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1. Free of charge workshops for local businesses and those looking to set-up in business in Epping Forest district – limited places - register now for sessions May to November 2012

Epping Forest District Council is partnering with HM Revenue and Customs to deliver a series of workshops for businesses in the local area. See below for dates and content of each of the workshops. All will be held in Epping and run from 1100-1330.

If you would like to register please email Vicki Willis ASAP on vwillis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk with your name, business name, type of business, contact address and telephone number. Your place will then be confirmed by email. **Please note that places are strictly limited so it advised that you register as soon as possible.**

Newly self employed - the basics - 17 May 2012 / 19 September 2012 / 15 November 2012

Advice on registration, national insurance, record keeping, and payments cycles, completion of tax returns, deadlines and penalties, where to get further help and guidance.

VAT - how it works - 20 June 2012 / 17 October 2012

A basic guide to what VAT is, your records & completing the VAT return, Schemes for Small Businesses and what you can and cannot reclaim.

Business expenses and capital allowances for the self employed - 25 July 2012 / 21 November 2012

Allowable and non allowable expenses, how to treat assets, car van and motor expenses claims, where to get further help and guidance.

VAT international trade - 22 August 2012

Aimed at businesses that trade or are looking to trade with countries outside of the EU.

Covering the jargon, Customs procedures, legal requirements for Customs through to documentation and Export declarations, and possible ways of reducing costs.

1 | business briefing

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2. Did you know that around 75% of British cucumbers are grown in the Epping Forest area? Head to the Great British Cucumber Festival on 12 May in Waltham Abbey

The Great British Cucumber Festival is a celebration of the vast salad industry that is hidden in the Lea valley countryside. Head to Waltham Abbey this Saturday (12 May) to find out more and enjoy a quirky family day out! There will be live music and dance, children's arts & crafts and hands on activities, local clubs and business stands, sports and leisure, health and beauty, the famous cucumber relay race and of course lots of food - not just cucumbers! Hattie Hayridge aka Holly from cult sci fi comedy series "Red Dwarf" is to open the festival at 10.00am.

For more information see
<http://www.cuefest.co.uk/index.html>

3. 'One Eats Local' - calling all local food growers/producers and local restaurants/food outlets

This item follows very nicely from the above on The Great British Cucumber Festival. 'One Eats Local' is a new project that we are starting to work on. One aspect is seeking to identify local growers and producers and match them with cafes, restaurants and other outlets in our local area that are keen to herald and use local produce in their menus. This will support fellow local businesses, further promote our great area and its assets as well as help you manage your carbon footprint.

If you are potentially interested in this work and would like to be kept informed as it develops or you have any ideas please drop a quick email to vwillis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk and also highlight your type of business and your contact details. If this might be of interest to your organisation but you are not the best contact please forward this briefing on.

4. Foundation East - providing loans to new or expanding businesses that have been refused by the bank & much more...

Foundation East is a community finance company that provides loans of £500 to £50,000 to businesses that have been refused a loan from the bank. People may be turned down for bank lending for a wide variety of reasons. A common problem is a poor credit score. Foundation East does not use a credit scoring system for its small business loans. Instead, the applicant must be able to provide a strong business case for the loan, supported by the necessary documentation and financial detail.

To find out more about Foundation East visit www.foundationeast.org or telephone 01284 757 777.

2 | business briefing

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Is your business ready for the London 2012 Games?

Visit www.getaheadofthegames.com for more information and advice.

3 | business briefing

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5. Funding for innovation in the agriculture and the food and drink sectors – deadline approaching

The Technology Strategy Board and Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) are to invest up to £500k to help stimulate and promote innovation in the agriculture and the food and drink sectors.

Grants will be available to support the rapid development of an innovative idea and demonstrate its practical feasibility in the agricultural (including horticulture) and food and drink sectors.

This competition is open to micro, and small and medium-sized companies (SMEs). Projects must be business-led and may be undertaken by the business alone or with one other business. Projects should last between three and six months. Grants will be available for up to 100% of the cost and will not exceed £25k.

The registration deadline is noon 23 May 2012 and the deadline for applications and video submissions is noon 30 May 2012.

For more information visit:

<http://www.innovateuk.org/content/competition/innovation-for-growth-in-agriculture-food-and-drin.ashx>

6. Get One Shops Local working for you - make sure you are signed-up and encourage your customers to review you!

Launched by Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce, Essex FSB (Federation of Small Businesses) and partners in late 2011 One Shops Local is a web-based directory designed to encourage footfall to local shops and businesses and keep trade local.

How One Shops Local can work for you:

- 1: Sign-up - visit www.oneshopslocal.com and list your business for FREE so that local shoppers can find out what's on their doorstep
- 2: Offer incentives to heighten your promotion and keep these updated
- 3: Encourage your regulars to review you – personal recommendations can be very effective!

7. Independent Retailer Month – get involved!

July 2012 is Independent Retailer Month. Plans are already afoot for some activities in our area and the ethos of the event fits very closely with One Shops Local as outlined above.

The official website has loads of information and inspiration on how you can get involved as well as free resources you can download - <http://www.independentretailermonth.co.uk/> If you are planning anything let us know and there might be opportunities for stronger promotion via One Shops Local.

Any feedback?

This is a new format for the business update - we are investigating different ways of doing things. If you have any feedback please let us know, email: vwillis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Sent direct?

If you have not received this briefing directly to your inbox and you would like to in the future, please email: vwillis@eppingforestdc.gov.uk