

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

# DIARY

A list of social and networking events planned for 2010

**FEBRUARY** -\* Breakfast seminar at Heath Sports for the 23rd February, where speakers from a well known firm of rating experts will be in attendance to give local businesses the key facts on this important topic and what they have to do.

Expect a welcoming coffee/tea and networking, followed by breakfast then a presentation then questions.

Cost £10 per ticket available from David Smyth WKH, 22-24 Kneesworth Street, Royston. Telephone 01763 247321.

**APRIL** - AGM April 21st - To be confirmed. Review of past year and vision for the future.

A chance for you to air your views and discuss the Chamber's business with committee members. Come along and see how we can work together.

If there is something you would like us to organise as a social event please call Christine on 01920 467177 or if you have a venue that could host a social event we would love to hear from you.

## NEW MEMBERS NEEDED...

Come to our AGM and see what the Chamber can do for you. We are run on a voluntary basis and your opinion counts!

## Recent Changes in Employment Law

### National Minimum Wage (NMW)

There have been increases in the minimum hourly rates of the NMW which took effect on 1 October. These are:

- Standard (adult for workers aged 22 and over) rate from £5.73 to £5.80.
- Development (workers from 18-21) rate from £4.77 to £4.83.
- Young workers (16 and 17-year-olds) rate from £3.53 to £3.57.
- Accommodation off-set rate from £4.46 to £4.51

Hospitality, leisure and service sectors may no longer use gratuities and tips to make up the NMW. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills has produced a Code of Best Practice on tipping and service charges. It provides businesses with practical guidance on how to operate in a fair and transparent way, and is intended to ensure that customers have sufficient information to make an informed choice before they leave a tip or gratuity or pay a service charge.

## Business Rates Revaluation for 2010\*

The business rate is a tax on non-domestic properties such as shops, offices, warehouses and factories.

The business rate bill of an individual property is calculated by applying the relevant multiplier to the rateable value of the property. Rateable values are, broadly speaking, based on the rental value of the property, which is assessed by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The multiplier is adjusted each year to reflect the September RPI inflation rate, which means that within a revaluation period the rates liability of an individual property will not increase by more than inflation (and will decrease if inflation is negative) unless its rateable value changes.

All rateable values are reassessed every five years at a "general revaluation". The next revaluation will take effect from 1 April 2010. The multiplier is rebased for the first year of the new rating list to account for any overall changes to total rateable value. Transitional relief is provided by the Government to cap these increases so that there is supposedly a fair sharing of the burden between smaller and larger business rate payers

The Chamber is organising a breakfast meeting so that local businesses can be given information on this important topic by specialists in the area. See DIARY \*



**Royston Business Network gathers every Thursday morning at Heath Sports for an informal breakfast meeting and the chance to develop members' businesses in a relaxed environment.**

Members are encouraged to help each other by exchanging business tips, leads and referrals if they have them, and so strengthen profitable business relationships.

To see what the network can do for you, visit the website [www.roystonbn.co.uk](http://www.roystonbn.co.uk), or call Adam Fernandes at WKH Chartered Accountants on 01763 247 321.

# CHAMBER news

Working for Royston & District February 2010



## Light at the end of the Tunnel?

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) has published its September 2009 Economic Forecast. Despite a further downward revision in GDP expectations for this year, the BCC is more upbeat about economic growth in 2010, and has reduced its forecast for peak unemployment.



## Breakfast Rates

There is to be a breakfast seminar at Heath Sports for the 23 February next where speakers from a well known firm of rating experts will be in attendance to give local businesses the key facts on this important topic and what they have to do.

There will be a welcoming coffee/tea and networking, followed by breakfast then presentation and questions. Cost £10 per ticket



## SNOW PATROL...

The Chamber is advised by the County Council that a Hertfordshire County Council solicitor has confirmed that it is quite in order for businesses to clear snow and ice from footpaths and other areas outside their properties. Any claim for an accident in areas covered by Hertfordshire Highways is legally the responsibility of Hertfordshire Highways regardless of any winter maintenance you may have undertaken.



## Orchid win Business of the year

"Orchid have been working from our offices in Royston since 1997 and have not entered in to any Business Award before. It was therefore greatly appreciated to win an award that recognises the skill and expertise that our staff have put in to projects, from website development through to technical documentation, for companies large and small, in Royston, the UK and overseas.

I do think we tend to undersell ourselves and this award has been well received amongst our customers and staff".  
Keith Glanville of Orchid



## ROYSTON & DISTRICT BUSINESS AWARDS 2009

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## Royston Business Awards

By Matt Gooding of The Royston Crow

### BUSINESSES new and established shared the honours at this year's Royston Business Awards.

The winners of the 2009 awards, organised by The Crow in association with the Royston and District Chamber of Commerce, were announced at a glittering awards ceremony at The Banyers hotel in Royston. Stephen Larcombe, chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, said:

"This is a celebration of enterprise despite the dark clouds of the recession which hang over us all. We have so many good business people in Royston, and it is good to see a cross-section of them represented in the awards."

Winners of the prestigious Business of the Year award were Orchid Information Systems, who offer a range of technical authoring, multimedia, and internet development services.

Two members of staff from Cambridge Wine were on the shortlist for Employee of the Year, with Clive Powell getting the nod ahead of colleague Kirby Bryant. The shop was also celebrating after picking up the Best Town Centre Shop prize.

There was a double award for the Stationery Cupboard, which was named winner in the Investing in Royston and Outstanding Customer Service categories.

For more details of the winners, and photos of the event, visit [www.roystonbusinessawards.co.uk](http://www.roystonbusinessawards.co.uk).



Norman Dawse of Meridien Line Travel presents Keith Glanville of Orchid Communications with Business of the Year Award

*"We have so many good business people in Royston, and it is good to see a cross-section of them represented in the awards."*

Terry Hutt receives the Outstanding Contribution to the Community Award from Mike Gowen of Stationery Cupboard, with Neil Jinkerson who compered the evening.



## RAILWAY UNDERPASS SUPPORT

### It is now very likely that a Public Enquiry will be held due to the Compulsory Purchase Order required to aid construction of the Underpass and establish ownership of Coombes Hole Lane.

A number of people are against the construction of the Underpass, it is therefore important that evidence of support and the need for this project to go ahead are available to an Enquiry.

We would ask that Schools, their pupils, parents, residents, local organisations and businesses all write letters of support. Below are a number of points which it is felt are benefits to be gained from the provision of an Underpass, they may be helpful to you. Please send your letter to any of the addresses below.

Thank you for your help

Sincerely Doug Drake - Chairman, Underpass Support Group.

- A safe crossing of the railway for schoolchildren, cycling or walking,
- Improved access for residents to Schools, Leisure Centre, Doctors Surgery, Community Centre, Shopping and the Industrial Area.
- A new safe crossing point in Melbourn Road A10
- It will complement a wider cycle network planned for Royston
- It will reduce illegal crossing of the railway line
- It will provide an enhanced link to the Rights of Way network
- It could reduce use of the Car
- It joins up a Town and communities severed by the railway line

#### Please send to either:

Doug Drake, 4 The Green, Royston, SG8 7AA

County Cllr. Fiona Hill, 17 Lindsay Close, Royston, SG8 5EF

Helen McCormick, Client Support, Highway House, 41-45 Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City, AL7 3SP

## Socially Responsible Companies encouraged to enter BITC Awards

Businesses that can demonstrate outstanding corporate social responsibility (CSR) are being called on to enter Business in the Community's (BITC) 2010 Awards for Excellence.

Firms can enter any of the 15 main award categories. There is also a specific category for firms with less than 250 employees - the Small Company of the Year Award. Categories include the Talent Award, the Healthy Workplace Award, the Bank of America Climate Change Award and the Active Communities Award.

Businesses that can prove their community or environment programmes have a positive impact will receive a Big Tick, a nationally recognised logo which they can use on their websites, marketing materials and letterheads. Between three and five businesses in each category will then be shortlisted for the overall awards, the Examples of Excellence.

"It is vital that we continue to celebrate those companies, large and small which recognise that their environment and community activities are just as important now as ever," said BITC Regional Director, Mike Brophy. "Our winners tell us that the application process is a valuable tool for evaluating the work they have been doing, and provides a template for their programme development. "The size of the company is taken into account - for example, a company with only ten employees that managed to provide 1,000 hours of employee volunteering for a local cause is a much higher level of achievement than a company with 100 employees achieving the same level of activity."

Entrants to all categories must be able to show evidence of the impact they are having on the community or environment, prove that the programme could be replicated and demonstrate a clear business case for the activity.

The closing date for entries is 5th March 2010 for national awards and 30 March for regional awards. The Examples of Excellence winners will be announced at a Gala Dinner at Hengrave Hall in June 2010 supported by BAA Stansted, Adnams and Anglian Water.

For more information and to enter the awards, visit the BITC website [www.bitc.org.uk/east](http://www.bitc.org.uk/east) or contact Jenny Webb at [Jenny.webb@bitc.org.uk](mailto:Jenny.webb@bitc.org.uk) or 01638 663272

## Mobile phone shop [m-viron]



Tony Field has spent 30 years in communications right back to the days when a modem took two full sized blokes to lift it! Today that function is chip size in a PC. He has spent the last 10 years supporting business sales across Europe, Middle East and Russia which provides for an exciting set of markets, but not always the best to deal in.

At the beginning of September, Tony bought the m-viron Orange shop in the High street of Royston. This shop has been in operation for 8 years in Royston although in different parts of the high street. The shop sells and supports customers on the Orange network. Although any customer who has an Orange contract call still use the call centres, most people prefer to deal with a person face to face rather than a call centre. In fact Tony's tag line at business meetings is "if you like call centres don't call me".

Tony has joined one of the local business groups and is keen to be part of and supportive of the local business community in Royston. In terms of the opportunities, obviously being a high street shop consumers are welcomed and drop in for new phones and bill reductions, but the target for growth is small and medium companies especially ones based in and around Royston. So please feel free to contact them to see what support they can bring to your local business on 01763 242 984.