

# one | business briefing

EPHING FOREST DISTRICT BUSINESS UPDATE WINTER 2013

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## Welcome...

Welcome to the latest edition of One Business Briefing! As Business Champion for the District, I was delighted to receive the bids of our town centre partnerships (TCPs) for the District Council's new economic development initiative fund of £35k. Amongst the bids, there were some new and innovative ideas, as well as others that were tried and tested and had previously been successful. Bids included town centre apps for smartphones, a new signage idea, festivals and advertising to increase footfall into the high streets. In excess of £30,000 has been awarded to Ongar Town Forum, Loughton High Road TCP, Buckhurst Hill TCP and Loughton Broadway TCP, as well as supporting, for the first time, a joint bid for a combination of town centres and also one from the Chamber of Commerce for a district-wide idea.

The new fund has already helped generate renewed interest in the important role the Town Centre Partnerships can have in bringing traders and residents together to support local activity. The next edition of One Business Briefing will be reporting back on how the new projects are getting on.

Anne Grigg

Business Champion

### Sent direct?

If you have not received this briefing directly to your inbox and you would like to in the future, please email: [economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

## 1 | business briefing

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## One Shops Local - have you registered your business yet?

With nearly 300 local businesses registered, One Shops Local is a great way to promote your business to potential customers in the Epping Forest district, and it's **FREE!** Go to [www.oneshopslocal.com](http://www.oneshopslocal.com) to register.

one | shops local  
EPHING FOREST DISTRICT  
[www.oneshopslocal.com](http://www.oneshopslocal.com)

## 1. Economic Development Initiatives Fund continues to offer support

The District Council and its partners in One Epping Forest are committed to enhancing the vibrant and diverse high streets in the District, as shown by initiatives such as the One Shops Local and Visit Epping Forest websites. With that in mind, it set up a fund, totalling £35,000 for the current financial year, for its Town Centre Partnerships and other groups to come up with ideas to support our high streets.

A first bidding round in May 2013, focussed on town centres as key in providing significant local employment and injecting money into the local economy. It resulted in the award of funding to schemes in Buckhurst Hill, Loughton Broadway, Loughton High Road and Ongar. Further details of the successful Ongar bid are covered in the next article

A second bidding round closed in early October. In this round the panel were looking for schemes/projects which not only promote shopping centres as places for social interaction, focal points for the community and providing residents with a good way of life, but which have some or all of the following elements:

- Are innovative and test new ideas
- Help co-ordinate and promote activity across the District
- Have positive District-wide implications

A total of five bids were received including individual bids from Epping, Loughton Broadway and Waltham Abbey Town Centre Partnerships, a joint bid from Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, and Loughton High Road Town Centre Partnerships, and a bid from Epping Forest Chamber of Commerce for funding to support the One Shops Local scheme which now has almost 330 businesses taking part.

The new Epping Forest Town Teams Group, including representatives from all of our town centres, will now meet regularly to monitor the projects and discuss other ways to support our high streets.

## 2. Signs are positive for Ongar following success in Town Centre Funding Bid

As a member of the Ongar Town Forum (OTF), Simon Hanney, General Manager of Epping Ongar Railway, was involved in the OTF's bid for funding as part of the first round of the District Council's Economic Development Initiative Fund. Here he explains some of the thinking that went into the Ongar bid and some of the initiatives they will be implementing following their success.

"The welcome that Ongar gave to visitors, whether arriving in car parks or via train services needed attention, as signage and information about the town was poor. The OTF made a bid to improve this and we are delighted to have received a grant of £6,000 towards work in conjunction with improving the trading for the retailers on the High Street.

"Ongar Town Forum's bid consisted of three approaches; installing signage with finger posts and map boards at key arrival points such as car parks and the train station; producing and distributing leaflets; and providing a virtual trading website for Ongar town centre to assist with online trading in conjunction with an Ongar App and QR code which can be scanned to give further information on the town and its products."

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### 3. Support for your business - just a click away

Epping Forest is already a great place to be, a place where people aspire to live. We want the district to be an even better place to live, work, study and do business in. And we want this to be the case in challenging and difficult times as well as more prosperous times. Central to achieving this will be a thriving, growing, diverse and successful business economy.

As part of our commitment to making the Epping Forest District a great place to start and run a business we have put together an online resource of business support and advice.

Part of a new project to give better information to new business start-ups in the district as well as established companies looking to expand, the pages give advice on everything from sources of grant aid to help with recruiting apprentices. This is the first step to developing an overarching programme of support to local business which includes dedicated hotlines with free problem solving advice to local businesses and a series of business master classes targeting key areas such as online sales and marketing, Investment to Grow etc.

There is a vast wealth of resources freely available to support your business venture, whether you are just starting out and need to know the basics of setting up a business and getting your idea off the ground or whether you are an established business and employer looking for advice on how to take the next step towards further growth or how to exploit opportunities to export your goods and services abroad. To access these resources go to:

**[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/business/business-support-and-advice](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/business/business-support-and-advice)**

Within these links we hope to help you find the support and advice you need. If you have any questions about the content, would like further information, or you identify a gap in the information you would like to see filled, you can contact our Economic Development office on **01992 564593** or by email at **[economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)**

### 4. Local Plan moves forward - new timetable announced

Epping Forest District Council is working towards a new Local Plan, which will guide development for the next 20 years.

The new Local Plan will seek the appropriate balance between protecting green spaces, and providing new homes, businesses, shops and leisure and will include:

- A vision for how the district will develop;
- A plan setting out appropriate locations for development; and
- Policies to manage housing, employment, green space, community facilities, etc.

Preparing a new Local Plan involves at least three formal stages of public consultation. The 'Community Choices' consultation (also known as Issues & Options) took place in 2012 and collected the views of almost 6,000 people and organisations, on topics as wide ranging as Green Belt, potential development sites, community facilities, housing numbers, economic development and transport. Councillors and officers from the Forward Planning team are working together, using the consultation responses, and background technical studies (investigating things like population growth and flood risk), to work towards the next stage of consultation in 2014.

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This will be called the 'Preferred Options' or 'Draft Plan', and will begin during the Summer next year. This consultation will be more focused, narrowing down the range of options and the 'pot' of potential development sites.

The third and final stage of formal consultation, called 'Pre-Submission' will take place in Spring 2015, and then there will be an Examination in Public, by an independent inspector, in early 2016. Final adoption of the new Local Plan is expected to take place in Summer 2016.

For more information, go to [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/planningourfuture](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/planningourfuture), or contact the Forward Planning team via [ldfconsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:ldfconsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) or **01992 564517**.

### 5. Local Business Group offers support for new businesses

Are you a start up business or in your first year of trading?

Chigwell Business Group is offering a free £1,000 boost to a new business.

Do you have a great business idea and just need some extra income to get it off the ground? Have you already started a business and require some support to take it to the next level?

The Chigwell Business Group is offering five businesses, whether brand new start-ups or in their first year of trading, 3 months' FREE membership and the chance to secure a FREE £1,000 cash amount to help boost their business.

The third and final stage of formal consultation, called 'Pre-Submission', will take place in Spring 2015 and then there will be an Examination in Public by an independent inspector in early 2016. Final adoption of the new Local Plan is expected to take place in Summer 2016.

An application form for the £1,000 will be made available to anyone taking up the three-month FREE membership offer. To find out more about CBG, and this fantastic offer, email us now at [enquiries@chigwellbusiness.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@chigwellbusiness.co.uk) or call Carl Belle on **07862 723151** or visit The Chigwell Business Group website at <http://www.chigwellbusiness.co.uk/cbggrant.asp>

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## 6. Epping Ongar Railway on track with the support of Visit Epping Forest

Shortly after Epping Ongar railway, national 'Heritage Railway of the Year 2012', resumed steam train services in May 2012, they suggested to the District Council and One Epping Forest that more could be done to support tourism throughout the district.

The heritage railway and buses link together a number of attractions and destinations, bringing in over 25,000 visitors in their first six months and contributing to the local economy whilst at the same time respecting the forest and countryside through which they travel.



*Image supplied courtesy of  
© Simon Hanney, Epping Ongar Railway*

As founding members of the Tourism Taskforce they helped to establish the Visit Epping Forest website:

**([www.visiteppingforest.com](http://www.visiteppingforest.com))**, which aims to inform both visitors and residents and encourage them to spend more leisure time in the district, enjoying the wide range of attractions and activities. Simon Hanney, General Manager at Epping Ongar

Railway says that "The website has been well received, encouraging more people to visit the area and the railway. I am delighted that the Task Force has achieved so much in a short space, only thanks to the combined efforts of Epping Forest DC and One Epping Forest working in partnership with key local attractions such as Epping Ongar Railway."

Commenting on the recently published Visit Epping Forest leaflet, Simon said "The leaflet has had many positive comments and is stocked at Epping Ongar Railway and many other attractions.... only by working together can the District be stronger and demonstrate we have something for all ages and interests, benefitting the local economy."

Copies of the leaflet can be found at many tourist outlets throughout the district and can be downloaded from the Epping Forest District Council website using the following link.

**<http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/index.php/home/file-store/category/402-tourism?download=2282:visit-epping-forest-leaflet>**

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## Focus on



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## 7. Using young talent to build your business

Employing young people to grow a business brings many benefits, from a willing and flexible workforce to enhanced computer and e-communication skills. More and more career-minded young people are choosing apprenticeships rather than university as the preferred route to gain qualifications and build their work experience. Currently, where employers chose to take on an apprentice they could qualify for a government grant of £1,500 per apprentice up to a maximum of £15,000.

Some business owners have concerns about employing the right people and helping them to build their confidence and skills and that's where Epping Forest College comes in.



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## Focus on



The College has a dedicated business team called 3SIXTY who match and support employers and young people by providing a range of training and apprenticeship opportunities, many of which are government funded.

Support includes recruitment via the National Apprenticeship Service and full screening to ensure no surprises. For both new starts and

existing employees, training and assessment is undertaken by specialists with relevant industry experience and includes ensuring literacy, numeracy and IT skills are up to the expected standards. In some cases the delivery is wholly in the workplace whilst others include College once a week.



Young work-based learners enjoy the same range of support services available to their full-time counterparts. Qualifications currently available include business and administration, customer service, IT, team leading, accounting, health and child care, hairdressing, plumbing and motor vehicle.



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For more information about training and apprenticeships, for existing or new young employees, contact 3SIXTY on **020 8502 8733** or **8708** or visit:

<http://www.efc.ac.uk/courses/apprenticeships>



## 8. Claim cash incentive to make a difference to disabled youth unemployment

Work Choice is a financial incentive scheme which can help you to employ a disabled person who needs specialist support.

It's a voluntary programme to help:

- disabled people who find it hard to get and keep a job
- employed people whose jobs are at risk because of their disability

Work Choice is delivered by various organisations from the public, private and third sectors ('providers'). A provider will work with you to develop a package of support specially designed for your business and the individual with the aim of developing their skills.

You can offer any type of work but it must be 16 hours or more per week to qualify.

For more information visit

**<https://www.gov.uk/jobcentre-plus-help-for-recruiters/work-choice>**

or contact the Local Work Choice Provider for Essex, Alison Wells at Shaw Trust by email at **[Alison.Wells@shaw-trust.org.uk](mailto:Alison.Wells@shaw-trust.org.uk)**

## 9. News In Brief

### Tour De France to pass through Epping Forest in 2014

7th July 2014 will see the arrival of the world's greatest cycling road race on the streets of the Epping Forest District. After the 2014 Tour de France is officially launched in Yorkshire, the third stage of the tour will take the riders from Cambridge to London, passing through Epping Forest on its way. Entering Essex at Saffron Walden the Tour will leave the county through Epping en route to London. You can find out more about the whole of stage 3 at **[www.letour.2014stage3.com](http://www.letour.2014stage3.com)** and the full tour at **<http://www.letour.fr/le-tour/2014/us/>**.

If you have any ideas on how the Partnership can make the most of this exciting opportunity to boost local trade, please send your ideas to

**[economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)**.

### New faces join forces

Mike Warr has joined the Economic Development team as maternity cover for Vicki Willis. Mike has had previous roles in airport and high street retail. He has been joined on secondment by Philip Wilson from Essex County Council and Sinan Sahin from the Department of Work and Pensions. This creates for the first time an integrated team in the district to support business growth and youth employment.





## Stansted meeting targets jobs and opportunities

A delegation from the District has met with the new owners of Stansted airport to push for greater links and opportunities for the districts companies and residents. The Council party which included leader Chris Whitbread and a representative from the local Job Centre Plus, had a hour long meeting with Andrew Harrison Chief Executive of Manchester Airport Group. This focused on the new owners and their ambitious plans for investment in the airport and the generation of thousands of new jobs linked to long term deals for airlines. Cllr Whitbread said "It was a very useful meeting, and I hope it has laid the foundations for making sure the district gets the best out of the opportunities the airport brings"

## Superfast Broadband

The latest plans for the rollout of superfast broadband across the district have been published on [www.superfastessex.org](http://www.superfastessex.org) following the signing of the contract with partners BT. Plans are being developed for a major Superfast Seminar in the district where local businesses can come along and find out where they fit in the roll out and meet other companies that have used broadband to grow their business. Cllr Anne Grigg said "Broadband is a priority for us. We know how important this will be to attract and retain business in our district and we are working hard to make sure that our needs are high on the roll out programme"

## District hosts Essex team

As part of its programme of promoting the District, its needs and opportunities for inward investment, a special tour was held for senior councillors and officers of Essex County Council led by Cllr Kevin Bentley, the portfolio holder for Economic Development and



Growth. Cllr Anne Grigg who, along the with the leader Cllr Whitbread accompanied Cllr Bentley commented "It was good that Kevin gave up so much time from a very busy schedule to come along and meet so many of our local businesses and attractions. Sometimes it's easy to feel that

the district is physically on the margins of the county and as such we don't attract our fair share of investment. It was clear from the discussion that took place throughout the tour that Kevin and his officers are really anxious to work with us locally to deliver better opportunities for all our residents". Cllr Bentley was welcomed at Catch 22, a catering training establishment, Epping Ongar Railway, North Weald Airfield, Epping Forest College, Valley Grown Nurseries and the White Water Centre, before concluding with a meeting with Eleanor Laing MP and other local businesses in Waltham Abbey.



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## Food for thought

The district has established a new food taskforce to look at the future of the protected growing industry locally. Once home to the largest concentration of glasshouses in the world the footprint of the industry has declined over recent years but still manages to account for 75% of the nations cucumbers and 50% of its sweet peppers. The taskforce, which currently includes representatives from the growers, the National Farmers Union and senior councillors from Enfield and Broxbourne, hopes to also welcome Councillors from Waltham Forest and Uttlesford to the project. Cllr Richard Bassett, Chairman of the Taskforce commented "Issues around food security, food miles, access to free fruit and vegetables, and obesity, together with issues of youth unemployment are climbing the agenda. The district has had a massive heritage around growing for London and we are now looking at its future and whether it can contribute to some of these other areas." It is hoped that the task force recommendations will be reported to a special food summit locally in March.

## Your last chance to grab £2000 worth of skills training!

Skills for Economic Growth is an Essex County Council programme that provides training grants of up to £2,000 to help Essex businesses grow. The programme is down to the last twenty such grants and now is your last chance to benefit from this innovative programme.

The programme provides you with a training grant for 70% of the cost of the training course (up to £2,000) that will have the most impact in growing your business.

Over 400 Essex businesses have now been supported by the Skill for Economic Growth programme. For further details see [www.essex.gov.uk/skillsgrowth](http://www.essex.gov.uk/skillsgrowth), or email [skillsgrowth@essex.gov.uk](mailto:skillsgrowth@essex.gov.uk) or telephone **01245 435387**.

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## 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:

[economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:economicdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

or telephone: **01992 564593**



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