

# SWINDON BUSINESS NEWS

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## Business News

### Business leaders push for better transport

The first meeting of what will be a regular transport forum for Swindon business leaders took recently under the auspices of GWE Business West's Initiative in Swindon. A number of businesses were involved, including Howard Tenens, Honda, Alder King and Whitmarsh Lockhart.

Swindon Borough Council's Director of Transport, Dave Potter, attended the meeting to talk about the council's plans for the future of transport in Swindon. The council's Local Transport Plan 3 is currently out for consultation and Initiative members were invited to give feedback and provide input on the requirements for business. The meeting produced a debate between the Council and Initiative members.

Business leaders pressed for a number of actions that are needed to sustain business competitiveness in the town, these included:

Better orbital bus services linking key housing and employment areas

Intelligent transport systems – including better management of the existing road system

Much needed improvements to key transport interchanges – railway station and bus station

Electrification of the mainline rail route to London and Bristol, with

future high speed rail also a priority

Peter Barefoot, Alder King said: "This meeting is an excellent forum for business to prioritise and channel some of its concerns to the council. Alder King is pleased to be involved in this forum giving business the opportunity to present ideas and thoughts to the Council."

Ian Larrard, Director of GWE Business West's Swindon Initiative, said: "Businesses in Swindon are keen to work with the council to develop this agenda and help achieve the transport improvements we all want for the town. Through the Initiative in Swindon we will continue to bring businesses together to discuss these critical issues."

Nicky Alberry, Chairman, GWE Business West, said: "We have to look at what is achievable in the current economic climate. It's important that we continue to work to improve transport in and around the town, so when the economy does recover we have in place a long term strategy for transport in Swindon."

"This meeting is only the first stage in the process, the Initiative in Swindon will meet regularly to discuss transport issues and provide a means of engaging positively with Swindon Borough Council."

### New Harvester restaurant to create 55 new Swindon jobs

Swindon is getting its second Harvester Salad & Grill next month, creating 55 jobs for local people.

The new Harvester restaurant on Latham Road off Thamesdown Drive is due to officially open on September 7, and more than 50 bar, waiting and kitchen staff are being recruited.

Harvester's senior marketing manager, Alex Meyer, said: "We are delighted to have secured such a fantastic site for our second Harvester

Salad & Grill in Swindon.

"The area has great potential and we're confident that Harvester's unique offering will continue to prove very popular here."

"Our new restaurant will be the ideal setting to meet family and friends, with a relaxed and casual atmosphere that people will want to return to time after time. We're looking forward to welcoming guests of all ages in a few weeks time."

Freshly prepared main courses on Harvester's Salad & Grill menu start at just £4.99, and that price includes unlimited trips to the famous Harvester Salad Cart.

The menu gives guests the option of picking their own grill, sauce and side with 1,575 combinations to choose from, but complete Earlybird meals are also available all day everyday.

### Green energy jobs seen as vital to SW economy

A survey launched in the South West of England indicates that "green energy" jobs could be the key to leading the region out of the current economic downturn.

The survey of over 200 businesses shows that over the last two years, despite the recession, the number of people employed in the renewable energy sector grew to over 5,000 – a 78 per cent increase.

The survey, commissioned by Regen SW, found that there were now 5,100 people working directly in renewable energy.

It also found that the value of the industry to the South West economy (GVA) had risen by 17 per cent from £215m to £251m.

"This survey demonstrates the huge opportunity for renewable energy to be at the heart of our future prosperity. The 5,000 plus people already employed should be just the start" said Merlin Hyman, Regen SW's chief executive.

He added: "We will see massive investment in the next decade in meeting our climate change targets. That investment could go to overseas energy and technology companies – or we could equip local companies to win

the business and generate thousands of skilled long-term jobs.

"Regen SW is working with over 700 businesses, local authorities and many other partners on a huge range of exciting projects from wave power to woodfuel to help businesses create green jobs.

"The survey shows this work is greatly valued by business. It is vital that we build on this work as the new local enterprise partnerships, which are charged with setting the vision for our local economy in the future, are set up."

Regen SW identified a total of 731 businesses active in the renewable energy and/or energy efficiency sectors, which together directly support almost 10,000 jobs.

The findings reinforce a study by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills which demonstrated that the environmental goods and services sector is an important component of the regional economy. It also said that the South West outperforms other UK regional economies of a similar scale such as Scotland and the West Midlands in terms of the level of activity in the sector.

### Specialist recycling company opens facility in Colerne

A specialist carpet recycling business has opened a new recycling centre in Colerne.

Green Recycling has taken a new two year lease on Unit 18 at Colerne Industrial and Storage Park, which was let to them by joint agent Alder King Property Consultants. The unit is a 50,000 sq ft detached industrial unit close to the entrance of the Park.

Green Recycling has now fitted out the unit and will use it to process around 1,000 tonnes of waste carpet material every week.

The company has dedicated carpet collection containers at household recycling centres across the UK and also provides a carpet recycling service to several local authority areas. Through providing this service, the company diverts as much material as possible from landfill.

Alison Williams, senior surveyor at Alder King said: "Colerne Industrial and Storage Park offers three former aircraft hangars which have been converted to offer secure warehouse and distribution accommodation.

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