



[www.cleoburycountry.com](http://www.cleoburycountry.com)

# CLEOBURY THE COUNTRY BULLETIN

March Issue 2014

by local business people for local business people

## Networking with a difference

Come and see why Cleobury Country  
Networking is the best!

### what's inside

Cleobury Country News

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Articles & Features

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cover image: Simon Hector

Next Cleobury Networking meeting date: Wednesday 16th April



## Networking Perspective

### Apprentices Rock!

Well as ever a great time for us all as we listened to a great presentation from Gavin Owen (County Training) and Vince Birmingham (Hendra House Care Home) regarding Apprenticeships.

To hear from both sides of the fence, as a provider and a family business, both actively encouraging the scheme was both interesting and illuminating. We are currently re-looking at the scheme because of this presentation and I suggest if you are remotely thinking of taking on an apprentice a chat with Gavin would do no harm at all.

As I write this it's officially spring (hence why it's gone colder oops ... just kidding).

As the climate warms so at the same time is our economy and my clients are all seeing an improving outlook, most of all, confidence is growing which is crucial.

If you haven't been to a networking meeting do come along, it's, friendly and free (courtesy of sponsorship by Cleobury Country) We have supplier and clients as a result of our involvement with the group and I suggest you make an effort to come every time the chance presents itself.

And you get chips!!!!

See you all soon

Until the next time...

*Peter Roper*

The Family Business Man

p.s. "And Remember... If I Can Help You In Any Way Just Let Me Know!"

### MP to open Hobsons New Visitor Centre

Shropshire Brewer Hobsons is set to open the doors to its new Visitor Centre with the help of special guest, Rural Affairs Minister Dan Rogerson, MP on Wednesday 2nd April.

The new centre is located on the brewery's site at Newhouse Farm, Cleobury Mortimer and received grant funding through the Rural Development Programme for England, managed by DEFRA.

With a welcoming bar area and galley kitchen to present food tastings / pairing with beers the new visitor centre will offer a complete brewery experience. Hobsons Brewery, known for its strong community roots and sustainable thinking is keen to collaborate with local businesses and people to open up the centre to different communities and local tourists. Over the next 12 months the centre will be hosting special producer evenings such as a Pie Masterclass, a Cob Oven workshop, group tours and packages for local B&B providers to encourage tourists to visit.

The multifaceted facility has been constructed by local tradesmen using locally sourced materials. The sympathetic design encompasses natural

materials and sustainable technologies to give a light modern feel to the room. The building has been constructed with Gabions utilising local Cleehill stone offering high levels of insulation and low energy use, the existing ground source heating system has also been installed in the new centre.

"We have been organising brewery tours for many years, but our site wasn't conducive to year round visits, long stays or serving food, and we believe that the new Visitor Centre is a great asset to Hobsons Brewery, offering a substantial visitor and tourist aspect to the overall marketing of our business" commented Nick Davis, owner of Hobsons Brewery.

For further information about the new Hobsons Visitor Centre visit [www.hobsons-brewery.co.uk](http://www.hobsons-brewery.co.uk), please note bookings by appointment only.

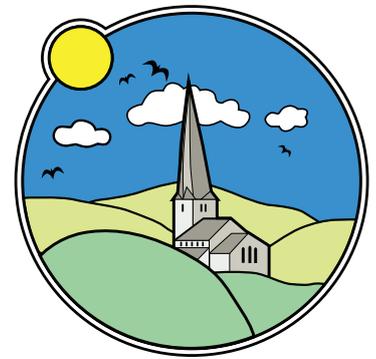
For further information please contact Kate Pearce, Hobsons Brewery Marketing Manager

Tel: **01299 270837** Mobile: **07506 155551** Email: [kate@hobsons-brewery.co.uk](mailto:kate@hobsons-brewery.co.uk)

For further information visit [www.hobsons-brewery.co.uk](http://www.hobsons-brewery.co.uk) or follow us on Twitter and Facebook.

# CleoburyCountry

## News News News



### March at the Cleobury Country Centre

*Its been an odd few months at the centre what with me jetting off for three weeks! But I must say "the Girls" have coped superbly well!*

Vicki, our apprentice, has now been in post since the beginning of January and has fitted in perfectly, she's taken over the front desk every morning and deals with the day to day stuff, leaving me free to concentrate on the accounts and managing the centre. Having Vicki, is also enabling Sue to go out and visit out best customers, find new ones and generally sell the centre more, without being stuck to the front desk. Sam continues to find new and exciting courses to stage and our diary is now becoming very full! The regular courses, like Food Hygiene Level 2 and Emergency First Aid at Work (1 Day) are all planned now for the year - 6 of each! With other favourites like, Manual Handling, Health & Safety, Fire Safety and COSHH featuring a couple of times each over the year ahead. PAT Testing and Adobe Photoshop courses have really taken off and both are full for the first courses. Sam in launching some new business related courses this month - Cash Flow Forecasting, Presentation

Skills and Sales & Business Development, all aimed at a slight different market to the basic courses, but we are hopeful that new businesses and middle management will see a need to educate staff in these areas.

The Cleobury Country Farmers Market this month (15th march) was in and around the church as usual despite the area in front of the church being dug up to provide the town with a band stand/central area where we will be able to stage more entertainment outside the markets but will also provide an area for other groups and organisations to use for their fund raising. It's intended to blend and complement with the War Memorial area.

We saw 197 visitors at the market and 19 stalls which is up quite a lot on February, which only saw 105 visitors and 13 stalls. Next month the market date falls on Easter Saturday and as this is a busy day in the Christian calendar we are unable to use the Church as we would normally. It's also our first birthday as a market and to celebrate this we are "going outside"! The area around the Market Hall will be filled with gazebos and our stall holders will trade from there, so please keep everything crossed for a dry day!

We have a few new stalls planned in for next month, one of which is Chocolate Heaven which fits very nicely with our chocolate theme for the month. We are asking all the high street shops to dress their windows in an easterly way and Mawley Milk has kindly offered to sponsor a trophy which will be competed for each year, and Sean Thorogood, our Chair of the Parish Council, will be our judge on the morning of the market.

The Business networking session this week had an Apprenticeship theme with Gavin Owen from Country Training and Vince Birmingham from Hendra House Care Home speaking on the benefits of taking on an apprentice. Vicki was also there to offer feedback and answer questions from the apprentice's point of view. It was a very thought provoking evening and nice to hear from someone other than Peter! Next month we're hoping that Phillip Dunne our local MP will attend although this is still to be confirmed - he has such a busy schedule!

That's all from the coalface for the moment, if any of our courses are of interest or you'd like to hire our meeting room please get in touch,

*Clare Todd*

# BUSINESS FUNDING AVAILABLE

## **Growth Vouchers for Small Businesses**

Growth Vouchers is a Government programme that helps small businesses of 49 employees or less get expert advice on:

- finance and cash flow
- recruiting and developing staff
- improving leadership and management skills
- marketing, attracting and keeping customers
- making the most of digital technology

Vouchers for up to the value of £2000 are available to help fund specialist business advice. The value of the voucher has to be matched by funds from the business.

For more information visit:  
[www.gov.uk/apply-growth-vouchers](http://www.gov.uk/apply-growth-vouchers)

## **Do you own a small wood?**

The Heartwoods Project has secured further DEFRA funding to extend the West Midlands Woodfuel Project. Details of the programme of events are currently being finalised but small woodland owners are encouraged to get in touch with the Heartwoods team so they can get free initial advice and be put in touch with practical managers who can help deliver the positive financial returns currently being enjoyed by other woodland owners.

For further information please contact Harriet Wood on 01952 435860 or email:  
[harrietwood@smallwoods.org.uk](mailto:harrietwood@smallwoods.org.uk)

You can also visit the website,  
[www.heartwoods.co.uk](http://www.heartwoods.co.uk)

## **Stimulating Innovation and Growth**

Shropshire Council's Business and Enterprise Team has secured ERDF funding to deliver a programme of activities to support small to medium sized businesses across Shropshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Staffordshire.

### **The offer to businesses includes:**

Free business briefings for eligible businesses

Free access to the use of specialist consultants to help them with specific challenges for their business

Grants of between £2,000 and £10,000 will also be available to implement actions.

For further information, contact Mrs Joe Bubb

Email [joe.bubb@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:joe.bubb@shropshire.gov.uk)

or call 01743 252516

## **Marches Business Support**

The Marches Business Support project is a flexible programme of free business support offered to residents of the Marches LEP (Hereford, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin) regional area who are looking to start up their own business or become self employed. The business support package includes one to one professional advice and guidance by Business Advisors, business planning and financial advice, marketing and sales support, networking opportunities and a range of specialised workshops.

## **Business Start Up & Shape Up Training - 2 days**

The training will give you an overview of what you need to know about starting up and running your own business. It will provide you with practical help and tools to help you start your business or will assist with refreshing your existing business to enable you to operate more effectively and efficiently. The course highlights the key issues to be considered by new business owners, from marketing and sales to finance and legal requirements.

## **Business Clinics - 1 hour pre-bookable session**

Business clinics are your opportunity to receive impartial one-to-one advice from a business advisor on a wide range of subjects. This can be for focusing on the areas of your business that need improving or advising you on your business plan if you are looking to start up your own business. If you are a start-up or existing business wanting to grow, these sessions will help you with the tailored support you need.

To find out more about this business support package, please call 01743 252596 or email [business@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:business@shropshire.gov.uk) or visit [www.start2great.co.uk](http://www.start2great.co.uk)

# SPRING DIARY



What's On?	Where is it	When is it?
Adobe Photoshop Course	Cleobury Country Centre	2nd April
Food Hygiene Level 2	Cleobury Country Centre	7th April
Emergency First Aid at work (1 Day Course)	Cleobury Country Centre	7th May
Health & Safety Level 3	Cleobury Country Centre	12th May
Manual Handling (Half Day)	Cleobury Country Centre	15th May
Defibulator Course (Half Day)	Cleobury Country Centre	15th May
Cover Supervisor Course	St Mary's Church	19, 20, 21st May
Forecasting Cashflow & Breakeven	Cleobury Country Centre	21st May

## Networking Cleobury Style: 19<sup>th</sup> March

A good turnout this month for our Apprenticeship Special!

Peter kindly donated the chips this month which were consumed by:-

Bill White from Bill White Nurseries, Anny Roper from Confidantes, William

Withers from Crystal Thought, Sue Brown from Cleobury Chiropractic, Linda Thomas from Giftscribes Gifts Ltd, Iain McIntyre from McIntyre Photography, Jane Brant from Mullers England Ltd, Jamie and John from Puncture Safe, Mike Webb

from SUNRG, Peter Chatterley from Babbage Lovelace Search & Selection and Clare Hilton-Turvey from Waith & Lovette Room Tailoring

...and remember "Family Businesses Matter!"



### CHIPS SPONSORED BY

**peterroper**  
the family business man

Do you understand the difference between conventional business thinking and family business reality?

If you don't you could be throwing away tens of thousands every year - or worse still a close family relationship...

# Country Training - Apprenticeships

## 2014 has started with a bang in Cleobury Mortimer in terms of apprenticeships!

You may have already noticed that Vicki has started in the Cleobury Country Centre and has settled in really well, very quickly. We wish her well and look forward to seeing her develop and grow within her new role over the next year or so.

January has also seen Lacon Childe school welcome an ex pupil onto their teaching staff in the form of a PE Teaching Assistant apprentice.

I am hoping that this will be the beginning of a big year for apprenticeships in South Shropshire as we continue to support both the businesses and young people in the area.

I have had numerous enquiries from other local businesses since the turn of the year and look forward to visiting them within the coming weeks.

If you know somebody who is interested in an apprenticeship, County Training are holding their 'Secure Your Apprenticeship' event

on Monday 7th April at Ludlow Learning Centre at 17:30. The evening will give you a chance to meet current apprentices and find out hints and tips as to how to get yourself an apprenticeship position.

If you are interested in recruiting an apprentice or attending the event then contact me at: [gavin.owen@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:gavin.owen@shropshire.gov.uk)

*Gavin Owen*

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## Small Business Rate Relief

Contact Shropshire Council on the link below for more information

14 March 2014

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/business-rates/business-rate-relief/>

- you only use one property
- its rateable value is less than £12,000

What you get

Until 31 March 2015 you'll get 100% relief (doubled from the usual rate of 50%) for properties with a rateable value of £6,000 or less. This means

you won't pay business rates on properties with a rateable value of £6,000 or less.

The rate of relief will gradually decrease from 100% to 0% for properties with a rateable value between £6,001 and £12,000.

You have more than one property

You could get small business rate relief if the rateable value of each of your other properties is less than £2,600.

The rateable values of the properties are added together and the relief applied to the main property.

Contact your local council to apply for small business rate relief.

You're a small business but don't qualify for relief

If your property has a rateable value below £18,000 (£25,500 in Greater London) you're considered a small business.

Even if you don't qualify for small business rate relief, your business rates will be calculated using the small business multiplier instead of the standard one. This is the case even if you have multiple properties.

The multiplier shows the percentage (pence in the pound) of the rateable value that you pay in business rates. A list of current multipliers is on the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) website.

# LOCAL JOBS *for local people*

We believe local business is best, but why do so many people have to look for work further afield, and so many businesses have trouble finding people locally?

Advertise your jobs here, and if you are skilled and looking for work, advertise yourself.

Contact Clare Todd at Cleobury Country Centre, 01299 272300  
[clare@cleoburycountry.co.uk](mailto:clare@cleoburycountry.co.uk)

## **Office administrator Worcestershire Marble**

Must have previous office experience, a willingness to learn and flexible approach to work. Duties to include; quoting, order processing, customer services and email correspondence. Sage accounts and payroll experience preferable.

Hours of work: 8.30am-5.00pm Monday-Friday.  
Rates of pay dependant on experience.

To apply please forward CV to [sue@worcestershire-marble.co.uk](mailto:sue@worcestershire-marble.co.uk)

## **Trainee Equestrian Travel Expert In the Saddle, holiday on horseback**

Trainee travel consultant to arrange tailor-made riding holidays to worldwide destinations. Key Skills: Excellent telephone manner, eye for details, ability to complete high quality accurate work. Responsibilities: Operate bespoke travel booking system, check availability and keep systems up to date, organise flights, car hire, accommodation and the riding holiday and maintain good client relationships by telephone or e-mail. Minimum 18years old, Minimum Grade B GCSE English and Maths, Excellent IT skills, Good communicator, Passion for horses and travel, Must live within 45 minutes of our offices and be able to drive.

To apply for his position please send your CV and hand written cover letter (marked Personnel) by 31st March 2014 to: Louise Wild, In the Saddle, Reaside, Neen Savage, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire, DY14 8ES

For more information visit [www.inthesaddle.com](http://www.inthesaddle.com)

## **Granite & Stone Worktop Installer Worcestershire Marble**

Dealing with both public and trade customers, must be punctual, professional and able to work as part of a team. Previous experience of fitting worktops is preferred. Transport and tools provided. Clean driving licence essential.

Hours of work: 8.00am-5.00pm Monday- Thursday, 7.00am-3.00pm Friday **\*\*Overtime Required\*\*** Pay dependant on experience

To apply please forward CV to [carl@worcestershire-marble.co.uk](mailto:carl@worcestershire-marble.co.uk)

## **Marble Fireplace Assembler Worcestershire Marble**

Producing and assembling marble fireplace parts. Preparing work, subassemblies, gathering parts and studying assembly instructions. Manufacturing experience beneficial, good hand and power tool skills and quality focus

Hours of work: 8.00am -5.00pm Monday- Thursday, 7.00am-1.00pm Friday **\*\*Overtime Required\*\***  
Pay dependant on experience.

To apply please forward CV to [carl@worcestershire-marble.co.uk](mailto:carl@worcestershire-marble.co.uk)

# Dunne backs National Apprenticeship Week

South Shropshire MP Philip Dunne is backing efforts to get more young people to become apprentices as part of National Apprenticeship Week. Mr Dunne recently visited Cleobury Country, a social enterprise which hired its first apprentice, Vicki Harris, in January.

National Apprenticeship Week is coordinated by the National Apprenticeship Service to promote the positive impact apprenticeships can have on individuals, companies and specific sectors of the economy.

Mr Dunne said "Apprenticeships can be a great way for young people to gain job specific skills, qualifications and experience. They also are a practical way for many to undergo training, as individuals earn as they train.

Many businesses benefit from taking on apprenticeships, as they can fill specific skills gaps or be a cost effective way to develop new talent. Research from Centre for Economic and Business Research has shown that last year 750 people started a new apprenticeship in the Ludlow constituency, giving an average benefit to the bottom line of £2,207 for every apprentice hired, or some £1.7 million boost to local businesses. This benefit is immediate, after wage and training costs are deducted.

County Training, the apprenticeship service run by Shropshire Council, offers latest advice on apprenticeships, so I urge local

businesses to take advantage of their free recruitment service to see what grants are currently available to help meet the costs of taking on new apprentices or training existing staff."

Vicki Harris, a former Ludlow College student from Clows Top, joined Cleobury Country in January, having approached County Training for help finding an apprenticeship.

She said "I am very happy to be here. I am learning more about the world of work every day. This is my first job, so as well as developing my work skills, I am also learning how everyone takes their tea!"

Gavin Owen, Business Development Officer from County Training, said "Vicki is a great advocate for this scheme. We were pleased that through County Training Apprenticeship Scheme we were able to help find the right person for the right position in a few weeks."

The next monthly meeting of the Cleobury Mortimer Business Network will be held on Wednesday 19th March at Cleobury Country at 6pm, and will focus on apprenticeships. Vicki Harris will be on hand with Gavin Owen from County Training to explain how the apprenticeship scheme works. There will also be information events running in Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Telford, Whitchurch and Oswestry during April. Please contact County Training to reserve your place.

Ann Hartley, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for children's services, said: "County Training works with a large number of

businesses already, providing opportunities for young people looking to access opportunities to develop a career with training. We're encouraging 16-24 year olds, including those that are leaving school or college this year, to come forward and find out more about this increasingly popular post-16 option. Apprenticeship vacancies are available countywide, with opportunities ranging from working in marketing and design and solicitors, through to being in a hospitality environment or working with horses."

Shropshire's County Training currently has 50-60 apprentice opportunities across the county with more expected after Easter.

The proportion of sixteen to twenty-four year olds, who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) has declined to its lowest level since 2008. Across the country there are 45,000 fewer NEETs than there were this time last year, and at 7.6 per cent the proportion of sixteen to eighteen year olds who are NEETs is the lowest since records began.



Photo: Philip Dunne MP with apprentice Vicki Harris and Gavin Owen from County Training



## Do you have spring in your step ?

With spring officially now here and daffodils and blossom cheering us up, business confidence seems to be riding high. Could now be the time to look at getting those marketing projects off the ground that you've spent all winter thinking about ?

There are a number of things you could be doing to stimulate demand for your products and services. Remember that your website should be the central point that all your marketing messages and advertising points toward, so ensure that it is kept up to date and relevant.

**Does your logo and brand reflect your business reputation and quality of service ?**

A poorly designed logo and brand can harm your reputation before you have even spoken with a potential customer. Take time to ensure that your marketing materials all reflect your brand consistently and are of the right quality to inspire confidence.

Big brands spend millions on getting their logo and branding right, and more on ensuring that their message is consistent across all media. Take a leaf out of their book and review all your materials together to see how good they look.

Do you have signage, or sign writing on your company vehicles ? These can often be a very cost effective form of marketing. Ensure that you don't try to say too much, or make the writing too small to read quickly, as many people won't have time to read it all. Ensure that your logo and web address are prominent.

**Are you communicating with your existing customers regularly?**

Regular communication with existing customers is key to repeat business. You can do this in a number of ways, but by far the cheapest and easiest is via email.

Consider starting to collect your customers email

addresses if you haven't already, and think carefully about what sort of things might interest them to hear about. It could be that you have regular offers, or perhaps you are attending a trade show or you have a new product or service to launch.

There are many online systems that allow you to send great looking email newsletters out to lists of customers. Some of them include: MailChimp, ConstantContact, iContact to name a few. Many of them offer free trials. The best thing you can do is plan the contents for each newsletter in advance, this will make it easier to put the newsletter together every month, or however often you plan to send them out.

Crystal Thought can provide your business with help to enhance your reputation, by using great design, and also help to get started with email newsletter communication.

*William*

# CleoburyCountry

## THE BACK PAGE



[www.cleoburycountry.com](http://www.cleoburycountry.com)



### Market Dates for 2014

Saturday February 15th  
Saturday March 15th  
Saturday April 19th  
Saturday May 17th  
Saturday June 21st  
Saturday July 19th  
Saturday August 16th  
Saturday September 20th  
Saturday October 18th  
Saturday November 15th  
Saturday December 20th

**ALL MARKETS HELD ON SATURDAY'S FROM 9.30am to 12.30pm**



[www.cleoburycountry.com](http://www.cleoburycountry.com)

# CLEOBURY THE COUNTRY TRADE CARD 2014

AVAILABLE FREE NOW in the Cleobury Country Area  
Contains Useful Telephone Numbers and  
Alphabetical Trade Listings for Local Businesses

Next Cleobury Networking meeting date: Wednesday 16th April