



Brentwood Chamber of Commerce Newsletter

February 2010

www.brentwoodchambers.co.uk

Dear Member

The winter weather has been very severe this year, matching the mood of the economy – though we are told that the UK has at last emerged (albeit by a whisker) out of recession. Dare we risk the thought that the business environment is starting to improve?

Let us hope so, though every time we hear positive macro-economic news, other gloomier portents emerge – currently from a number of Southern EU countries. Significant because of the potential knock-on effects for us all.

But some reports from Brentwood Chamber members suggest that for them, at least, business is showing definite signs of improving. It is a view supported by cautious optimistic noises emerging from The British Chambers of Commerce. Of course the true state of the economy and how businesses are coping with the residual effects of the downturn will be argued about at great length in the run-up to the election.

For our own part, we are on the point of re-launching a Chamber initiative which was first trialled a couple of

years ago but has been refreshed. We have mentioned it a number of times in recent editions but we make no apology for giving it plenty of publicity – for the new

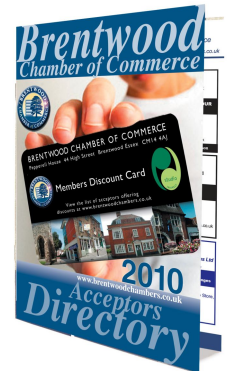


Member Discount Card is being sent out to all members with this Newsletter.

Sponsored this year by local firm Studio Indirect, we would encourage as much use of the Discount Card as possible. The cash discounts and other deals on offer represent great value for purchasers.

It can also stimulate trade for **Acceptors** (those who have signed up to accept the cards).

The 2010 **Acceptors Directory** is also included with this mailing. Have a look at the organisations which are offering the special deals; take advantage of them and thereby help stimulate local trade by supporting local businesses – it makes good economic sense to do so.



By now you should have received your invoice for your **2010 annual subscription**. The rates remain unchanged, as they have done for the past 5 years. As we have remarked before, they are the lowest Chamber subscription rates anywhere in the vicinity and, we believe, one of the lowest in the country.

We hope you consider the annual subscription fair value for money. As we always say, if there is anything more within our powers that you think we could be doing for you, let us know. We are represented on most of the Borough's influential groups or committees and, always take opportunities to promote the best interests of our members.

If there is something you believe needs to be brought to the attention of the powers-that-be that is where we believe we can be useful.

Best wishes for success in taking advantage of what we all hope is an improving trading environment.

Mike Hawkins
Executive Secretary

This month's Newsletter has been sponsored by

Mass & Co Chartered Surveyors
25 High Street, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4RG
Tel: 01277 201300 | Fax: 01277 232033 | <http://www.massandco.com>



MESSAGE FROM OUR SPONSORS



All Chamber members are involved with property in some way – the premises your business occupies, your home, commercial or residential investments either independently or through a pension scheme – and, depending on whether you are an owner or occupier, the lesson from recession is to maximise your assets or minimise your costs. In many instances, good local professional advice can help you to do this.

Mass & Co are an independent firm of Chartered Surveyors and Commercial Property Agents, formed in 1990. Each of our key advisors has around 30 years experience in the property market, including Landlord & Tenant advice for both owners and occupiers, Arbitrations, Commercial Rating advice, Commercial property acquisition/disposal, Surveys on all types of residential buildings and Party Wall work.

We act for a number of retailers, property owners and individuals as well as clients of local Solicitors, Architects and Accountants. For Landlords and Tenants alike we undertake rent review and lease renewal negotiations, as well as advising on re-structuring leases, all to obtain the best results in the current difficult market. In addition to the more visible disposal of leasehold or freehold commercial property, we identify and acquire premises for occupiers, mainly in Essex but also elsewhere throughout the Country.

With a Rating revaluation in 2010, based on 2008 values, our involvement in the local market makes us well placed to advise on commercial Rating matters (our charges normally being based solely on results). Over the years we have achieved worthwhile savings for a number of local office, shop and industrial occupiers as well as others further afield. There is still a short period of time during which appeals can be made against the 2005 rating assessment, and from April 2010 against the new rating list.

Mass & Co also prepare valuations for Court, taxation and asset review purposes. We carry out surveys for residential purchasers, on houses ranging from the 16th Century to the very recent, as well as producing Schedules of Condition for incoming lessees of commercial buildings to limit their liabilities when the lease comes to an end.

Where building work is being undertaken to residential or commercial premises alongside another property, we can advise you under the Party Wall etc Act as either Building Owner or Adjoining Owner, in order to help protect your interests.

We will happily have an initial discussion with Chamber members **free of charge**, without obligation, and offer a discount on our normal fees.

Please contact:

John Mass FRICS – Arbitrations, Landlord & Tenant advice, Commercial Valuations

Christopher Stewart BSc FRICS – Rating and Valuations, Surveys, Party Wall advice

Keith Furze – Commercial Agency, disposals and acquisitions

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MEMBER NEWS

The following companies have joined us recently and we welcome them to membership of Chamber:

Axiom Design Associates Ltd, The Old Hopstore, Codham Hall Farm, Brentwood – Commercial Interior Design, Planning & Furniture

Café a'Moore, 3 Moores Place, Brentwood - Cafe

Nucleus Technologies Ltd, 23 Rowhedge, Brentwood – IT Support & Website Services

Bonds Locksmith & Security, 15 Childerditch Lane, West Horndon – Security Services & Equipment

Camlar Limited, 5 Osborne Road, Brentwood - Lighting

Inside Brentwood, PO Box 9894, Brentwood – Publicity & Media

The Nags Head, 44 Brook Street, Brentwood – Pub / Restaurant

Drinks of France and the Holiday Inn - Chamber Members Working Together **An Invitation to Local Businesses**

The Holiday Inn and Drinks of France are joining forces on the evening of Friday 26 February to present a relaxed and informal evening of wine tasting for businesses in the Brentwood area. The event, which will take place between 5pm and 8pm, is totally free, so what an agreeable way to start the weekend!

Drinks of France is your local wine merchant specialising in wines, aperitifs and spirits from small independent vineyards who do not sell to chains and supermarkets. Their products represent great taste and great value for money.

During the evening you will have the opportunity to sample a wide range of French wines and the Holiday Inn will provide tasty cheese and pâté platters. The hotel staff will be there at your disposal to present their corporate facilities and answer any questions you may have regarding possible future requirements.

Drinks of France will also be present over the weekend presenting their wines to hotel guests and to their customers, new and old alike. Sylvie, from Château de Belleverne, who provides Drinks of France with their Beaujolais wines, including several Crus, will be there in person to introduce her wines.

In order to assist with catering on the Friday evening, rsvp to Neil Hornsby (Drinks of France) on 01277 221469, email neil@drinksoffrance.co.uk or Ann-Maria Stacey (Holiday Inn) on 01277 247201, e-mail annmaria.stacey@ihg.com.

For more information about this event please contact one of the above.



Do you know that you can get a Free Company Credit Check? This is available from Essex Libraries?

Essex Libraries Business Information Service has always provided free reports on Limited Companies, but can now provide you with *free credit checks*.

In the current economic climate it is becoming even more important to check out the organisations with whom you are doing business. Are they reliable and credit-worthy? Help save yourself time and money by getting CreditSafe report emailed direct to your desktop. You can find out director information, balance sheets, reports including credit ratings and limits, County Court Judgements and mortgages. Just contact

Check out their website www.essex-business.info. If you are interested in receiving a free credit report send an email to business.information@essex.gov.uk or call the Business Information Service on 01245 492535.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Executive Committee Meeting Dates for 2010 are:

18th February, 18th March - Joint with Council, 15th April, 20th May – AGM,
17th June, 15th July, 16th September – Joint with Council, 21st October, 18th November

If you have any issues you want to be raised at an Executive Committee meeting, please contact the Chamber office a week or so before the relevant meeting and we will put it on the agenda

Email: info@brentwoodchambers.co.uk

NETWORKING EVENTS

The next **Breakfast Club** is **Wednesday 17th February 2010**, 7.30 to 8.45am
Future planned dates: 17th March, 14th April, 19th May and 16th June

The next **Networking lunch** is **17th March 2010**, 12 noon to 2.00pm, Buffet style & Networking
at Ashwells Sports & Country Club, Ashwells Road, Brentwood, CM15 9SE

To book your place and pay online:

<http://www.brantdesignstudio.co.uk/brentwoodchamber.html> or telephone Elaine Othen 01376 564955

Have you considered sponsoring one of our Newsletters?

You will see that Mass & Co are this month's sponsors and feature prominently on the front and second pages.

The cost is £100, being the cost to us of having it photocopied in colour i.e. no profit element. We have editions available from the Autumn 2010. Just give us a call or email us and we can book your sponsorship.

Sign Off

I know that a number of our members find the Networking Events programme (or Business Club as we call it) a very useful medium for promoting and increasing business.

We are experimenting with a new format for our lunches, introducing a more informal buffet-style lunch, enabling people to circulate more freely and network more effectively. We have also changed the venue for the next event on 17th March to Ashwells Sports & Country Club. If you have not been before do give it a try and you may find that the format suits **your** business requirements. If breakfast is a better time for you, the booming Breakfast Club could be ideal. In both cases, if you want to find out more about what goes on and how to book, contact our Networking Events Organiser Elaine Othen of Brant Design on 01376 564955 or visit <http://www.brantdesignstudio.co.uk/brentwoodchamber.html>

Mike Hawkins
Executive Secretary

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