




Bridgwater
Chamber of Commerce

Spring 2016
Issue 002

The voice of your business
Working for Bridgwater's future

Updates from the Chairman

Hi, and welcome to the Bridgwater of Commerce Spring Newsletter and Chairman's report. March this year saw the fifth annual "Bridgwater Chamber Sedgemoor Business Awards Ceremony" at Bridgwater's new "Macmilan theatre. The event this year saw 190 attendees and awarded some of the area's most progressive businesses. With the help of many sponsors including Sedgemoor District Council , Bridgwater College, Pardoes, who helped make the event really successful.

As you know we still await the final investment decision from "EDF" re the "Hinkley Point" project but we as a Chamber firmly believe this project will take place and continue to bring more opportunities to the town.

The Chamber has been a firm supporter of getting young people into the working environment in the correct way, and following recent increased association with Bridgwater College, I am amazed at some of the opportunities there are around for young people to train for business.

We are lucky to have the college facility on our door step and I encourage all young people to look at some of these options.

The Chamber is increasing in size and now hold regular monthly networking seminars with a chance to mingle with all types of local businesses and to learn from a different interesting speaker each month.

The relationship with the business development team at Sedgemoor District Council is also crucial for the Chamber and again we are fortunate to have one of the most proactive district councils on our door step. Via this relationship it gives us a chance to gain local project updates and information which may be of use to our membership.

It's our Chamber for our town, be part of it and get involved now!

Yours Sincerely

Steve Leahy

Economic Development Update

2016 has started as a busy year for Bridgwater, below are some of the key developments currently underway:

- Work has started on site for the Eastover Hotel, with permission granted for two additional hotels at Bridgwater Gateway and the Regional Rural Business Centre
- Planning application submitted for a further hotel on the old Bridgwater Hospital site
- Bridgwater Retail Park has consulted on its plans for expansion
- The Council is out to tender for development of the Northgate site
- The new Somerset Energy Innovation Centre is now open with the first tenant in occupation
- Improvements works have started and are now well underway on the Huntworth roundabout at J24
- Planning permission approved for phase one of Bridgwater Gateway site

Business Accelerator Loan Fund

Round two of the Business Accelerator Loan Fund is now open for businesses seeking to build.

Aimed at supporting individual local businesses seeking to grow, the fund will provide loans of between £50,000 and £350,000 to individual companies seeking to build new property within the district.

Loans will be provided at competitive rates to assist firms to more easily finance new construction, and with flexible terms to allow for easier repayment and to encourage further investment.

For more information visit www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/businessaccelerator

Looking for business support and advice? There is a wealth of information available online, the Economic Development team has tried to make this more accessible for businesses.

Our newly revised webpages are now available at www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/business We will continue to update these over the coming months.

Member Focus: Victoria Park Community Centre

Multi Room Conference Centre, with Community Facilities

Victoria Park Drive, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6
7AS

Telephone: 01278 422255

Email: gareth@vpcc.co.uk or info@vpcc.co.uk

Website: www.vpcc.co.uk



Victoria Park Community Centre is a standalone charity set up in Bridgwater 10 years ago, its aims are to provide a local community hub and have a range of activities and events for the local population, they now provide a range of great community facilities for the people of Victoria Ward and beyond.

They have a selection of excellent yet affordable meeting / conference rooms to meet all needs for events for 2 – 200 people, whether you are having a party, christening, hosting a meeting, holding interviews or delivering an event or activity.

They also have their superb –Cafe on the Park – serving hot food and drinks 6 days a week.

They are home to the Lola Fisher Academy of Dance, Slimming World, a variety of activities provided by the onsite Children's Centre, the BAAE Lunch Club, The children's and family charity – Homestart Sedgemoor, Diversity Voice ,Bridgwater Credit Union and Bridgwater's Bushi Karate club.

The centre is proud to have onsite as part of our local hub – the Victoria Park Medical Centre, Lloyd's Pharmacy and Wyvern Nursery

Member Focus: Monahans **Chartered Accountants & Business** **Advisers**

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As one of the leading independent groups of Chartered Accountants in the West of England, Monahans are able to provide advice on all aspects of accountancy such as accounts preparation, audit and tax as well as a range of more specialised services such as: Forensic Accounting, Corporate Finance, Tax Consultancy, Business Recovery & Insolvency and Elite Payroll Service.

Their team of qualified accountants at our offices in Bath, Chippenham, Frome, Glastonbury, Swindon and Trowbridge can provide you with all the support you may need across Wiltshire, Somerset and beyond.

Sedgemoor Business Excellence Awards 2016

The Bridgwater Chamber of Commerce 2016 awards ceremony was held on the 17th March 2016 at the McMillan Theatre, Bridgwater.

The evening kicked off with a Champagne reception before moving to the dining room which looked stunning with styled blue, white and purple palm tree table centre pieces.

The catering was prepared by Bridgwater College and the food was of the highest standard and praised by the guests. It truly was of high restaurant standard.



Suitably wine and dined the main event of the evening was introduced by Steve Leahy, Chairman of the Bridgwater Chamber of Commerce who handed over to Claire Carter from BBC Radio Somerset, our host for the awards presentations.

Our Guest Speaker for the evening was Alan Hurford from Bridgwater Town Council. Locally born and raised Alan has been Town Clerk for Bridgwater for the past 12 years and as an active member of Bridgwater Town Football Club for over 40 years he called on a wealth of local memories in an entertaining talk.

Special thanks must go to our independent judges, Cllr David Hall Somerset County Council, James Hester HSBC, Jason Kilduff Bridgwater College, Helen Lacey Red Berry Recruitment and Jonathan Langdon Milsted Langdon without whose careful deliberation of the submissions the evening would not be possible.



There were 11 categories and a list of winners and sponsors of each award are shown below.

A big thank you to our sponsors for their support.

The Young Entrepreneur of the Year and the Community Engagement Award were presented with a bursary of £1000 each. Levels Lamb will be using the £1000 to help towards building the business through marketing. Levels Lamb are passionate about the traceability and quality of their lamb – Grass fed, lamb meat boxes fresh from the farm – with the knowledge of how it was produced, even the fields it has grazed.

The bursary will be of massive help to the worthy winners of the Community Engagement Award, BARB search and rescue, who are a registered charity that relies solely on donations to run its service. Its annual running costs are over £30,000. No-one at BARB is paid – they are all volunteers – so every penny raised is put towards rescues, training and maintaining their equipment. Membership of the Chamber of Commerce can help your business to excellence. Of the 11 awards, 5 winners, as voted by the independent judges, were members of the Chamber.

You can read more about the event and see more photos at www.sedgemoor-businessawards.co.uk

- International Trader of the Year – Micron Bio-Systems*
- Family Business of the Year – Petruth Paddocks
- Independent Trader of the Year – Timeless Images
- Marketing Campaign of the Year – Pardoes Solicitors LLP*
- Customer Service Excellence Award – Petruth Paddocks
- New Business of the Year – Somerset Larder
- Micro Business of the Year Award – Clavelshay Barn Restaurant*
- Small Business of the Year – The Bower Inn Ltd*
- Large Business of the Year – Bridgwater College*
- Community Engagement Award – BARB
- Young Entrepreneur of the of the Year – Levels Lamb

*Chamber Members

Join the Bridgwater Chamber – Plenty of benefits and great value

Joining the Bridgwater Chamber of Commerce brings with it a number of benefits that allows your business to grow. The membership more than doubled in 2015 and this allows us to give even better value to the local business community.

The Chamber provides members with:

- networking forums where you can meet with like-minded businesses in the area
- having the ear of local and national politicians to lobby on your behalf
- promoting your business via our website and newsletters
- providing free business advice
- help towards getting available Government business grants
- seminars and workshops

We also sit on a number of local forums including the Town Team and Development Forum that constantly look into improving Bridgwater.

Membership fees are retained at a rate to encourage all businesses to join. For 2016 we are currently offering membership at only £100 for the year or, if you prefer to pay monthly by standing order our normal rate is £9 per month. However we are currently offering a special rate of £8 per month which is fixed for 3 years for those who wish to join at this time.

If you would like to join download an application form at www.bridgwaterchamber.org.uk/contact.

If you require more information, please don't hesitate in contacting us or view our website www.bridgwaterchamber.org.uk.