Committee.

Mark highlighted the importance and long standing reputation of our region – mentioning also that the Chamber is soon to be celebrating its centenary.

2017 in Review

As has become the custom, Mark briefly reviewed the salient and major news stories of 2017 from the Trump inauguration, the uncertainty around Brexit and the snap general election. Mark is, as ever, upbeat and states that if you step out of the Westminster bubble the economy is actually doing better than you think. It is growing, employment is up and we are the first in Europe, second in the world for foreign investment. The latter shows the confidence world markets place in Britain as a place to do business.

Mark is incredibly proud and optimistic about our local area. The M11 corridor, the proximity to London and Cambridge and Stansted Airport being on our doorstep all combine to attract national and international recognition. As well as this the area has great consumer strength and a well-educated and equipped workforce. Mark cited some specific examples that show the strength of our area and the success of the local Business Ambassadors – an initiative supported and backed by the Chamber:

1. Large companies relocating to the area such as Gu desserts;
2. The £5.5m investment and redevelopment of Jackson Square; and



- Continued growth and development at Stansted Airport, with 190 destinations and new routes opening up all of the time

The political landscape may be uncertain but we have a strong economic base.

Trade and Export

Mark then moved on to a topic close to his heart and a subject he is hugely passionate about, trade and export. Mark is an absolute believer in free trade, with greater choice leading to lower pricing for all. Mark feels it is essential for businesses and even more important politically as trade allows areas around the world to grow and lift themselves out of poverty. If nothing else, it opens up the large and existing markets of Africa, India and China. Trade is a fundamental part of British history, we are a small island nation that has arisen to great heights through trade and being open to new opportunities and markets. Over the last 415 years we have seen growth through trade and we have now reached the stage where 80% of our products are exported and we are world leading in certain specialisms like aerospace.

Mark feels the 'fly in the ointment' that is Brexit should not stop business from exploring their options as only around 11% of our exports are to Europe – it is often commonly assumed it is more like a third and similar to Germany but this is not the case.

Mark does not wish to come across as preachy or dictatorial and he is not merely flippantly saying that businesses should export, he feels by highlighting the benefits exporting speaks for itself: .

- Businesses that export outstrip competitors that only sell nationally. Businesses that export are spurred on to improve and develop and often see a boost in productivity, Mark mentioned a 34% rise;
- Exporting helps to spread the risk. As any businessmen will know it is bad to rely on a single market. Mark argues strength in diversity;
- Exporting will extend the commercial life span of services by 5-10 years as the British market is at saturation point;
- We are told that businesses that export are 11% less likely to fail.

We are told Britain is perfectly placed to capitalise on trade and exports. The weak Pound allows for stronger margins and cheaper goods and the reputation Britain is held in around the work for its innovation and quality.

A Pause for Brexit?

After setting the scene for expansion abroad, what of Brexit, should business wait and see?

Mark feels this would be a mistake. Practically speaking the vast majority of the market is outside Europe and until we actually leave the rules will stay the same (in the main). Even if a business would export mostly to Europe, there will be a 2-3 year implementation period post March 2019 and so nothing will actually change for quite some time. As a business you must weigh up and quantify the risk to your business of not acting now against waiting due to some general worry or concern.

Where to Start

As a country there has never been a better time to start exporting, with a great amount of help available from the Department of Trade and Industry. The advice and guidance is now business led, so it is practical and accessible with a worldwide business directory for leases. There is also an overhauled worldwide finance system and general availability of information, help and support has improved significantly and is now available online. Our model is now a world leader and the USA is trying to copy it.

Mark strongly advocates for trade and export to the Nordic and Baltic States, combined making up the 6th largest export market. Not only does this make sense economically, but culturally we are very similar. With Stansted Airport on our doorstep it would be a missed opportunity not to consider this area, what is there not to like?!

From Marks personal experience with these countries he feels there is a strong interest in our products, especially food and drink, ICT, finance, services, and renewables. Admittedly, as some are members of the European Union, there is disappointment that we are soon to be leaving but that should not dampen ambitions.

Mark does not pretend that the Nordic and Baltic states are the only location, but feels it is good for a start and within easy reach.

Mark closes by reiterating that experts do help business, the economic market is as good as it could be for business to start exporting and although not an ideal time politically, if you waited until everything was perfect you'd be waiting for a very long time indeed.

Next Quarterly Business Lunch

The Chamber is excited to have Sir Alan Haselhurst for our 11th business lunch at Bishop's Stortford Golf Club on Friday 16 March; Sir Alan will speak on "Renewal of Parliament". We look forward to seeing you all there and I'm sure Sir Alan will share many stories from his long career as an MP.

Report by John Stigwood of Nockolds

View from the Chair



Happy New Year! 2018 is going to be a great year!

Looking back first of all - It's plain to see it's been a successful year for the Bishop's Stortford Chamber Of Commerce. With our social media strategy taking off, utilising Facebook, Twitter

and LinkedIn we have had an excellent uptake on information requests and visitors. The pages are now up and running and we would urge you, if you haven't done for already, to Like, Follow and Share our posts to help raise our profile!

So what can you expect from the Chamber going forward in 2018? One of our aims is to continue to maximise exposure and increase the business opportunities for our members. Member numbers are constantly rising and with new businesses comes new opportunities. Many members have already been making the most of our exclusive 'members offers'; offers available only to fellow Bishops Stortford Chamber of Commerce members. Have you promoted yours yet??

Our new and improved website is currently being built and supplied by Simpsons Creative will be going live shortly!.. watch this space.

We will be continuing with fund raising events in support of a local charity in the coming year. Our target for the current charity, St Elizabeth's, will be reached shortly and we will select another local worthy organisation to succeed it. We would welcome your feedback, as we're always looking to improve what we're doing at the Chamber. We're open to discussions with members and so please do get in touch if you have great ideas for us going forward; after all this is your Chamber. It is much appreciated and we wouldn't have such a great Chamber without your effort and dedication. I am proud to continue to be your Chairman and looking forward to working hard for you throughout 2018.

Nick Hyde - Chairman

New Chamber Members

Billy Hancock	H2O Plants
Richard Smith	Bishop's Stortford Mencap - Grove Cottage
Nick Cox	Garma Ltd
James Garrett	HNE Media Services Ltd

Forthcoming Events

6 March	Networking Breakfast
16 March	Quarterly Business Lunch
26 March	AGM
10 April	Networking Breakfast
22 June	Centenary Ball
11 October	Chamber Quiz

BISHOP'S STORTFORD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE networking breakfast

SUPPORTING



Bishop's Stortford Golf Club
Dunmow Rd, CM23 5HP

Tuesday 6th March 2018
8am for 8.30am

Gary Smith
Nockolds

"The Gender Pay Gap"

£15 Members • £20 non members