

# BUSINESS VOICE



A NEWS UPDATE FROM MILTON KEYNES BUSINESS LEADERS PARTNERSHIP

SUMMER 2016

[www.mkblp.co.uk](http://www.mkblp.co.uk)

## IN or OUT? – But the Concrete Cows must remain!

**Events surrounding the European Referendum added extra drama to Business Leaders' summer season of Quarterly Dinners.**

Just a week before the crucial poll in June arch-Euro sceptic John Redwood MP gave a measured view of the likely economic impact of a vote either way, speaking on behalf of private investment firm Charles Stanley which he said, remained neutral on the issue. John, the firm's Global Strategist, outlined likely scenarios: 'Bad Brexit' - a massive confidence loss and trade damaged in a dramatic way; 'Good Brexit' – trading continues after short term confidence shock; 'Good Remain' - The Euro muddles through, UK not dragged into the Euro project and Turkey not immediately joining the EU; and 'Bad Remain' - with another Euro crisis, further influx of migrants and a European banking crisis.

Earlier, visiting each table John spoke more candidly to members and guests predicting, perhaps not surprisingly, a likely outcome closer to 'Good Brexit'. And in a lively Q&A he shared his own optimistic view of the future saying he would love to start his career again. 'I would be starting again in a much better world, much richer, fairer and teeming with opportunities, power and excitement.'



*Sir Anthony Seldon*



*John Redwood*

In July the fallout from the Brexit vote saw a planned speech by Skills Minister Nick Boles suddenly cancelled when he resigned from the Government.

In stepped Sir Anthony Seldon, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham, who as a respected political historian and commentator with impeccable contacts, took guests on a fascinating and timely behind closed doors tour of Downing Street and Whitehall following what he described were three weeks in British politics: 'The like of which we have never seen before.' Sir Anthony, who had argued for Remain, said Brexit 'had campaigned frankly on a bunch of lies. But he also called for post referendum unity saying, 'We should all now work to make the most of the opportunities that come about'.

Earlier in the year Bernard Donoghue, Director of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) gave a spirited defence of Milton Keynes' concrete cows. He said the concrete cows generated a brand awareness, 'most cities would give their eye teeth for. Use them, absolutely use them.'

Milton Keynes Business Leaders Partnership (MKBLP) is a not for profit business group of individuals from a broad cross section of backgrounds who utilise their skills and knowledge for the benefit of the wider business community

Welcome to a new feature in the MK Business Leaders' newsletter, where a member introduces themselves. We kick off with a recent appointment to the MK BLP Board. Meet... Jean Gowin, Managing Director of Jeanius Consulting Limited

**With over 25 years' experience in global PR, marketing and business development, I launched Jeanius Consulting when I relocated to Milton Keynes in 2013. We offer award-winning PR and marketing, social media management, business development and creative solutions, successfully combining a diverse range of clientele locally, nationally and internationally.**

Previously, I co-owned a maritime publishing and PR business with overall responsibility for the global sales of the company's world-leading publications, alongside my core PR work.

#### **Why is membership of MK BLP important?**

I enjoy being a member of a pro-active business organisation that has a clear, strategic focus on identifying and developing the business landscape of Milton Keynes. Working with like-minded leaders, it's great to positively engage with the wider community and bringing together all sectors.

#### **What do you bring to MK BLP?**

In addition to my great passion for Milton Keynes I bring extensive communication skills and global business experience to MKBLP and also improve the gender balance, something that is healthy for all organisations.

#### **What challenges face the MK business community?**

We have a strong successful reputation to uphold. Milton Keynes needs to stay current and grounded in a fast growing business environment which is driven largely by the success of SME's and Micro businesses, many of whom are developing world-leading, niche products and services - defining and shaping the future of Milton Keynes.



#### **What makes MK special for you?**

I'm proud to live and work in one of the top five fastest growing cities in the UK and I love the mix of the commercial activity and great community spirit along with the green spaces, lakes and leisure activities.

#### **Your tip for success in business and/or life?**

Treat everyone as you would wish to be treated yourself in business and life.

## **Celebrating MK50 deserves 100 per cent support**

In 2017 Milton Keynes will show the world how it has become the economic, cultural and political powerhouse of the region. Plans are in place for MK50, the official celebration of our first half century and last year MK Business Leaders Partnership was given a comprehensive preview by Project Manager Lallie Davis and colleague Shane Downer.

They were keen for the business community to become involved and we were encouraged to hear that Milton Keynes Council had put £100,000 on the table to attract further money. So it was disappointing to learn later that the council contemplated reducing the amount proposed.

MK50 requires the commitment of the whole community and real leadership. Businesses are interested in supporting MK50 and Lallie and Shane spoke of the benefits that supporting arts, culture and heritage can have for business. Together we must make MK50 a resounding success with a justifiable, well-presented celebration of what has been achieved, and an investment in Milton Keynes' future success.

## **Partnerships**

According to the dictionary the word partnership means: a joint business venture; a relationship between two people; or in cricket, between batsmen. Whether in business, marriage or at the crease partners expect certain things of each other. That each pulls their weight, that benefits and challenges will be shared, and there's trust between them.

The Milton Keynes Business Leaders Partnership exists to identify and develop the strategic interests and needs of business in Milton Keynes by engaging with decision makers and working with public and private sector organisations. We constructively collaborate, building meaningful and lasting partnerships, and our experience has mostly been extremely positive with parties working together to get the job done.

But some organisations have different agendas, ways of working and sometimes even different concepts of time and a priority for swift decisive action. This can make a successful partnership a challenge and even understanding the challenges we face taking Milton Keynes forward is not always demonstrated by everyone at the table. All who are passionate about the city's future must meet on a level playing field with mutual respect. All must show commitment and determination to achieve joint goals, and understand that partnership is more than just a word.

*Abridged articles written for Business MK*

# Porridge, brains and chiclets on breakfast menu

**It has been another varied programme of Breakfast Briefings, with several firsts for these popular events.**

For the first time we visited HMP Woodhill at the invitation of the Governor Rob Davis and Julie Mills, Principal and Chief Executive of MK College (and MK BLP board member). The College runs an Offender Learning programme at Woodhill and 27 other prisons in England. Rob told guests, who enjoyed a breakfast cooked by prisoners, that getting ex-offenders into employment increases the chance of them not going back into prison. He called for business to get more involved in that process while Julie said employers should consider those leaving prison with work skills to fill roles in their organisations.



*Philip Smith and Lt Col McClean*

For the first time a senior officer in the British Army addressed Business Leaders about recruiting the best business brains into the Intelligence Corps. Lt Col Phaedra McLean, commanding officer of 6 Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion said having a member of staff in the Army Reserve is an advantage for employers. 'They get the benefit of their people having that additional training and experience and leadership and management skills that are transferable between either roles.'



*Philip Smith with Lynette Ryals, Pro-Vice Chancellor Education at Cranfield University*

- Business Leaders heard the new language of encouraging entrepreneurship with presentations from Entrepreneurial Spark and innovateMK, and from Pam Gosal of MK Council which is coordinating help for business start-ups. Vicky Taylor, Entrepreneurial Spark enabler said its new businesses are called chiclets (sic) and their new Milton Keynes business hub is a hatchery. Chiclets are encouraged to re-focus on their business idea with a Mental Accelerator and have a fortnightly 'temperature check'. She said: 'Have they got things done – and if not why not?' Jason Adcock said innovateMK focused on digital innovation. 'Ours is a very simple model, entrepreneurs helping entrepreneurs with a great network of mentors,' he said. Pam Gosal said growing businesses is a strategic priority for the council and last year there were 73 start-ups, 'but we can't do everything on our own,' she said.

- 'What are universities and education for, if it isn't fitting people for the world of work', asked Lynette Ryals, Pro-Vice Chancellor Education at Cranfield University when she gave a thought-provoking overview of changes ahead for education and the workplace. Lynette said at Cranfield they were investigating combining an academic education with its practical application in the workplace - including ground breaking work in augmented and virtual realities - and some universities were now looking at four year degree courses that included a paid year in the workplace.

## Chairman's Report

Spring into summer was another busy period as MK Business Leaders Partnership was represented on committees, working groups, at networking events and we joined many celebrations of life in the city and region.

These include contacts with Cranfield and Buckingham Universities, The Open University, Milton Keynes College – attending the always inspiring College Awards event, meetings with Milton Keynes Council, The Parks Trust, SEMLEP, MK Development Partnership, MK Skills Forum, MK Transport Partnership, Destination MK, MK Sports Board, Sport MK, Leap, MK City Orchestra and the MK Futures presentation.

I have also had the pleasure of attending awards events, receptions - including the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire Mrs Milly Soames DL's reception at her home, breakfasts, lunches and dinners with SportsAid, Concrete Cattlemen, the Biztech Awards, MK Community Foundation and the MK International Festival, and attended the Schools Games in Aylesbury, visited Millbrook Proving Ground and saw an interesting demonstration of Medical Detection Dogs.

May I also welcome Gina Harper who has taken over the MK BLP administration role, and thank her predecessor Sandra Overbury for her contribution to the organisation.

When it was announced that I had been awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List I said it reflected the part all the members of the MK Business Leaders Partnership play in the life of the city. On June 9 with my partner Hilary and three children I went to Buckingham Palace for my Investiture by HRH The Prince of Wales. It was an outstanding and surreal day and, although our conversation was brief, I made sure Prince Charles knew about MK BLP.



Gina Harper



## MK BAA 2017

Plans are well advanced for the Business Achievement Awards 2017, to be held on Thursday March 9 next year.



Award categories have been announced (full details on the MK BAA 2017 website) and many awards have already attracted sponsorship, with The Open University as Headline Sponsor and also Business of the Year. The theme for 2017 is MK50.

The official launch of these prestigious awards, now in its fourth year, takes place on Tuesday, September 6 at The Transport Catapult, 170 Midsummer Boulevard, CMK from 6pm until 8.30pm. More details of the entry categories, judging process and the format of the event itself will be revealed.

## For your diary

**Launch of the MK Business Achievement Awards 2017** at the Transport Catapult, CMK - September 6

**Quarterly Dinner** at Holiday Inn, CMK - September 8  
Speaker: The Rt Hon Lord Adonis, Chairman, National Infrastructure Commission

**Breakfast Briefing** venue tbc - October 13 Speaker: Darren Dorrington CEO MKFM, 'Keeping it Local'

## Directors of Milton Keynes Business Leaders Partnership

Dr Philip Smith MBE	Chair
Duncan Phillips	DP Leisure
Mike Robinson	PwC
Nicholas Mann	Interdirect
Dr Julie Mills	Milton Keynes College
Jan Flawn CBE	PJ Care
Jean Gowin	Jeanius Consulting
Julia Upton MBE	
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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