

MP calls for Chamber members to help shape the recovery

Brentwood and Ongar MP Alex Burghart has called for input from Chamber members as he gathers thoughts from the local business community on economic recovery, as we begin to emerge from COVID-19 lockdown.

The government published its COVID-19 recovery strategy, which outlines a phased return of businesses to work, with a roadmap to lift restrictions step-by-step including opening non-essential retail when and where it is safe to do so this month, and opening at least some of the remaining businesses and premises that have been required to close next month.

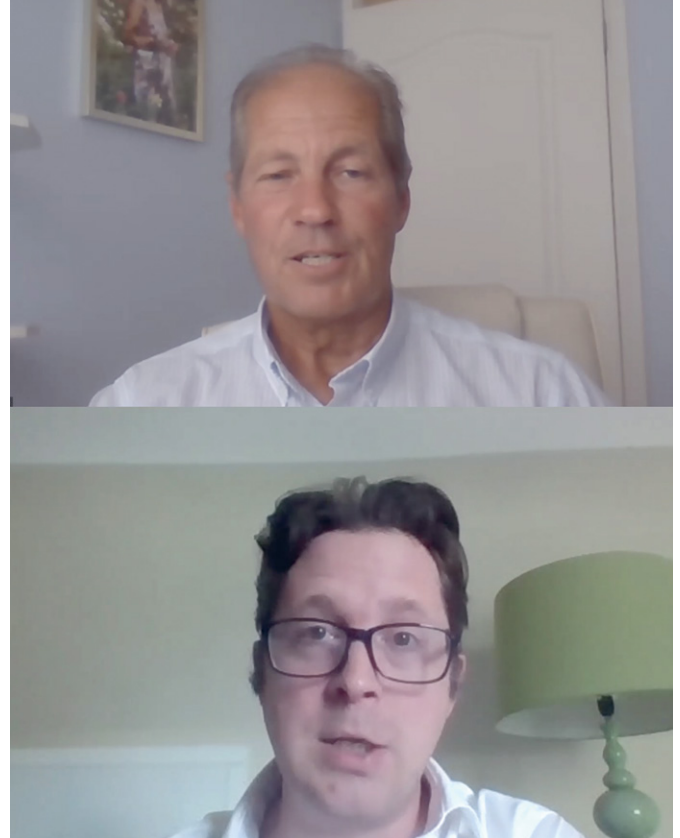
Speaking during last month's exclusive Chamber Q&A, run live online via Zoom, Burghart said: "I'd be very interested in hearing from anyone who's on the call today or anyone else who's involved in Brentwood Chamber of Commerce about your ideas for how we can generate growth and jobs in our area and nationally.

"Because how we step up to this challenge is going to be one of the big questions of the age, and we need your expertise."

The 50-minute session - available to watch back in full via the Chamber's YouTube channel at youtube.com/channel/UC39BxChrewL2v9P1KYEE8Jw - covered a wide range of subjects, with questions submitted in advance by the watching audience, and real-time during the webinar.

Issues discussed included the extension of the government furlough scheme; issues with and the possible extension of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme; the safe return of Brentwood's children to schools, and it being safe for vulnerable parents for them to do so.

Also mentioned were our high street shops re-opening as planned this month and onwards; the introduction of the planned test, track and trace system this month; a post-COVID19 net-zero approach to economic recovery; the NHS surcharge for overseas workers; and the roll-out of a coronavirus vaccine.



Brentwood and Ongar MP Alex Burghart joined Chamber chairman Colin Barber for the live Zoom Q&A session run via Zoom, and now available to watch via the Chamber's YouTube channel

Chamber chairman Colin Barber, who put the questions, said: "Thank you to Alex for joining us and answering your questions. We did cover most of the questions submitted, and we wish him all the best as he continues to manage the issues presented to the government.

"If you'd like the Chamber of Commerce to submit any questions or anything else to Alex then do contact us."

You can contact Alex Burghart via his website at alexburghart.org.uk.

Being an 'aloeholic' could restore you

Our immune system works in two main ways: innate and acquired, explains Chamber member Khatija Karim of Entirely Aloe.

"Innate response is our body deciding whether something is friend or foe. Acquired is where we can play a part and support our immune system by regular exercise and healthy eating ensuring we get all the vitamins and minerals we need," says Khatija.

"Those who have met me know I often talk about being an aloe alcoholic. But what I aim to get across is the importance of having an all-round nutritionally charged pure (99.7 per cent) Aloe Vera drink which has more than 20 minerals, 12 vitamins, 18 amino acids and 200 health promoting compounds every day.

"It restores the balance in your gut, which as you well may know is your second brain, and contributes to 80 per cent of your immune system.

"So why not take this shot every morning to set you up for the day and more? There is no other plant known with such a perfect ratio of health elements.

"Coronavirus or not, along with a healthy immune system we could all do with a digestive aid, to maintain natural energy levels, and assist natural beauty for our skin, hair and nails."

Contact Khatija on 07974 399859 or see entirelyaloe.myforever.biz/store.

Five go on member list

In spite of the current situation we had another five prospective members to approve at the May executive committee meeting.

Bright & Beautiful Brentwood are an eco-friendly cleaning, tidying, laundry and ironing provider; **Kingswood Group** provide specialist HR solutions; and **Supreme Electrical Limited** are an electrical contractor.

Also joining were **Admin Support By Rachel**, run by Rachel Lynas, and **The Productivity Process**, run by Hayley Sykes. All their details will soon be added to the Member Directory at brentwoodchamber.co.uk/members.

If you're considering joining Chamber, see the benefits of membership at brentwoodchamber.co.uk/membership-benefits and apply online.

Keeping immune system healthy is vital to get through the lockdown

Coral Byford from Health and Wellness by Coral is a qualified homeopath, bio resonance practitioner and diet and nutrition therapist. She has been involved in the industry for over 20 years. Here the Chamber member outlines the things you should be doing to maintain your health through the COVID-19 lockdown.

"Lockdown is now easing slightly although we all need to be cautious and keep healthy. The best way to do this to is keep your immune system healthy. The best way to do this is through eating immune-busting foods.

"Spinach is packed with anti-oxidants and beta carotene which may increase the infection fighting ability of your immune system. Cook spinach as it is then at its best.

"Other foods to include are citrus foods, oranges, lemons, grapefruit. These are packed with vitamin C. The body does not store vitamin C - if you choose to go for a supplement do not take more than 2000mg a day.

"Red peppers, broccoli, garlic, ginger (this is also helpful for nausea); Greek yogurt is great with some fruit and honey for breakfast. Include sunflower and almonds, Kiwi and papaya fruit. Green tea is good and has lots of health benefits.

"Poultry is the best meat to eat; try to avoid having too much red meat as this can be inflammatory. Turmeric is one of the best spices to include in your cooking.

"Get out in the air for a walk regularly, and now the summer is coming it will also help your Vitamin D levels. Try also to keep stress as low as possible, walking is great for that as is yoga and meditation.

"If you wish to take supplements then please take a good make such as Cytoplan or BioCare. Take a probiotic to support the good flora in the gut and then a Vitamin C and possibly D.

"If you would like any help or more information then please book a discovery call with me through homeopathessex.co.uk or email coral@homeopathessex.co.uk."



Get out and walk regularly now summer is here says Coral Byford

Member Spotlight webinar series set for launch

Social distancing has presented challenges and opportunities for all of us. While it is not currently possible to run our popular offline face-to-face 'Meet the Members' networking events, this does not prevent us from getting to know other members.

So Chamber chairman Colin Barber has come up with the idea of a new regular online series of webinars called 'Member Spotlight' that will enable you to hear about other businesses in the Chamber of Commerce, and provide you with some useful tips which could maybe be replicated in your business.

In each webinar Colin will be talking to one of our members, to hear their story and learn some of the secrets of their success. It will be a great opportunity to explore member businesses and look for possible future collaborations.

If you're interested in taking part and would like to find out more, then drop Colin a line via Colin.Barber@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk with your details.

Also launching soon will be a new 'Members Training Programme' - Build Your Business - to provide training courses and workshops, which will help chamber members to develop and grow their business. Guidelines for training providers are online at brentwoodchamber.co.uk/members-training-programme - and we're keen to receive your training proposals!



Building a healthy relationship is key when advising employees on the plan for coming back in during the current crisis says Mullis & Peake's Manzurul Islam

Steps to consider for your staff's return to work

Manzurul Islam of Chamber member Mullis & Peake LLP Solicitors goes over some of the considerations when advising your employees on the return to work in the current climate.

"There is only so long any business can sustain being closed or under reduced operations. A business needs to be productive and profitable to ensure its survival and providing an employer has taken reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff, it can, in theory at least, compel them to return," says Manzurul, the Head of Mullis & Peake's Dispute Resolution team.

"However, an employment relationship is not a healthy one if an employee feels forced to do something against their wishes."

So, what can you do to assist your staff's transition to work? "Communicate - this is one of the most important steps. Do not ignore or play down the fears of your staff. They are unlikely to risk their income and job security unless their concerns were serious.

"Consider a plan and what adjustments you can put in place to make your staff safer, so they feel reassured. Also consider changes to your business hours and working patterns. Try adjusting hours so that teams who might ordinarily be working in close proximity can do alternate shifts.

"Be prepared to invest in protective measures. There are many no-cost steps you can take, such as restrictions on numbers using lifts or communal areas. Some changes will be more modest than others (e.g. additional soap and hand sanitiser), whereas others could be more costly (e.g. installing plastic screens for staff who might be customer-facing)."

To discuss any employment issues please contact manzurulislam@mplaw.co.uk or call 01708 784020.

Free marketing surgery offer for members

Attract & Engage are offering Chamber members a free no-strings attached marketing surgery during lockdown - helping prepare for the challenges ahead and come back stronger.

You can join directors Jill and Richard Willis for an hour via Zoom as they help you to explore the steps you can take to ensure marketing responds to the new landscape, you power through coronavirus, and maintain visibility in your market for long-term profitability and continued growth.

There are five sessions on offer per month, for as long as it takes the COVID-19 situation to abate.

Says Richard: "Our businesses are all facing challenging times as the economic impact of coronavirus starts to bite. Marketing must now work smarter than ever, and be ready to tackle the growth challenges ahead." Email richard@attractandengage.co.uk to register your interest.

Videos to help you think thinner!

"I started my business, Think Thinner, to provide one-to-one weight loss coaching and help people who are struggling to lose weight to stick to a diet or to deal with their food cravings," says Chamber member Sarah Measday.

"The people I coach have often tried many different diets, losing weight initially but finding that eventually they fall back on their old eating habits and regain the weight they had lost.

"The philosophy behind Think Thinner is to provide a different way to lose weight and in a manner that is both healthy and sustainable. Instead of focusing on depriving yourself of certain foods or restricting how much you eat, I help people to change the way they think about eating and weight loss.

"This is the only way for someone to conquer unhealthy eating habits such as sugar cravings, emotional eating, night time eating etc. I provide my clients with tools and strategies to enable them to change these eating habits, lose weight and keep it off, for good!

"Lots of people are worried about their weight or weight gain during this lockdown period and I want to be able to help more people than I am able to reach through individual coaching sessions.

"So I decided to produce a series of DIY weight loss videos that people would be able to follow and start to learn the techniques that are required to lose weight on a sustainable basis."

Watch the videos at thinkthinner.co.uk.



Sarah Measday

Chamber Events Calendar 2020

June

Friday 5 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers: Grow Your Business with the Google Toolkit
Being run online

Friday 12 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers: An Intro to SEO for the Busy Business Person
Being run online

Friday 19 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers: How to Build a High Converting Sales Funnel
Being run online

Friday 26 – Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers: An Introduction to Advertising on Facebook and Instagram

Being run online

Mondays – Coffee & Chat with members

Virtual networking via Zoom

Tuesday & Fridays – Backing Brentwood Business

Webinar series via Zoom

Tuesdays – Wellbeing Evening with Virtual Networking

Being run via Zoom

Wednesdays – Chamber Lunchtime Networking Get Together

Virtual networking via Zoom

All other June events cancelled

July

All offline July events have been cancelled. Details of online events will be confirmed in next month's newsletter.

August

All offline August events have been cancelled. Details of online events will be confirmed in due course.

September

Tuesday 1 - Meet & Eat lunchtime networking event

Thursday 10 - Chamber Open Meeting and AGM

Friday 11 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Carers First

Friday 18 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24 fingers: How to run an engaging Instagram Profile

Tuesday 22 - Meet The Members networking event

Guided Learning

Tuesday 22 - Meet The Neighbours, Safari Networking

Stansted Airport

Tuesday 29 - Meet The Members networking event

Tees Law Directors

October

Tuesday 6 - Meet & Eat lunchtime networking event

Friday 9 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Aching Arms

Friday 16 - Chamber Training Workshop run by 24

fingers: How to Use Instagram Stories

Tuesday 20 - Meet The Members networking event

Kinetic Podiatry Clinic

Monday 26 - Meet The Members networking event

Kids Inspire, Chelmsford

November

Tuesday 3 - Meet & Eat lunchtime networking event

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

Friday 13 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by Brentwood Development Partnership

Tuesday 24 - Meet The Members networking event

Wylie Veterinary Centre

TBC - Meet The Members networking event

Brentwood Brewery

December

Friday 11 - Business Breakfast

Sponsored by 24 fingers

Thursday 17 - Chamber Christmas Lunch

Events will be reviewed and cancellations updated at brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events - where all online events can be booked in advance.

Helping brands to #StayEngaged

Many of us are now very used to the remote way of working which has been necessitated by the COVID-19 crisis. But as the light at the end of the tunnel begins to shine, you may be wondering how to best communicate with your clients that you're ready to hit the ground running.

Now more than ever, brand consistency and credibility is key. Branded presentations and documents have a higher audience engagement, therefore delivering your message in a professional, efficient manner.

Chamber members Blue Serif have been helping brands to build this credibility - helping them to communicate with their clients throughout lockdown - and are now turning their attention to getting brands up and running again as they begin to re-open.

Their #StayEngaged campaign has been helping businesses to stay engaged with their audiences through a suite of digital assets, including branded presentations, professionally designed newsletters - both as internal comms and external to clients - interactive brochures and on-brand social media posts.

All of these pieces of digital collateral have helped brands keep in touch with their clients, update their audience on changes to their working practices and help build brand credibility, ready to drive sales. These tools will continue to be important in the coming weeks and months, as will assets such as digital screen content displaying safety messages and latest offers in retail premises. Contact: hello@bluserif.co.uk.

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