

Chairman outlines Chamber vision to prosper in 2020 and beyond

Chamber chairman Colin Barber laid out his vision for the organisation in 2020 to the recent Executive Committee meeting, aiming for ongoing achievement across a wide variety of areas.

"I think that we made excellent progress in 2019, both in terms of the services which we offer to our members and also in the way in which the Chamber is run and managed," he said.

"I am very pleased with how much we have achieved, and I believe that we are now being thought of as 'The Voice of Business in Brentwood', which was one of my goals when I became chairman.

"I realise that our progress and continued success is very much dependant on the hard work and commitment of our committee members. With this in mind I am keen to increase the number of committee members, so that the responsibilities can be spread out more evenly."

Colin explained that he is keen to see more of the largest businesses and organisations based in Brentwood join the ever-growing band of sole traders and small businesses.

"As the article elsewhere in this edition shows, we have significantly increased our membership in the past year, particularly among the networking fraternity.

"The Council are keen to promote Brentwood as a potential base for businesses which are looking to expand or relocate to the area, and I think that the Chamber and its members could play a significant role in this.

"I am also keen to increase the range of other services offered to members - continuing to research what other Chambers offer to their members, both in the UK and overseas."

The proposed key areas of focus for the Chamber are:

- Increase the number of committee members and the range of skills and experience they offer.
- Persuade the largest businesses and organisations in Brentwood to become involved with Chamber.



Sponsors of Chamber's latest successful Business Breakfast were Digital Technology Labs, with Kevin Gordon presenting his top-ten website tips to another full house at Marygreen Manor

- Build on the relationship with the Council to promote the needs of members.
- Become involved in helping to promote Brentwood as an ideal place to build a business.
- Increase awareness of and interactions with other Chambers both in the UK and abroad.
- Increase the range of services and benefits offered to members.
- Increase Chamber's 'non-subscription' based income.

A bumper year for Chamber membership with 50 per cent rise in 2019

Chamber membership rose dramatically in 2019, growing from 172 in January to 259 members at the end of the year, an increase of fractionally over 50 per cent.

Neil Hornsby, who looks after Chamber's Member Services, identified several reasons for the relatively large rise: "There's an increased perception in south west Essex that Brentwood is a 'good place to do business', both by being based in town and also recognising opportunities that exist within the Borough.

"We now have several members who are based outside the Borough but who do much of their business in and around it."

Sole trader members and charities/not-for-profit organisations saw an increase of 40 per cent in 2019, now making up 44 per cent (114) of the membership; while membership by companies with 2-10 employees increased by 43 per cent, to 30 per cent (77) of the total.

Companies employing 11-50 increased 53 per cent to 26, representing 10%

(26) of the membership; with the larger companies (6 per cent) and Town Link Radio subscribers (10 per cent) completing the membership picture.

Neil also believes the positive word being spread about Chamber activities is producing an upwards membership spiral: "There was an increase in Chamber members networking at other events during 2019, with a knock-on effect of more Chamber members introducing further new members.

"The decision to introduce Meet the Members events to provide more networking proved to be very popular and of itself generated new members. And the introduction of the Chamber Zone at the Brentwood Showcase, where potential members were able to chat to members of the Executive, generated 30 new members."

It's no surprise then that Neil has received lots of positive testimonials from members going into 2020:

"Joining Brentwood Chamber of Commerce was probably the best business decision I made that year.

I've had the opportunity to network with a group who genuinely want to do business with fellow local companies, and to support each other along the way."

"I totally recommend joining Brentwood Chamber - it's an organisation that exists for its members; friendly, welcoming, proactive and fun, it's well worth it. You only have to look at the growing, diverse membership and the many complementary benefits you receive as a member."

"Pop along to one of the many sessions and just say 'Hi', you won't regret it, have fun!"

"Southend is dead, so I am looking at the opportunities in Brentwood."

There were five new members approved in January: Indian food specialists **Tastefully Yours**; **Qi Centre**, for physical and mental wellbeing; **Gritting Works**, for gritting and snow clearing services; **Think Thinner**, providing weight loss coaching; and **Essex Community Foundation**, an independent charitable trust.



A trailblazing year for Queen's Theatre

Chamber member Queen's Theatre Hornchurch - a registered charity that has been serving the local community for over 65 years - racked up an impressive list of achievements in 2019.

As well as being nominated for London Theatre of the Year in The Stage Awards, Queen's staged 14 productions, including notable world, European, regional and London premieres.

Among other accomplishments were:

- Over 131,000 audience members welcomed.
- 45 per cent of the total were first time visitors.
- Productions made at or with Queen's were seen by an additional 25,000+ in Ipswich, Clwyd, Hull, Oldham, Derby and Croydon.
- Four-star reviews in The Observer, Guardian, Sunday Express, Evening Standard.
- Over 7,350 subsidised school children tickets sold.
- 149 people from across London on stage in As You Like It, including 20 disabled performers, a Public Acts partnership production with the National Theatre.
- Shortlisted for three Off West End Theatre Awards in January, with another four nominations throughout the year.
- 411 young people took part in Queen's Theatre Hornchurch's 2nd annual Take Part Festival.

Ian McKellen On Stage fundraised more than £46,000 towards QNew, celebrating the Theatre's 65th birthday with a facelift for artists, participants and audiences alike.

QNew transformed the building with a new Q Learning Space, Q Bar, lighting and an array of improvements front of house and backstage.

Exciting plans for 2020 are already underway and if you would like to be involved with special access to the theatre and audiences why not consider becoming a Corporate Champion.

Contact Tom Lowe, Relationships Office, at toml@queens-theatre.co.uk for more information.



The Recovery Rooms' bespoke themed Art Deco bistro serves fresh and tasty food from 6am Monday to Friday

Therapy camps help to relieve daily pressures

Chamber member the Wilderness Foundation UK is running three Wilderness Therapy Camps during 2020 for 16 to 21-year-olds at their Chatham Green and Mann Wood sites in Essex.

Taking place on March 7-9, July 25-27, August 15-17 and September 26-28 the camps take participants deep into nature and wild places, away in space and time from the pressures and immediate issues that they may be struggling with on a day to day basis.

Referrals can include depression, trauma, relationships with siblings, parents, couples, friends, and work, drugs and alcohol, self harm, health recovery, social and other anxiety, and bereavement amongst other problems.

You can self refer, commission services for a client, or contact them with regards to a child or client in your care, school or home.

By being outdoors beneficiaries can often feel more relaxed, and less pressured, and using natural tools and exploration the work is more creative and makes engaging much easier.

The costs are £450 per person with £200 non-refundable deposit. Contact info@wildernessfoundation.org.uk for booking information.

Fund starts donations

In mid-December, Chamber member Community Charity Fund for Brentwood made the first donations from its reserves. The Trustees' efforts to raise funds through events and grants made it possible to fulfil its aim to promote local community cohesion by offering a helping hand to small local charities and charitable community projects.

The beneficiaries were: The Gates (providing social, educative and therapeutic opportunities for vulnerable adults), the Brentwood Club for Visually Impaired Persons, and The Moses Basket (supporting families with babies and young children needing basic items of clothing & equipment).

The Trust has plans for various 2020 fundraising events and the intention to launch an updated invitation for local groups to apply for funding. Application forms via: CCFB c/o Oscar Court, Fairfield Road, Brentwood CM14 4LR.

Get your mind and body working to perfection

New chamber member The Recovery Rooms is a totally new concept focused on the promotion of both physical and mental wellbeing from their Kings Road premises in Brentwood.

Co-founder Nick Noguera explains: "We believe that with both your mind and body working together in unison, this contributes towards a higher quality of life. The Recovery Rooms is built on the idea that everyone is equally important and we endeavour to act as a support system that cares about everyone's wellbeing.

"We are also a wellness centre, committed to offering an array of different services that provide recovery for the body and mind." These include yoga, pilates, meditation, cold exposure therapy (ice tanks, cryotherapy), intravenous hydration therapy (IV Drips and IM shots), and massage therapy.

"At The Recovery Rooms we understand that for many of us, work is a big part of our lives. It's where we spend a lot of our time, it's how we pay our financial commitments and moreover it's where we meet new people and develop relationships," says Nick. "The pressures of working life can be a burden for some people in dealing with issues associated with their mental health – deadlines, targets, promotions, to name a few. A toxic working environment can be detrimental to our mental health and wellbeing.

"Addressing mental health and wellbeing at work increases productivity by as much as 12 per cent and The Recovery Rooms are here to help business achieve this through interactive workshops, informative and educational presentations and various other fun and engaging initiatives."

In addition to the health services on offer, they have a coffee shop bistro that sells various blends of coffee from around the world, as well as a healthy clean menu including a variety of plant-based / non-plant based recipes and healthy food supplement based drinks. See therecoveryroomsuk.com.

Meet the Members in 2020 in very different settings

One of the many benefits of our Meet the Members events is the chance to see where the hosting member is based while you do some evening networking. And events moving into spring will allow you to visit a wide variety of premises and locations along the way.

Next up on Tuesday February 25 is hosted by Howe Chartered Surveyors at The Vault, near their Shenfield premises, followed on Tuesday March 24 by The Chiropractic Centre, and a week later at The Recovery Rooms.

Then on Tuesday April 21 the event will be hosted by Essex Wildlife Trust from their Thorndon Countryside Centre in Thorndon Country Park. All the events are free to members, and will be bookable via brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events.

Chamber Events Calendar 2020

February

Tuesday 4 - Meet and Eat lunchtime event

The Teriss Bar; sponsored by UK Energy Management

Friday 14 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Brentwood Borough Council

Tuesday 25 - Meet The Members networking event

Howe Chartered Surveyors; The Vault, Shenfield

Thursday 27 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers:

How to Maximise The Power of Your LinkedIn Profile

CREATE Business Hub, Brentwood

March

Friday 13 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Howe Chartered Surveyors

Friday 20 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24

fingers: Blogging for more Business

CREATE Business Hub, Brentwood

Tuesday 24 - Meet The Members networking event

The Chiropractic Centre

Tuesday 31 - Meet The Members networking event

The Recovery Rooms

April

Friday 17 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by The Chiropractic Centre

Tuesday 21 - Meet The Members networking event

Essex Wildlife Trust, Thorndon Countryside Centre

Friday 24 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24

fingers: Using Facebook to get more business

CREATE Business Hub, Brentwood

May

Thursday 14 - Chamber Open Meeting & AGM

Friday 15 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Blue Serif

Friday 15 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24

fingers: How to Easily Create Eye-Catching Images and

Video for Your Social Media

CREATE Business Hub, Brentwood

TBC - Meet The Members networking event

Bretts Business Recovery

June

Friday 12 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Bennetts Funerals

Friday 19 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24

fingers: How to Build a High Converting Sales Funnel

CREATE Business Hub, Brentwood

Monday 22 - Meet The Members networking event

SNAP

July

Wednesday 1 - Chamber Summer Barbecue

Ashwells Sports and Country Club

Friday 10 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Guided Learning

Monday 20 - Meet The Members networking event

Saint Francis Hospice

August

Friday 14 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Rotary Club of Brentwood

TBC - Meet The Members networking event

The Teriss Bar

September

Friday 11 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Carers First

Friday 18 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24

fingers: How to run an engaging Instagram Profile

CREATE Business Hub, Brentwood

Tuesday 22 - Meet The Members networking event

Guided Learning

October

Friday 9 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Aching Arms

Friday 16 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24

fingers: How to Use Instagram Stories

CREATE Business Hub, Brentwood

TBC - Meet The Members networking event

Kinetic Podiatry Clinic

November

Friday 6 - Brentwood Business Awards

Orsett Hall Hotel

Friday 6 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24

fingers: Give yourself the Gift of New Customers this

Christmas - How to Run a Highly Effective Marketing

Campaign

CREATE Business Hub, Brentwood

Friday 13 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Brentwood Development Partnership

TBC - Meet The Members networking event

Brentwood Brewery

December

Friday 11 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by 24 fingers

See brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events for all the latest event updates and online bookings.

Members can post their own events at brentwoodchamber.co.uk/add-member-event.

Brentwood Chamber of Commerce
Pepperell House
44 High Street
Brentwood, Essex
CM14 4AJ

01277 214814

info@brentwoodchamber.co.uk

www.brentwoodchamber.co.uk

Let's Connect:

Twitter: @BwdChamber

Facebook: @BrentwoodChambers

Instagram: @brentwoodessexchamber

LinkedIn: /company/brentwood-essex-chamber-of-commerce

Newsletter Design:

JD Designs

www.jddesigns.co.uk

Newsletter Editor:

Julian Goode

www.juliangoode.co.uk