

Newbridge Networking a Great Success

There was a full house at our Speed Networking event at the end of January 2011 where lots of local business people got to meet and swap details of their organisations on a one to one basis. Three hours later the exhausted participants went home hoarse but happy having got to introduce and promote their information individually to a room full of like-minded individuals. Businesses in attendance included financial services, entertainment options, consumer products & services and 'business to business' specialists. This included a beauty salon to hauliers and everything in between!

The concept of Speed Networking is based on the idea of 'Speed Dating' where someone invests one evening to get to meet lots of others for a quick introduction. If they like what they see and feel they could do business together they subsequently arrange to meet up for a longer chat at a later date. It is a cost effective way of sourcing new customers within the business sector which has worked well for Newbridge in recent years and is always a popular event with members.

Speaking on the night, President David Wright said "We are delighted to kick off a busy Chamber year with this popular event. I am particularly keen to promote the idea of shopping local all year round - not just for Christmas - and by you doing business together it keeps the money moving in our local economy. In addition service should be better and costs more competitive when we are all close by one another, so everybody wins."



Libby Kelly (Bank of Ireland) & Tim Redmond (Canada Life) prepare to start networking



Local business owners and managers 'ready to go' at the Speed Networking evening



In full swing are (facing) Peter Moran (East Coast FM), Eugene Donovan (Donovan Printing) & Nora Corbett (Robeplan)



Gabriel McGinley (Fitzgibbon McGinley Architects) & Avene Dempsey (Coughlan White Solicitors) take a break from their Speed Networking

43rd AGM Report



Top Table at the AGM: David Wright, President, Con McNamara, Vice-President, Noel Delaney, Treasurer, and Larry Sheridan, Auditor.

The Chamber's 43rd AGM was held on February 28th last, ahead of the novel Procurement Platform (featured on page 1). David Wright thanked Newbridge Credit Union for the use of their fabulous facility and confirmed he is staying on as Chamber President for a second year, before getting through the formalities of the AGM.

In his address he mentioned rates still being one of the big issues on his agenda, and the importance of keeping dialogue open with all parties. Christmas parking concessions are also an objective which he intends following up now and not waiting till the season is upon us. (He has since met with Michael Malone, Kildare County Manager on both of these issues).

He complimented Whitewater S.C. & Newbridge Silverware on their recent €50,000 successful promotional retail initiative which has created a coveted lifestyle image for Newbridge and is attracting lots of new shoppers to the town. David also took the opportunity to remind attendees of his vision for Newbridge as a year round 'Shop Local' destination.

David listed several other projects which he and the committee are busily working on behind the scenes on behalf of the Chamber and as details are agreed or progress made we will spread the word to members. These include very innovative Bord na Mona environmental projects, Enterprise Ireland / IDA developments in the town and plans for a Low Cost Trade Fair to be hosted by Chamber in the Curragh Racecourse later this year.

He concluded his address by outlining the 2011 Business Plan objectives and his desire for its roll out via sub committees to ensure no stone is left unturned.

After Finances were discussed and a commitment given to balance keeping costs to a minimum for the year ahead, while still providing critical and unique membership

benefits, the new committee for 2011 was elected - see page 3 for current list of volunteers. The meeting concluded after AOB (which included a discussion on the best timing for local Chamber events to boost attendance) training needs (most urgently Social Media) and everyone moved over to the other part of the Credit Union for the Procurement Platform.

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ISSUE 1 2011



PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESS

After the AGM in February last Newbridge Chamber hosted a unique event. In a first for the town, the Procurement / Purchasing Managers of some of the bigger companies based in Newbridge were invited to meet other Chamber members, in order to see if they are producing goods and services which the larger businesses need to buy. The 'Procurement Platform' was born.

In a little over an hour, lots of 'one to one' discussions were held and contact details exchanged. It is hoped that in the future at least quotes can be sought from those who attended on the night. All else being equal, there is a definite commitment across the board to consistently support local suppliers.

The success of the local economy depends hugely on businesses based here, as they pay staff wages, rent, rates etc. and keep the money moving round the area.

Similarly, the larger companies are looking for value and keen suppliers with efficient service to keep down their costs of doing business!



Pat Quinn, Keadeen Hotel, meets Architect Barry Fitzgibbon



Pat Sutton, O'Kelly Sutton, meets Kevin Martin from Pfizer

High calibre companies including Pfizer, Proctor & Gamble, The Keadeen Hotel, Michael Murphy & Co. Ltd. and Horse Racing Ireland joined Newbridge Credit Union at their premises to see if they could source any more of their needs from these environs. It seems all who attended (Purchasers and Suppliers) found the exercise a positive one. A Manager from one of the multi-national firms subsequently observed "It was good to be involved and very interesting to see how enterprising people are."



John Leddy, The Leinster Partnership, hands over his card to Joe Murphy from Michael Murphy & Co. Ltd.

"Box Clever, Box Innovative, Box Bold!"

Shane Ross was in flying form at this year's President's Lunch when he told the audience at the Keadeen Hotel that it was time for the government to take action on our IMF loan. Ross suggested to the listeners that we do the unthinkable and default in order to contain the situation and then seek better terms. Speaking in his easy style he gave his views on Ireland's future to the business people of Newbridge at this popular annual event.

He started by saying he was aware of the difficult business climate in which Chamber members throughout the country are currently operating. Realistically while we are at a low ebb, we can recover - it's the route that's chosen to recover which is key! The last few weeks have helped greatly to raise morale, especially the change of government and the visits of Queen Elizabeth and President Obama which have helped us regain our self confidence. "At

least the world now knows we are open for business".

Ross suggested that we have sent a signal to international business people that Ireland is worth checking out. Although not a popular view, Ross emphasised that in his opinion multinationals are key to keeping investment up in Ireland. He called for a reduction in the corporate tax rate rather than an increase or leaving the status quo! We need to attract new international investments to headquarter here, as it is much more difficult to get indigenous industry to provide jobs on the same scale.

Indigenous entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged. Small businesses shouldn't have to suffer high rates and upward only rents. We need to encourage the Government to introduce a 'Small Business Bill' to help businesses breathe. This measure, along with cuts in public service spending, is what



Noel Delaney (Grant Thornton), Shane Ross TD (Guest Speaker) & David Wright (President)



is needed to confront traditional thinking and help encourage economic growth, Ross felt.

Event Sponsor Grant Thornton's Newbridge based Partner Noel Delaney reiterated their delight to be associated with the prestigious Newbridge event for the 4th year in a row. A successful association he put down in no small way to the high calibre of speakers over the years.

CHAMBER COMMENT

Newbridge Chamber President speaks out

We in the Chamber are staying optimistic! This is your President's second recession to experience so why should I be optimistic? The previous lessons learnt were that those businesses which are agile and go the extra mile for the customer will prosper.

Post the Chamber's AGM we have started a new business year and we have a few fresh faces on the Committee full of enthusiasm. Work for the next 12 months has been defined under the headings:

Increasing Business Opportunities through Networking. The Chamber plans local events and specific networking events with our neighbouring Chambers including access to Dublin members. *Team Leader:* Con McNamara assisted by Evan Arkwright, Derek Shannon and John Tierney.

Specialist Training to bring new business skills to members and in particular utilising social networking. *Team Leader:* David Wright assisted by Breda McHale.

Job creation and inward investment seeking to help business growth and encourage new business starts. *Team Leader:* Michael Mullally assisted by David O'Reilly and Fiona McLoughlin.

Sustainable Communities with a focus on Environment and associated business opportunities. The key is to make Newbridge and District attractive to inward investment. *Team Leader:* Corinna Hopkins assisted by Con McNamara.

Growth and Income, building a strong and agile Chamber. *Team Leader:* Noel Delaney assisted by Brid Nolan, Breda McHale and Celia Quinn.

There are a few vacancies on a number of the teams. If you feel you can make a valuable contribution please contact Breda and Celia at (045) 438296.

In the adjoining article based on the work of Chambers Ireland, we comment on the Programme for Government and the potential measures for creating prosperity.

Newbridge Chamber, while focused on some new initiatives for the year ahead, has not forgotten the key issues facing our members' business survival, such as rates and energy costs.



David Wright
President of
Newbridge Chamber

The Programme for Government

Here we highlight five of the key elements on creating a strong business environment based on the Programme for Government compiled by Chambers Ireland. We have also asked David Wright for his opinion on each one, as you'll see below.

1. The reform of procurement processes to aid small and medium business participation. This combined with a promise of streamlining bureaucracy is to be welcomed. For example, the potential reform for small business tax and sole traders (less than €75,000 p.a.) in order to cut compliance costs.

President's comment: *How government helps and hinders business and the citizen by rules and regulations is in need of constant review.*

2. To bring our bankruptcy laws up to date is to be welcomed.

President's comment: *This change should be done in conjunction with strong legislation to make reckless trading a criminal offence. We cannot have a wake of disproportionate debt left behind as a result of bankruptcy.*

3. Reform of JLCs (Joint Labour Committees) especially where the terms are a threat to business growth.

President's comment: *There is no desire to see the lower paid workers paying for the current crisis; however, there are many aspects of JLC agreements that are outdated and have no connection to the real world of commerce. Failure to reform will mean the road to emigration will be heavily populated by the very people the JLC are supposed to protect.*

4. Promises for Local Government reform have been made and this will in all probability be done in conjunction with water and waste management issues including charges.

President's comment: *Governments have been talking about Local Government reform since the foundation of the State. It is a bit like talking about draining the Shannon. The key words for reform are: Adequate funding, equitably distributed resources with transparency, including corporate and individual accountability. There needs to be a link between rental values and rates. New businesses or 'change in business use' levies need to be related to encouraging enterprise. At a time when bank loans are difficult, levies become an even greater barrier to those who are willing to take risks by starting or expanding a new business.*

5. Halving PRSI rates applied to less than €356 and lower VAT from 13.5% to 12% is most welcome. This combined with labour intensive capital programmes should aid jobs.

President's comment: *There is a recognised saying 'Governments don't create jobs, entrepreneurs do so'. However, Government has a major role to create the environment for businesses to prosper. While attention needs to be given to the new technology and knowledge industries, the hardy faithfuls of agriculture - in particular food and the thoroughbred industries - should be championed.*



Meeting Minister Perry

John Perry TD, Minister of State for Small Business, chatting with Peter Byrne, Newbridge Chamber's CEO at Chambers Ireland's CEO Forum in April. The Forum gave Chamber CEOs from all round the country the opportunity to discuss key issues for the future of business in Ireland with the new Minister. It also represented a good platform to meet each other and share experiences and possible solutions to many of the common business problems encountered by members throughout the country.



Meet Newbridge Chamber Committee for 2011

The following Committee members were elected at the AGM on 28th February 2011:

NAME	COMPANY	BUSINESS TYPE
Peter Byrne (C.E.O.)	Newbridge Chamber	Chamber of Commerce
David Wright (President)	Horse Racing Ireland	Horse Racing Authority
Con McNamara (Vice-President)	McNamara Communications	Interview & Public Speaking Consultant
Noel Delaney (Treasurer)	Grant Thornton	Chartered Accountants
Evan Arkwright	Curragh Racecourse	Racecourse Management
Fiona McLoughlin	Privateseller.ie	Online service selling homes privately + Business Consultancy
Michael Mullally	Management Consultant	Management Consultancy
Brid Nolan	Falcondale Properties Ltd.	Property Management
Corinna Hopkins	Bridge Medical Centre	Medical Practice
John Tierney	TGC Gift Co. Ltd.	Corporate & Golf Gifts
David O'Reilly	O'Reilly Recruitment	Recruitment
Derek Shannon	Bank of Ireland	Banking
Sean Dunne	Rebate Financial Solutions	Financial Planning

If you wish to contact any of the above committee members, please call the Chamber Office at (045) 438296 or email office@newbridgechamber.ie

New Network for Newbridge

One of the new plans of the recently created Event sub committee of your Chamber is the creation of a 'Friday Fortnight' B2B Network for members. This will kick off on 24th June at 7.15 a.m. It will be based at the Keadeen Hotel every second Friday morning and become a

new automatic benefit to Newbridge Chamber members. So no big extra costs – you simply pay €5 for coffee & scone each time you attend. You can also bring a guest with you if you like. With Con McNamara and Johnny Tierney at the helm you know it will be worth while!

Meet New Members

We extend a welcome to recent new members and look forward to seeing you at a Chamber event soon:

NAME	COMPANY	BUSINESS TYPE
Mr. Dave Deering	Deering Transport	Haulier
Ms. Bernadette Doyle	Healing Hands Clinic	Complementary Care Therapy
Mr. Trevor Hull	Kildareataclick.ie	Co. Kildare Activities Web Portal
Ms. Siobhan Brady	02 Newbridge	Communication Provider
Mr. Derek O'Neill	Proctor & Gamble Ireland Ltd.	Provider of Branded Consumer Products
Mr. Ray Cuddihy	Pro-Fire & Design Ltd.	Fire Safety Engineers
Mr. Sean Dunne	Rebate Financial Solutions	Financial Planning
Ms. Nora Corbett	Robeplan	Fitted Furniture Provider
Mr. Paul Traynor	Sharkx	Family Recreation Centre

President's Lunch (continued from page 1)



Pat Sutton, Paul Hughes & Michael O'Farrell



Pauline Curran, Sharon Nolan & Alan Nolan

Close up on Committee

David first started his career with Grafton Recruitment in late 1980's and today manages his own busy employment



agency, O'Reilly Recruitment, from their new location on Cutlery Rd., Newbridge. His daily routine includes interviewing candidates, client meetings, and all aspects of HR consultancy. With a Masters of Business Administration from Trinity College Dublin, David practices what he preaches by keeping up his skills; he's currently completing CIPD and hopes to achieve Chartered Membership this year.

Stimulated by business and commerce, David says he could talk it all day! He acts as a mentor to MBA students in TCD, sits on an SPC with Kildare County Council, and also acts as a consultant to a number of indigenous and foreign businesses. At the same time he owns and manages a company that distributes a range of packaging machinery, components and consumables - a busy man!

David has been a member of Newbridge Chamber since 2004, and has moved onto committee this year. "Now more than ever we all need to work together for the greater good. We have a great little country and great community with excellent people and I want to see it get back on track".

Although David is originally from Belfast (born bred and buttered!) he now lives just outside Newbridge near Baroda Stud with his wife Triona and their three children. He is a self confessed social animal, rugby fanatic and family man. When time allows, he also enjoys the odd round of golf. You can contact David at (045) 448800 or via david@oreillyrecruitment.ie

