

# Chamber Chatter

The Voice of local business in Taunton Deane

April 2011

TAUNTON  
CHAMBER  
*of*  
COMMERCE



## NOTICE of Annual General Meeting

You are cordially invited to the  
**Annual General Meeting**  
of the  
Taunton Chamber of Commerce  
  
at Mr Miles Tea Rooms, High  
Street, Taunton

on **WEDNESDAY 27th April 2011**

5.30 for 6.00pm

**Booking Form attached**



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS for 2011 -

### MAY - THURS 26th May

Business Breakfast in association with Somerset College  
**Guest Speakers: Sue Parker & Jack Fleming** -  
"Grow your business with an Apprentice"  
**Further info and booking form to follow**

### JUNE - Weds 29th June

Networking Lunch at Holiday Inn with Jobcentre Plus  
**Guest Speaker: Lynne Hughes, Jobcentre Plus**  
"JCP Services to Employers & "Get Working Britain"  
Campaign  
**Further info and booking form to follow**

### JULY - FRI 22nd July

Networking Lunch at Taunton & Pickeridge Golf Club in  
association with Concept Staffing - in support of Taunton  
Women's Refuge  
**Further info and booking form to follow**

### AUGUST - Summer Break

### SEPT - THURS 15th September

Joint Business to Business Dinner with Somerset  
Chamber of Commerce at Queens Conference  
Centre  
**Further information to follow**

**NB: These events may be subject to change or  
cancellation at short notice so please keep an eye on  
the Chamber of Commerce website for regular  
updates.**

## IN SUPPORT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

Taunton Chamber of Commerce is proud to be supporting the budding businessmen and women of tomorrow through its Bursary Awards which for the first time, have been presented to students from each of the four secondary schools in Taunton.

At a recent awards evening, Chamber President Chris Mitchell was delighted to present the awards, in recognition of the achievements in Business Studies by each of the students, to William Massingham (Bishop Fox's); Sam Leitch (Castle School); Nathan Derrick (Heathfield) and Matt Cline (Taunton Academy).

In his presentation to the audience of parents, teachers and representatives of local businesses, Chris commented "In our four Taunton Comprehensive schools we have students all doing Business Studies very successfully which, we hope, they might carry onward to Further Education.

We, as a Chamber regard it as essential that the Taunton business community, through these awards encourage and support the next generation of business people.

Together with these awards, the Chamber also presents bursary awards to business students at both Somerset College and Richard Huish as well as supporting and assisting local students through Young Enterprise and Young Chamber as well as a number of other business links and partnerships that our members have with local schools.

Our young people are the future of business here in Taunton and, across Somerset and, if growth and wealth generation for society generally can only come from the private sector then, it is essential we continue this work and, where possible develop these links further."



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## LOVE YOUR WORK? INSPIRE THE YOUNG!

Young Enterprise needs volunteers from local business to go into local schools to inspire young people (aged 4 – 19) and tell it like it is! It involves practical, fun, hands-on activities.



No previous experience required – just your own experience of work – and your enthusiasm!

You will not be on your own! – you'll work alongside teachers on specifically designed Young Enterprise programmes.

Become part of an exciting and enjoyable learning experience for the local community as a Young Enterprise volunteer.

Contact Wendy Horton on 01398 332472 or [wendy.horton@yesw.org.uk](mailto:wendy.horton@yesw.org.uk)

## “TOASTMASTERS TAUNTON” - LAUNCHING 16 MAY 2011

- Want to improve your public speaking skills and confidence?
- Want to become a better leader?
- Want to become a better listener?



Toastmasters could be the place for you.

Mention the word “Toastmaster” and most people will think of men in red jackets presiding over events such as weddings. Toastmasters is however, an international organisation with small local groups which helps individuals improve their speaking, leadership, presentation and communication skills.

Toastmaster groups are run on a voluntary basis with meetings held normally 2 or 3 times a month and events lasting 60-90 minutes. Ideally the groups should comprise 20 – 40 attendees so members have the chance to participate in a friendly and informal atmosphere.

Members are asked to volunteer to perform various different roles at each meeting, such as evaluator, timekeeper and grammarian. The normal format for an evening would then involve 2 or 3 members delivering a short talk with evaluators providing positive feedback on their performance. In addition other short fun activities are performed such as table topics, where a member has to speak for one minute on a topic handed to them with no prior notice.

Members come from all walks of life, from full time parents to business professionals. All attend for different personal reasons, such as wanting to improve confidence or conquer nerves when speaking in public. All are welcome at the groups.

The concept of Toastmasters is to “learn by doing” with all members having the opportunity to participate at their own pace, as and when they feel comfortable. Members can work through a 10 step “competent communication manual” which gradually builds up from short speeches using notes to a 10 minute speech with no notes. In addition members can also work through the “competent leadership manual” in order to develop their leadership skills.

The nearest Toastmasters group to Taunton is currently the South West Speakers Group based in Kingsteignton. We are planning to launch a Taunton group with the inaugural meeting planned for the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> May (venue to be confirmed). In order to ensure this is a success we need support from the local community and would be pleased to welcome guests that want to come along and find out more information at this event. In addition, further information about Toastmasters can be obtained from the website [www.toastmasters.org.uk](http://www.toastmasters.org.uk)

There will be a nominal charge for non-members attending meetings (less than £5) to cover running costs such as room hire. Once members join the Toastmasters organisation, however and proceed through the training manuals, there would be no additional meeting fees.

Any individuals interested in joining the group should email Jane Jordan (**Lentells Chartered Accountants**) or Roy Duffy for confirmation of the meeting arrangements:

[Jane.jordan@btinternet.com](mailto:Jane.jordan@btinternet.com)

[Roy@icduk.biz](mailto:Roy@icduk.biz)

With your support we will be able to make this a success!



## NEW SKILLS BOOST FOR REGION



Somerset College

The UK's green and renewable industries' prospects have been boosted with the recent announcement by Skills Minister John Hayes of a new National Skills Academy (NSA) for Environmental Technologies.

And in the South West, The Genesis Centre at **Somerset College**, Taunton, has now been formally approved as one of only three founder hub members.

The National Skills Academy will receive up to £2.5m of funding over three years, matched by employers. It will work with industry and training providers to ensure employers in new areas of business such as installation, maintenance and repair of photovoltaic panels, ground source heat pumps and biomass products, have a highly skilled workforce to help them grow - and to support the Government's ambitions for renewable energy and low carbon growth.

The Genesis Centre at Somerset College will be part of the National Skills Academy's plans to deliver around 2000 publicly-funded and over 200,000 privately funded training courses. It is part of the recently established national network of 14 specialist training provider 'hubs', based in Further Education Colleges, with over 80 accredited training providers throughout England. Training courses are now starting at The Genesis Centre and more will be announced in the near future.

As a hub member, The Genesis Centre at Somerset College will lead the cluster of public and private training providers, including City of Bristol College, City College Plymouth, Weymouth College, Gloucester College, Nu-Heat Limited, P & R Hurt Limited and PETROC. They will deliver high quality training that meets national occupational standards for existing environmental technologies and new technologies as they emerge.

Rachel Davies, Principal of Somerset College, said: "Up-skilling in green technologies is vital to future jobs and employment in the sector. Leading the cluster of training providers in our region for the Skills Academy will ensure we play a key role in developing the skills capabilities of the sector and help promote the green agenda to consumers."

Keith Marshall OBE, Chief Executive of SummitSkills, said: "At present, training provision in this area is patchy across the country, and is not recognised as meeting the industry-recognised competence level. With the network structure of the Skills Academy, employers can now be confident they can gain accredited renewables skills in a location closer to their business."

## INTRODUCING NEW MEMBER: A1 Ace Taxis

A1 ACE Taxis services was created as a result of the merger of A1 Deane Taxis and Ace Taxis in 2009. (A1 and Deane Taxis had been acquired in the previous year by Mike Davis, to create A1 Deane Taxis).

The aim of the merger was to improve customer service and reduce costs. Like all Taxi firms the drivers are self employed and we operate many ways in which they can work with us. With over 80 drivers now working with us we can accommodate various shift patterns that drivers want to work, whilst providing the availability customers are seeking. We try and work as a "cooperative".

Customers are noticing the difference and this year we have grown by 10%, on a much lower cost base, which has allowed us to absorb the increase in VAT and fuel prices, whilst remaining below the Council set tariff structure. We are also the only VAT registered Taxi firm in Taunton, which for VAT registered businesses helps reduce costs. To claim VAT back on Taxi fares you have to have a business account. For more details on what we are doing, or to set up an Account contact Mike Davis on 07846 - 956036, or [mike.davis@a1acetaxis.co.uk](mailto:mike.davis@a1acetaxis.co.uk)

We also run Taunton's only MOT only testing station for cars, vans, light commercial vehicles and motor homes, for more details and on line 10% discount please visit [www.mottaunton.co.uk](http://www.mottaunton.co.uk)



Kindly sponsored by Chamber of Commerce Members:



**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

*St Margaret's Great Somerset Walk is a lovely walk through some of Somerset's natural beauty, offering the chance to see your area from a different angle*

The walk, mainly along footpaths and bridleways, is the longest organised walk in Somerset - but is also broken into shorter, manageable sections so that you can walk from just 4 miles or challenge yourself to complete the full 34 miles between Taunton and Yeovil. The route between Taunton and Creech St Michael is wheelchair and pushchair friendly.

The Great Somerset Walk is for everyone! Toddlers, teens, twenty-somethings and seniors are all welcome. You can even bring your dog! Not only do you get the benefits of fun, fitness and a great day out - every pound you raise will help provide hospice care for thousands of patients and their families in Somerset.

The Great Somerset Walk offers you the chance to enjoy the wonderful scenery we are so lucky to have on our doorstep whilst helping raise funds for Somerset's largest charity.

For further information, please click on the link below:  
<http://www.somerset-hospice.org.uk/Fundraising/CharityWalk2011>

**To contact us:** call: 01823 353353 or 07808 776244  
Email: office@taunton-chamber.co.uk  
Write to: First Floor, 12F Fore Street, The Orchard Centre, Taunton TA1 3TP

### Data Protection

The Chamber has your details held in a database that has been compiled from volunteered information.

If you no longer wish to receive E-communications from the Chamber please email Jane Burden. We will continue to hold your remaining details unless you specifically indicate otherwise in writing.

If you would like a colleague to receive these e-mails direct, please let us have their details and we will add them to our database.