

BUSINESS VOICE



A NEWS UPDATE FROM MILTON KEYNES BUSINESS LEADERS PARTNERSHIP

SPRING 2017

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MK Business Leaders is going places in 2017

The historic MK Business Leaders and British Business Group Dubai link is already opening doors to increased trade between Milton Keynes and the UAE – and there are more international deals to come.

At the beginning of 2017, and the culmination of months of negotiation with the leading UK business interest group in the United Arab Emirates, we announced a partnership with BBG that will see reciprocal trade relations between our regions and nations. We were delighted to receive the encouragement of the International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox and our MP Iain Stewart. Inward investment and developing business opportunities will be encouraged and businesses from MK and the SEMLEP area will be supported in establishing commercial footholds in Dubai and the Northern Emirates, generating trade and creating wealth and employment.

As I said in January, with the BBG's support the potential opportunities are fantastic as we move into a post-Brexit landscape. And things have moved fast following the official launch luncheon in Milton Keynes attended by BBG Chairman David Burns and their UK representative Mark Baker, as well as a party of diplomats from the UAE Embassy whose attendance demonstrated their support for the initiative.

At that event we heard about local companies which have already begun making connections in the UAE and we are now identifying other suitable businesses wanting to be involved. I can only reiterate that the opportunities presented by the link are open to ALL businesses in MK and the SEMLEP area and I urge all our members to spread the word among their colleagues and contacts. Going forward we hope to announce soon a dedicated portal on the Business Leaders' website, directing businesses to information



MKBLP BBG Iain Stewart MP, HE Rawda Al Otaiba, Dr Philip Smith MBE, David Burns MBE

about out how they can get on board. There are plans for B2B events here and reciprocal visits and business missions to and from Dubai and the UAE.

And there's more. I can now announce that even as we launched the relationship with BBG, interest in Milton Keynes from other nations and regions around the world has been generated with discussions taking place with representatives from China, who we hope to receive in April.

This is all very encouraging and fits perfectly with Business Leaders' objective of promoting the Milton Keynes business community at every level. I thank members for their support and encouragement towards what will be significant developments for MK Business Leaders and our city in its 50th year.

Ruby Parmar and Simon deMaid join the Board... as Mike Robinson leaves with our thanks

We are pleased to welcome Ruby Parmar and Simon deMaid to the Board of Directors. Ruby is the Office Senior Partner at PwC in Milton Keynes and the South Midlands, taking over from Mike Robinson who has also stepped down as a Board Member.

Ruby heads a team of more than 130 at PwC and after 20 years advising private businesses predominantly on taxation matters, she is now a trusted adviser to a wide array of clients. Ruby was recently elected to the CBI Regional Council and sits on the Board of Trustees of the Magic Bus India Foundation charity, helping children living in poverty.

Simon is a Partner and Head of Office at Howes Percival LLP in Milton Keynes. As an employment law specialist, he supports local businesses dealing with employment related problems and advises on the employment aspects of corporate transaction. Outside work Simon is interested in music, fitness and sport.

Philip Smith, chairman of MK Business Leaders Partnership said: 'We welcome Ruby and Simon who both bring much experience to the Board, and we also thank Mike Robinson for his invaluable contribution to Business Leaders and particularly with his help in growing the MK Business Achievement Awards into a major annual event.'



Welcome to the newsletter feature where a member introduces themselves. Meet Ruby Parmar office senior partner for PwC and recently appointed to the MK BLP Board...

Tell us about you and your business...

I am the office senior partner

for PwC in Milton Keynes and been with PwC for more than 16 years. I lead the private business and private client practice in Milton Keynes and the South Midlands, working with a range of businesses. I am also a board trustee of the charity Magic Bus and I am a recently elected member of the East of England CBI council.

Why is being a member of MK Business Leaders important?

With the government focused on delivering an economy that works for everyone, the idea of inclusive or good growth is rising up the agenda. It is important to be part of MK Business Leaders and engage with local businesses and advisors about the challenges and opportunities our city faces. Milton Keynes is the fastest growing

place in the UK and together we can really put our great city on the map.

What do you bring to MK Business Leaders?

As a trusted advisor I spend time with businesses and clients of different sizes across a number of sectors, so I have a good understanding of what challenges and opportunities the local and wider business community face.

What challenges face the Milton Keynes business community?

It is a great time to be doing business in Milton Keynes. The city is recognised for growth and its position in the wider region's economy. PwC's recent Good Growth for Cities Index ranks Milton Keynes seventh in the UK, performing well across a range of measures including economic and quality of life. But is it facing a 'price of success' dilemma? MK performs above average for jobs, income, health, new businesses, owner occupation and environment,

but below average on work-life balance, housing affordability and income distribution.

What makes Milton Keynes special for you?

I'm proud to be a part of a vibrant, diverse and passionate city. It has great strength in its people, skills, economy and community, and is a dynamic place to live, work and visit. Throughout 2017 Milton Keynes marks its 50th birthday and we should come together and celebrate what this wonderful city has achieved.

Your tip for success in business and/or life?

Don't be reticent. If you have a skill, be proud and shout about it. If you have relevant experience, use it and share it with others. If you have time, use it wisely and get involved with projects and opportunities. Every relationship you make will prove valuable at some point in your career. The wider your network, the easier your job will become.

Breakfast Briefings serve up early morning variety for members and guests



Philip and Darren Dorrington

Darren Dorrington, managing director of MKFM made his case for the city having its own truly local, local radio station in October.

MKFM, a not-for-profit community station, opened online in 2011, moved to DAB in 2013 and from September 2015 has broadcast on FM 106.3 and reaches an estimated 120,000 people.

Darren said MKFM's aim is to become the glue that binds the community. 'The number of listeners has increased along with the business opportunities, and we are making the most of them. We must sustain ourselves as a business, building revenues, selling advertising and attracting sponsorship,' he said. MKFM is supporting MK Business Achievement Awards 2017.

In December Ian Revell and Bart Gamber of Milton Keynes Community Foundation presented their annual Vital Signs report which collates and makes available, data on health, wealth and well-being in the city.

Bart, MKCF director of programmes said: 'Too often statistics have a national focus. Vital Signs has a local focus, telling us what is going on in our own community and where the gaps in local provision are.' The theme for the 2016 report is 'A tale of two cities' showing that while Milton Keynes thrives in many ways, there are still many families in financial hardship, he said.

MK BAA 2017 is almost here



There are just weeks to go to the fourth Milton Keynes Business Achievement Awards.

The entries are in, they have been judged and short-lists drawn up – thanks to Sir John Southby and his hard-working team of judges. Soon the names of the winners will have been transferred to the trophies and kept under wraps until the big night on Thursday March 9 at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, Stadium MK.

Since MK BAA began we have kept the elements that our audience have enjoyed, not least the early evening drinks reception which has to be the biggest (and noisiest) annual get together of business people in the region.

And we have rung the changes to keep the event fresh and entertaining. This year the theme is MK50 and our guest compere is world champion, Olympic silver medallist and local hero Gail Emms MBE. Thanks to all Business Leaders who have contributed in some way to this our flagship annual event. See you there and IF you haven't yet got a ticket – sorry by the time you read this they should all have gone!



The Business Crime Strategy really is on its way!

It was way back in 2015 that Supt Gez Chiariello of Thames Valley Police spoke to MK Business Leaders about a business crime strategy for Milton Keynes – except he revealed that there wasn't one!

So together Gez, Philip Smith and a group of MK BLP members pulled one together and, after many meetings, discussions, drafts, re-writes and a few other diversions and hiccups along the way, we are due to release the MK BLP/TVP Business Crime Strategy in March following MK BAA 2017. This is quite timely with the recent Government focus on cybercrime including how it affects business.



Supt Gez Chiariello of Thames Valley Police with Philip

Chairman's Report

It has been another busy period connecting with the many businesses, groups, individuals and public bodies that MK Business Leaders see as crucial to building and maintaining the relationships that help Milton Keynes prosper.

My contacts were spread across all the key areas we have identified as being of special interest: Transport and Communications; Smart Cities and High Technology; Sport, Health and Wellbeing; Economic Development; Education, Skills and Apprenticeships.



Philip Graham CEO Nat Infstre Comm with Dr Philip Smith MBE

Among the many, were meetings with: Buckingham University, UCMK and The Open University; SEMLEP Sports and Leisure Group, MK Sports Board and SportsAid; a meeting with Pam Gosal re 3D City Visioning, as well as Tech Mahindra; Routeco, Destination MK, Yellow YoYo and MK Investors Group.

There were also meetings connected with MK BAA 2017 and of course the MK Business Leaders – British Business Group Dubai Link (with both featured elsewhere in this newsletter).

For your diary

Directors of Milton Keynes Business Leaders Partnership

Dr Philip Smith	Chair
Duncan Phillips	DP Leisure
Ruby Parmar	PwC
Nicholas Mann	Interdirect
Dr Julie Mills	Milton Keynes College
Jan Flawn CBE	PJ Care
Jean Gowin	Jeanius Consulting
Julia Upton	MK Community Foundation
Martin Banham-Hall	Heald Solicitors

Milton Keynes Business Leaders Partnership is an independent organisation, funded through member subscriptions, MKBLP works to identify and develop interests, specific to the business community in the city.

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