



We'd like to be ending the year with our usual Christmas Lunch gathering - but hopefully in-person events won't be too far away again in 2021

Message from your chairman: at the end of testing year for Brentwood business

As I write this we are in the middle of our four-week lockdown, which is again having a massive impact on many of your businesses.

Whereas the first lockdown seemed to be widely accepted as a necessary precaution, talking to our members, I get the impression that there is more resistance and frustration this time, particularly from small businesses, many of which are fighting to survive.

While the Chamber has been unable to stage so many events this year, we have certainly been active in representing the needs of our members.

I am pleased to say that both Brentwood Borough Council and our MP, Alex Burghart, have been very keen to hear your views and experiences - so do keep letting us know how things are for you.

Not all of our discussions have been related to the lockdown and its impact. For example we have been actively pushing for a quick solution to the mobile phone signal problems, caused by the loss of the aerial near Brentwood station.

Another area of concern to Brentwood businesses is the ongoing conversion of office space to residential accommodation. Finally that old chestnut – parking; Brentwood Borough Council recently held a workshop to ascertain the views of Brentwood businesses on a wide range of issues related to parking in the Borough.

The Council have also been busy running a consultation process with high street specialists, Savills Place, on future ideas and options for the three high streets in the Borough. One of the key findings was that the Borough needs to be marketed better both to residents and outside visitors.

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Chairman's message:- looking ahead to 2021

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The Chamber are currently participating in a series of workshops facilitated by Savills Place to formulate a plan for promoting Brentwood as a desirable place to live, work and do business.

This newsletter is the last one to be edited by Julian Goode, who is stepping down at the end of this year. I am sure you will agree that Julian has done an excellent job editing the newsletter over the last couple of years. He has also been responsible for all our social media output and will be greatly missed. Thank you Julian.

As I mentioned in previous articles, every adversity contains within it the seeds of opportunity, and I do hope that many of you are managing to innovate and take advantage of new opportunities presented by this 'new normal'.

I wish you all the very best for 2021, whatever it holds in store for us.

Colin Barber, Chairman

AGM hope for May

Following various discussions about our AGM, the executive committee took the decision not to hold the AGM in 2020.

The AGM usually takes place in May, so we hope to be able to go ahead with the AGM in May 2021. One of the purposes of the AGM is to publish the annual accounts for the previous year, and respond to any queries regarding the accounts. If you would like to see a copy of the annual accounts for 2019, please contact Chamber.Office@BrentwoodChamber.co.uk.

Welcome to new trio

As the Chamber continues to offer a broad range of services to our members, we are pleased to welcome three new faces to our executive committee.

Adding to our existing line up will be Matt Barry (Blue Serif), Emma Goode (24 fingers) and Cally Raynor (Howe Chartered Surveyors) - who will all be starting on the committee in January.

Find out more in our next newsletter, which should be published in February. Please send us your new year news articles!



Staff at Spire Hartwood Hospital were keen to take part in the activity challenge to help the fundraising effort for SNAP

State of the art tech brings loved ones together

Brentwood nursing, dementia and residential home Brentwood Care Centre, in Larchwood Gardens, has been able to offer regular visiting for residents and their loved ones thanks to the state of the art Edison DayLodge (pictured above).

The lodges at the Chamber member give residents and their families the peace of mind that it's a clean and safe environment thanks to the Automatic Sanitisation System that's guaranteed to kill 99.9 per cent of all germs, including the coronavirus (as stated by Edison & Day®).

Other important safety features include separate entrances for residents and visitors, and a plexiglass room divider. It also has the added benefit of heating and air conditioning so, whatever the weather, everyone can enjoy their visit in comfort.

"The DayLodges are a really comfortable atmosphere and we are so pleased we are able to visit and be together as a family again," said Ged and Susan, husband and daughter of a Brentwood Care Centre resident.

The facilities are bright and spacious and have been beautifully furnished and decorated for maximum comfort, creating a peaceful and homely atmosphere for safe visitation; enabling residents to spend time with their loved ones while adhering to government guidelines.

Okay to lose your hat and find your core identity

These have been challenging times for many of us; businesses finishing, employees furloughed, redundancies, changing business practices and a general sense of uncertainty. "For some, this has led to a sense of loss of identity or sense of self," says Emma McNally, of Chamber member Achieve Your Greatness.

"We put a lot of importance on the labels we use to describe ourselves; we are 'business owners', 'directors' etc. These labels serve to create security, clarity and understanding. However, the issue starts when we believe that these labels are actually who we are - our identity.

"This is not the case - these are just the roles we play and are therefore transient in nature. As COVID has shown us, things can change overnight. It is therefore helpful to realise that these labels are just that: labels. They are just roles we are playing, hats we are wearing! Most of us have many hats - business, family - and we become adept at changing hats on a regular basis. If a significant hat is removed it can leave us feeling discombobulated.

"Once you realise that these labels don't define who you are, you can start to discover your core identity; those qualities and characteristics that make you unique. Knowing and discovering your true identity can help you to feel more secure, so that when changes occur (and they will) you can move forward with greater confidence."



New air conditioning system installed by CS HVAC at The Halfway House Restaurant

Five new members

We were pleased to welcome and approve five more new Chamber members at November's executive committee meeting.

Joining up was Hey Presto Cleaning Services, a professional cleaning company based in Brentwood, offering services to all of the surrounding areas; also Undiscovered Workplace, providing office relocation services - and passionate about moving customers' offices and saving them time.

North East Counselling Services are based in Tyne & Wear and provide high quality counselling via Zoom and telephone to private individuals, couples and company employees; while Aprons & Errands are a professional housekeeping and errand running business based in Romford.

We also welcomed Navigate Life Coach, offering life and mindset coaching services to clients across the UK and Europe.

If you're not yet a Chamber member, but are interested in joining for the new year, then have a look at brentwoodchamber.co.uk/join and fill in the online application form.

Final 2020 events

Following last month's Member Spotlight webinar with Robin Bailey of Capricorn Media, we have another scheduled for Thursday December 10, this time with Chamber member Kids Inspire.

If you miss any of these live, you can watch them all back on the Chamber's YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/3mniyZX>

As well as the Wellbeing Event on the first evening of the month - featuring a presentation on 'Getting glam for Christmas' with makeup artist Leanne Perilly - we have our first sponsored Virtual Breakfast taking place this month.

These have proved popular events this autumn, and we're delighted to welcome Kinetic Podiatry Clinic as our sponsor at the early morning networking session via Zoom on Friday December 11.

We'll be reviewing our online events scheduling as we move into 2021, and all events for January and February will be added at brentwoodchamber.co.uk/events for booking as soon as they are confirmed.

We hope our Events Calendar will return for 2021 in our next newsletter edition, scheduled for February. And we obviously hope that it won't be too long before that we can once again include in-person Chamber events.

Breath of fresh air delivered at The Halfway House

With COVID-19 at the forefront of everyone's mind and with the government restrictions in place it has been hard for the hospitality and leisure industry to get back on its feet. That is why The Halfway House Restaurant, on the A127 south of Brentwood, has invested in people's safety and comfort.

Chamber members CS HVAC Ltd (CSHVAC.co.uk), based in West Horndon, recently completed the installation of new, highly efficient low-profile extraction fans situated throughout the dining and bar areas. This ensures that clean, fresh air is streamed through the facility. The fans can deliver a performance of up to 25 air changes per hour depending on the occupancy. With this rate of fresh air being drawn through the space it almost is as good as being outdoors.

"The new Mitsubishi Electric driven air conditioning systems will manage the temperature to a very comfortable level," said Darren Milne, CS HVAC Business Development Manager. "The systems were selected for their high level of efficiency and filtration, before delivering the comfort to the various spaces."

The equipment was designed and installed by CS HVAC, an air conditioning and ventilation contractor, and will be maintained by sister company Campbell & Law Building Services Ltd (CampbellAndLaw.com) for optimal performance and effectiveness.

"Shaun and his team at The Halfway House are delighted with the performance of the new ventilation and air conditioning systems," added Darren, "as it will not only offer patrons a safer, cleaner environment to dine in, but the staff will also benefit from working in this very well ventilated place of work."

Annual subscription rates stay unchanged for 2021

December is the time when Chamber issues invoices for annual subscriptions. The executive committee had previously intended to recommend an increase in subscription rates for 2021, as we increased the amount of services offered to members. However, with the amount of services being restricted by COVID-19, and having given consideration to the financial difficulties being faced by many of our members, we decided to keep rates the same for next year.

In comparison to subscription rates charged by Chambers of Commerce in similar sized towns, we believe that our rates offer good value for money, and hope that membership of the Chamber will continue to grow.

At the same time as issuing invoices for 2021 subscriptions, we will be introducing membership numbers, which will make it easier to administer events. Please make a note of your membership number and quote it when booking Chamber events.

We would appreciate it if you could pay your subscription as soon as possible, and if paying by bank transfer, remember to quote your membership number.

A busy time for Rotary Club despite challenges posed this Christmas

Christmas is a magical time, but it is also a very busy time for the Rotary Club of Brentwood - and this year will be no different despite the current challenges.

The Christmas team at the Chamber member has been working really hard to think how they can still put on their Christmas activities in a way that keeps the general public and their members safe.

So they are doing the following:

- Visiting a Street Near You - December 14-18: helping Santa visit some of the roads in Brentwood, pulling Santa on his sleigh - and the helpers will ensure that safety is observed.

They will publish the roads that Santa will be visiting, and you will be able to track in real time where the sleigh is during these nightly visits.

- Talk to Santa on Zoom - December 19: although you will not be able to see Santa in his grotto in the High Street this year, you will be able to chat with him on Zoom. Let him know how good you have been and the special presents you have on your list!
- Still collecting donations: not only the busiest time, but the time of year when the Club raise more money for their local charities than any other.

They anticipate that this year will be different, as times are hard in so many ways; but if you feel you would still like to donate to the Rotary Club they will ensure that your hard-earned donations will go to help charities locally.

To see the routes, download the tracker, make a donation or book your slot for a Zoom call with Santa, visit santa-brentwood.co.uk.

The Rotary Club of Brentwood would like to take this time to wish everyone a happy, healthy Christmas!



Father Christmas is coming to town

Father Christmas has asked his friends at The Rotary Club of Brentwood to help him safely meet as many children as possible this year. Children can send an email to Father Christmas and visit him in his virtual grotto from

Monday 14 December until Christmas Eve

Track Father Christmas and his Sleigh around the streets of Brentwood using his Sleigh Location App. If your lucky you may spot him in a road near you. For more information please visit

www.santa-brentwood.co.uk



LinkedIn can be a powerful tool for business growth if used correctly and creatively

When Adrian Williams first joined LinkedIn in 2005 he says it was "most definitely just an online depository for CVs: a comfortable home for job seekers, career advancers, and recruitment agencies".

But Adrian, of Chamber member CSE, says: "Fast forward some 15 years and we now find it, in my opinion anyway, the premium social media site for Business to Business (B2B) networking.

"It is in fact the world's largest professional network, with a staggering membership in excess of 720 million in more than 200 countries and territories.

"My personal contacts have grown to over 9,000 over the years, and the platform continues to fuel the growth of my business. I came to the easy conclusion a long time ago that as a small businessman I would not have survived and thrived without it.

"For those who are new to LinkedIn, the posting process is remarkably like that of Facebook, though there are some small differences. Whereas in Facebook your post message can be up to 20,000 characters long, in LinkedIn you are limited to some 1,300 characters. I have never found

this a problem as I am writing to business people who just would not have the time to read a 'War and Peace' length post!"

On the plus side, some research conducted recently by 360Freedom, showed that the half-life of a Facebook post is three to five hours in the stream, whereas that of a LinkedIn post is three to five days. This obviously gives your message a far greater opportunity to be seen.

Adrian says it is always important to remember when constructing messages for a LinkedIn post that each one should be business focussed: "It really pays to remember the golden four-stage rule of marketing when you do so: interrupt; engage; educate; offer.

"I also think it important to use every post as a vehicle to build your brand in the marketplace. You can use products like Canva that will enable you to place your business logo or strapline on every picture or image you use to enhance the interest of your post."

If you would like to chat further about LinkedIn, find Adrian at linktr.ee/adrian.williams.cse.

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