

# THE Kent Voice



May/June 2014

Your regional magazine from the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

## Small business awards are cherry on the cake

**C**ONGRATULATIONS to **Cake Craft World, Sevenoaks**, who have been recognised as **Regional finalists in the FSB WorldPay UK Business Awards against tough competition.**

Almost 1,000 small businesses entered this year's awards which see companies from across Britain competing to be named best small business.

This year's increase in entrants is a sign that small businesses, the backbone of our economy, are enjoying a feel-good factor about the emerging recovery and are keen to celebrate it.

Lin Chow, the company's Managing Director, said: "To be recognised as finalists means the world to us. After 30 years of putting our heart and souls into creating fabulous ideas for others it is fantastic to receive recognition for all our hard work.

"We really enjoyed the experience of entering as it made us realise how far we have come from a tiny cake shop to an international online cake craft supply company."

Cake Craft began as a small retail shop now they sell to customers across the



▶ Carol Baines, Finance Director, Lin Chow, Managing Director and Paul Hallam, Technical Director of Cake Craft World

UK and Europe. Lin added: "We never stand still. We finish one project then get straight onto the next, continually creating to inspire our customers.

"Coupled with the research that is carried out to source new suppliers from local to Liverpool to Mauritius means that every day is different.

"With a diverse team of people from creative to warehouse staff there is never a dull moment. Lin's advice

to others starting out and growing a business would be to focus on the customer.

She added: "Always remember the customer, managing their expectations and providing an impeccable service. Of course, bring your passion into your business."

Karren Brady from TV's *The Apprentice* will name the best small business in the UK at the awards ceremony in May.

### The budget from The Bull

MEMBERS watched the Budget this March from the cosy setting of The Bull Hotel, Wrotham.

Landlady and member Lygia Fontanella was pleased that 1p would be knocked off the price of a pint, saying, "It's good that the Government is not penalising people for having a bit of fun. They could be doing more to support us but for now at least the

price of beer is not going up."

Vic Peake, Regional Secretary and Director of VJP Accountants said: "It's good to discuss how number 10's decisions affect us. There's some good news, in that the annual investment allowance is doubled to £500,000. Other highlights are the £140million for flood defences and postponed fuel duty."



▶ Lygia Fontanella

#### CONTENTS

Regional News	2
Consumer Law	3
Farming, Fishing & Food	3
Telecoms	4
Company Law	4
Employment	5-6
Taxation	2
Environment	3
Financial & Legal	7-10
VAT	4
Health & Safety	4
Regional Contacts	12

5 VOICE EDITORIAL: This publication is produced by and published for the Federation of Small Businesses, Sir Frank Whittle Way, Blackpool Business Park Blackpool, Lancs, FY4 2FE.  
6 © Copyright 1996 Federation of Small Businesses all rights reserved. Editor: James Connor. Tel: 01253 361179 Email: james.connor@fsb.org.uk.  
7 Whilst every care has been taken in the compilation of this publication errors or omissions are not the responsibility of the Federation of Small Businesses and opinions expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily the policy of the Federation.

#### CONTACT

WELCOME to this latest edition of YOUR Regional Voice bringing you up-to-date news from the FSB.

Business Update this issue includes stories on employment and the environment plus tax.

Ring Alison Parmar on 07917 628 904 or email alison.parmar@fsb.org.uk



## View from the Chair

**ALL the indications seem to be pointing towards a turnaround in the economy and improvements for small business.**

**I hope that is the case for FSB Kent members. However, as we have seen with the news about Manston Airport, spanners suddenly appear.**

**So, if you feel there are issues holding you back, we would like to hear from you.**

**That takes me on to what we are trying to achieve in your Region.**

**We want to revamp the way we handle Branch and Regional issues and the way we interact with you.**

**I've been working with four other Regions in the South East (representing this inter-regional group on the national policy committee) and, between us, we represent a significant proportion of the national membership together with the political foundation that forms the base for our lobbying.**

**At a time when national policy is being reviewed, it seems right to carry out an audit of our policy.**

**We need to plan budgets and support to work the system from Branch level through to national level.**

**As part of this change, we need to establish small focus groups that can act as sounding boards and generate content for response to government (in particular KCC) and where appropriate, for media.**

**We're therefore looking for sector representation around the following; life sciences, creative and media, low carbon, land-based, construction, tourism and leisure.**

**Please consider joining this. To find out more contact Sue Waldock 01622 688134 or Alison Parmar on 07917 628 904.**

*Roger House*  
Regional Chairman

## Political heavyweights at FSB events

MEMBERS from all over the UK were in Manchester for the FSB's annual conference. Guest speakers included the Chancellor, Ed Miliband, Leader of the Labour Party, as well as Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, young

entrepreneur Jacob Hill and BBC host, Naga Munchetty.

The FSB's Head of Public Affairs, Craig Beaumont, said. "At the FSB, we fiercely protect our cross-party, non-partisan independence.

"This isn't always easy, but we do

it at every level. We've welcomed David Cameron, George Osborne and Chuka Umunna to our first Policy Conference, Vince Cable spoke at our Chairman's Dinner and we can now add The Chancellor and Ed Miliband

speaking at National Conference. To have the Prime Minister, Chancellor, Business Secretary, Shadow Business Secretary and Leader of the Opposition is something.

"This is a stellar line-up others can only dream about."



► Medway Council's Meet the Buyer event

## Council switch is boost to SMEs

**DID you know that for every £1 spent in the local community, 63p stays in the local economy?**

So, when one local authority has an annual spend of £230m there is an awful lot of money that is available to local companies.

In fact, Medway Council drive 10 per cent of the local economy. It is a good example of why the FSB is so passionate about encouraging good business practice between local authorities and businesses.

We were pleased to attend a Meet the Buyer event with Medway Council and other businesses at the St Georges Centre, Chatham.

Councillor Alan Jarrett, Deputy Leader of the Council and Finance Portfolio Holder, said: "We are pretty proud of our

progress. Medway does have a big budget to spend on residents' services, but we are doing what we can to make sure that the money stays in and supports our community.

"We're doing what we can to make it easier to do business with us and are setting new standards that help not only local businesses but the job market, too.

"For instance, we've now agreed that any company doing business with us over £1million must take on an apprentice."

Neville Gaunt, North Kent FSB Chairman and Director of Mindfit, said: "It is great to see Medway Council changing the environment for SME procurement and I hope local businesses grab the opportunity it gives them. I was particularly impressed that Medway has set itself a target of 50 per cent of contracts being

with local SMEs. This is double the Prime Minister's target for Government Departments."

As evidence of their success, the Category Management team at Medway Council responsible for procurement recently won the Highly Commended Award in the Excellence in Public Procurement Awards.

Councillor Jarrett said: "We won the award for our £12m Homecare contract where we were able to save £1.9m while still maintaining a high quality service.

"It has been tough getting new systems in place but we are sure we're doing the right thing, making it easy to do business with us."

To find out about contracts with Medway Council visit the Kent business portal [www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk](http://www.kentbusinessportal.org.uk)

# Are you in a not spot?

**THE South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP) is collaborating with the mobile app provider, Opensignal, to build a picture of mobile 'not spots' and to estimate the impact this has on local businesses.**

Zoe Gordon, the business and communications manager for SE LEP revealed details of a recent survey.

She said: "It looked at the impact that poor mobile phone reception has on businesses in the area.

"The survey estimated that mobile 'not spots' cost the average small business £10,000 a year in lost contracts and increased running costs, with 84 per cent saying their business had suffered and continues to suffer from disruption because of poor mobile reception.

"We wanted to get stronger evidence that poor signal is bad for



business. By working with Opensignal's mobile phone app we can understand the extent of 'not spots' and downtime when businesses can't access mobile networks. OpenSignal helps you get the best connection, find nearby wi-fi networks and keep track of your usage. It also helps

you to search for a signal." Because of the success of the survey, Zoe is keen to delve deeper.

She said: "We're going to run another survey with the FSB. The data will be used with mobile phone companies, the Department for Communities Media and Sport and the Department for Transport. We're committed to improving reception in Kent and on key transport routes, especially on trains."

Find out more at [www.southeastlep.com](http://www.southeastlep.com) and download the Opensignal app through the Apple App store, Google Play for Android or visit <http://opensignal.com>

Please contact Zoe Gordon on 07880 179 998 or [zoe.gordon@essex.gov.uk](mailto:zoe.gordon@essex.gov.uk) for more information.

## Seller beware

**WHEN Denise Barnes chose to sell her eight-branch estate agency, which had 50 staff, she was sure that having a business agent, rather like an estate agent, was enough to make the sale run smoothly.**

"How wrong I was," Denise told FSB members at a West Kent Branch event. "I was taken hook, line and sinker. It was a terrible time in my career because I had built my estate agency up from scratch, it was my baby.

"The sale, which should have gone well, turned into a nightmare. My staff and valued clients should have been looked after.

"Instead, all that I had worked so hard for was disintegrating in front of me. I wrote *Seller Beware* to warn others who may sell their business what to look for."

*Seller Beware: How Not To Sell Your Business* by Denise Barnes.

**EXCLUSIVE OFFER for FSB members: input BUSINESS for a discounted price of £8.99 (usually £12.99) [www.bitebackpublishing.com/promotions](http://www.bitebackpublishing.com/promotions)**



## Zero per cent loans

DID you know Kent County Council has £60m in zero per cent interest loans and it is looking for companies like yours to lend it to?

Councillor Mark Dance said: "Many of the companies we loan to are micro or small businesses with great ambitions and a desire to grow and succeed.

"As the local authority it is our job to make sure that we are lending the money responsibly to companies that are sustainable, and will create jobs. I like to say that we are a positive funder. We're here to encourage small businesses to grow and succeed."

Claire Burroughs of [www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)

Claimaday.com is one of the FSB members benefitting from the Tiger fund. In March the company secured more than £200,000 to help grow their business.

### Money talks

You may be eligible for a 0 per cent interest loan, from £5,000 upwards.

Tiger fund: £20m for North Kent

Escalate: £5.5m for West Kent

Expansion East Kent: £35m for East Kent companies

Marsh Million: £1m for small businesses in the Romney Marsh area

The contact is [www.kent.gov.uk/business](http://www.kent.gov.uk/business)

## Advertise your business in Regional Voice magazine

**FSB Members receive a 25% discount!**

**THE Federation of Small Businesses produces local news magazines for all 33 of our Regions.**

These publications provide a local link to thousands of our grassroots members and activists.

Now, for the first time, we are able to offer advertising space in these highly localised, specific magazines.

This is an opportunity to promote your product or service to fellow members in your Region.

Advertising space is offered on a first come first served basis, and only two pages of advertising are available per Regional magazine.

**Full page £750 + vat  
Half page £400 + vat  
Quarter page £250 + vat  
Eighth page £150 + vat**

**All members of the Federation of Small Businesses will qualify for a 25 per cent discount on the full advertised price.**

This is a fantastic opportunity to hit a target audience at very competitive

prices your business without breaking the bank.



**For more information, or to order, please call Mainline Media on 01536 747 333 or email [adsales@mainlinemedia.co.uk](mailto:adsales@mainlinemedia.co.uk)**

## Key diary dates for this year

FOR all FSB Kent events and networking sessions please check out [www.fsb.org/kent](http://www.fsb.org/kent).

You can also look on the Google calendar.

Many branches hold regular meetings often with guest speakers.

**Key dates:**

**22 May: EU Elections.**

**June: Marsh Million Business Week, Romney Marsh area**

**July: Independent Retailer month**

## Apprentice spotlight

**THE FSB teamed-up with the National Apprenticeship Service to talk about apprenticeships in Kent. Small businesses enjoyed a curry from The Chai Stop and commented on the process of recruiting an apprentice, and heard from an apprentice face to face.**

**For more information about grants and funding available visit [www.kent.gov.uk/apprentices](http://www.kent.gov.uk/apprentices) or call 0800 18 224.**

# FSB: "The fourth emergency service"

**HAVE you heard the expression: "If you want something done, ask a busy person?" This could be true of many of the volunteers in the FSB.**

As members they run their own business, or in some cases, a range of businesses. Many have families to look after, a gym to visit or a dog to walk.

Add to that, volunteering in their spare time and you may wonder how they do it. We asked a couple of our Regional Committee about their experience.

Daniel Sanguiseppe (pictured below left) owns and manages Castelwood Hotels, three hotels in Kent and East Sussex. Daniel said: "Originally we joined the FSB via my father, but as

I got more involved in



overseeing sales and marketing, I ended up taking on roles in the local community.

"One of these was with the FSB. I joined the South Kent Branch in 2006 to represent tourism and to have a seat at various tables which the FSB sat on. It means I can find out first-hand what is going on and have a chance to influence decisions.

"I enjoy putting my ideas into events and seeing how it works behind the scenes. I'm now Secretary of the South Kent Branch. I'd recommend volunteering to others who can give up a bit of time now and again and who may be able to help organise networking events."

Sarah Poole (pictured right) has been involved with the Regional volunteers since 2012. It's clear that she is passionate about supporting small businesses. She said: "I volunteer as I believe that all small, young businesses should be able to talk to people who face the same questions as themselves.

"I like to help put people together either through collaboration or just being able to recommend people to each other. Working in the events industry, it is great

to get to know who else is out there as it is always important to work with people who you know, like and trust.

"I'm currently secretary for the North Kent Branch. I organise speakers and conferences, regularly meet new businesses and encourage them to join the FSB, the fourth emergency service as I call it."

To volunteer in your area, contact a branch representative.



Development Manager - Alison Parmar  
C/O The Library  
Castle Road  
Allington  
ME16 0PR  
Tel 01622 688134  
[Office.kent@fsb.org.uk](mailto:Office.kent@fsb.org.uk)

**Regional Chairman**  
Roger House 01322 862724  
[roger.house@cmbcic.co.uk](mailto:roger.house@cmbcic.co.uk)

**Regional Vice Chairman**  
Debashish Sen 07791 956640  
[deb@mtfm.co.uk](mailto:deb@mtfm.co.uk)

**Regional Vice Chairman**  
Ivan White 01622 754508  
[ivan@ronaldwhite.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:ivan@ronaldwhite.fsnet.co.uk)

**Regional Secretary**  
Vic Peake 01303 814140  
[info@vjp.co.uk](mailto:info@vjp.co.uk)

**Regional Treasurer**  
Barbara Richards 01622 759 797  
[barbara@barbararichards.co.uk](mailto:barbara@barbararichards.co.uk)

**National Councillor**  
Roger House 01322 862724  
[roger.house@cmbcic.co.uk](mailto:roger.house@cmbcic.co.uk)

**Regional Office for all general enquiries:**  
10.00am - 3.30pm  
Mondays to Fridays

**Sue Waldock**  
Regional Office Administrator,  
FSB Kent & Medway Regional Office,  
The Library, Castle Road, Allington,  
Maidstone, ME16 0PR  
Tel: 01622 688 134  
Fax: 01622 761 126  
[sue.waldock@fsb.org.uk](mailto:sue.waldock@fsb.org.uk)

**East Kent Branch**  
Malcolm Bennett 07802 709 904  
[Malcolm\\_bennett@talktalk.net](mailto:Malcolm_bennett@talktalk.net)

**Mid-Kent Branch**  
Ivan White 01622 754 508  
[ivan@ronaldwhite.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:ivan@ronaldwhite.fsnet.co.uk)

**North Kent Branch**  
Neville Gaunt 07713 640 853  
[neville@mindfitltd.com](mailto:neville@mindfitltd.com)

**South Kent Branch**  
Bill Fox 01233 668 809  
[bill@kentba.co.uk](mailto:bill@kentba.co.uk)

**West Kent Branch**  
Graham Taylor 01732 363 165  
[info@gtengravers.co.uk](mailto:info@gtengravers.co.uk)  
[twitter.com/FSBKent](https://twitter.com/FSBKent)  
[www.facebook.com/FederationOfSmallBusinesses](https://www.facebook.com/FederationOfSmallBusinesses)

[www.fsb.org.uk/kentandmedway](http://www.fsb.org.uk/kentandmedway) for current news and events