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BIP NEWSLETTER

One unwritten rule for this newsletter is not to discuss politics especially when there is an election campaign running, thankfully as I write this there is currently another topic grabbing peoples attention; volcanic ash.

What effect might this have on readers of this newsletter? If you are stuck abroad then you will have been affected significantly, however if you are quietly getting on with your life you probably haven't been affected at all. I think the lesson which has struck me is that however sophisticated man's technology, when nature intervenes, man is powerless to stop it. One good thing is that this eruption is quite small compared with past incidents. In 1785, the consequence of a dramatic eruption was the death of 75% of Iceland's animals and 25% of the human population. All of Western Europe was affected by the sulphurous ash clouds, which damaged both animals and humans alike. Six days of no aero planes is quite a small price to pay compared with that?

By the time you read this, of course, the eruption may have increased again and flights will be disrupted again. As with all things in life there will be winners and losers, domestic tourism could well be a winner as holidaymakers evaluate the risks of disruption to their travel plans. Alternatively, maybe the no-fly period will be quickly forgotten.



By this time readers may well be asking what's all this rambling got to do with businesses in Devon.

It's about individual businesses being able to cope with disruption or interruptions in their normal trading patterns. These disruptions can be due to natural causes, like volcanoes, floods and snow, or loss of key personnel through accident or illness or it could be changes in economic conditions such as recessions or increases in interest rates.

You may take the attitude that none of this will affect your business; if that's the case, well done, or you may feel that there's nothing you can do to control any of this. You certainly cannot control the weather or volcanoes, or even interest rates. However, it is important to plan to minimise risks to your business. At a recent Lloyds bank seminar it was anticipated that the costs of borrowed money, are likely to increase over the next few years as UK plc grapples with its enormous deficit. If you'd like to learn more about how many senior economists view the next few years, and how you might manage these risks, we are holding a workshop to discuss the benefits of proactively managing your finances over the next few years. (see the events page)

Stewart Horne

Small Business Rate Relief

Some ratepayers may be eligible to claim relief on the grounds that they are a small business.

You will be classed as a small business if:-

- a) you have only one property*, in England, on which you are liable (wholly or jointly) for the payment of non-domestic rates
- b) the rateable value of that property is £17,999 or less and remains below £18,000 throughout the financial year; and
- c) the property is occupied and you are not entitled to claim any other mandatory relief.

* If you do pay rates on other properties they will be disregarded if their rateable value is £2,599 or lower, provided that the total of all properties' rateable values is £18,000 or less.

Properties with a rateable value of less than £12,000 will receive additional relief depending on the rateable value of the property, as shown below:

- Rateable Value £1 to £5,999 - 50% relief.
- Rateable Value £6,000 to £11,999 - relief reducing from 50% to 0.01% (1% for every £120 above £6,000).
- Rateable Value £12,000 to £17,999 - reduced multiplier only.

Ratepayers who receive any other mandatory relief, such as charitable relief or rural rate relief, may not apply for Small Business Rate Relief.

This is further supported by the chancellor's announcement as described below:-

Increase in Level of Small Business Rate Relief

This is important news that could benefit your business. The Government is introducing a temporary increase in the level of Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) available to eligible businesses. These changes will come into effect in October 2010. Meanwhile, you should ensure that you continue to pay your existing business rates bill.

On 24 March, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Government will temporarily increase the level of SBRR so that eligible ratepayers will pay no rates on properties with rateable values up to £6,000, with a tapered relief of between 100% and 0% for properties with rateable values between £6,001 and £12,000. The new levels of relief will be available for 12 months from 1 October 2010 to 30 September 2011.

There are no other adjustments to the scheme. For example, the eligibility criteria remain the same as described.



1SW Gets RDPE Funding

The South West is set to become a world-class destination for adventurous off-road cycling.

A total of £7.5m is being invested in developing the activity across the region, including funding of £4.6m from the Rural Development Programme for England.

The Forestry Commission led 1SW initiative will be developing trails, sites and information across the whole region which will enhance the quality of experience for anyone who wants to experience the fun of off-road cycling.

Developments will include purpose built adventurous cycling trails, bike hire facilities, cafes, areas to develop bike handling skills and information on how and where to ride across the region.

Paul Hawkins, 1SW Project Manager says: "The 1SW project will make off-road cycling attractive and accessible to everyone, even to those who haven't ridden a bike for years! The region's tourism economy stands to benefit greatly with opportunities for a diverse range of businesses, from increased out-of-season accommodation demand to providing specialist services such as guided rides. We will work with local businesses to ensure they maximise their benefit from the provision of this quality adventurous cycling product. Off-road cycling in woodlands is enjoyable whatever the weather and provides a fun alternative to beach-based activities, particularly outside of the main summer months."

Funding comes from the Rural Development Programme for England which, is partly funded by DEFRA and the EU. The funding is provided as part of a wider project under the Sustainable Rural Tourism Theme, managed by the South West RDA.

The National Trust, South West Lakes Trust, the National Parks, AONB's and Bristol City Council are all key delivery partners in this project.

More information about the project can be found at <http://www.1sw.org.uk>

ATTENTION ALL FOOD AND DRINK MANUFACTURERS!

Are you looking to:

- REDUCE your business costs through improved product and package design?
- ATTRACT your customers by using packaging that really 'talks' to them?
- REDUCE your carbon footprint in the most practical and efficient way there is?

In which case, benefit from the specialist - but very practical - help from our group of extremely experienced speakers who will speak YOUR language.

Mark Shayler brought to you by the **Manufacturing Advisory Service** has worked with small and medium sized food and drink businesses for over 8 years - and in his 15 years experience overall, has delivered in excess of £50 million of savings through improved package and product design alone.

Jon Stevens working with the **Food Innovation Service** comes from a team of dedicated food industry professionals with a diverse range of experience and contacts- enabling you to take advantage of the skills and knowledge gained from taking small food and drink businesses from 'farm to fork'.

The Manufacturing Advisory Service South West has worked with BIP clients in really improving their productivity, and helping them to compete more effectively.

Don't let your business miss out on this fantastic opportunity!

**Events take place on Fri 21st May and Tue 25th May.
Lifton Farm Shop and Watermark Suite Ivybridge
9.30 – 1.30 including a light buffet lunch and networking.**

Cost £10 per attendee payable on the day.

Events Page

We have a programme of events planned for the next couple of months. All our workshops are subsidised by our funders and cost just £10 per person. Please call us on **0800 592 872** to book your place.

Create a professional business website – absolutely free.

A website is one of the most effective ways to grow your business, allowing potential customers to find you, view your products, and place orders while you're busy running your business. So we're delighted to make it easier than ever for you to enjoy these benefits. Deborah Turner will show you how to use a simple online tool to create your first website - no technical knowledge needed. Update your site from any computer, for free.



We are running a series of these workshops at the following venues on the stated dates:-

Okehampton Business Centre on Tue 11th May at 9-30am—12.30pm or 1.30pm—4.30pm

Tavistock Business Centre on Tue 18th May at 9-30am—12.30pm or 1.30pm—4.30pm

Teignbridge Business Centre on Thur 20th May at 9-30am—12.30pm or 1.30pm—4.30pm

Okehampton Business Centre on Tue 8th June at 9-30am—12.30pm or 1.30pm—4.30pm

Tavistock Business Centre on Tue 15th June at 9-30am—12.30pm or 1.30pm—4.30pm

Woodland Grant Workshops

Tavistock Business Centre - Wednesday 12th May at 7pm – 9.30pm

Okehampton Business Centre – Thursday 27th May at 7pm – 9.30pm

Jez Ralph, of the Silvanus Trust will speak on the Woodland strand of the RDPE grant scheme, other woodland grant schemes, and describe the types of project that could be eligible for grant funding. These include funding for woodland and forest owners to improve the economic value of the forest, forest based businesses, primary production of forest products, renewable energy, tourism and recreation and skills and training.

Low Carbon Workshop for Food & Drink Businesses

Lifton Farm Shop - Fri 21st May & Watermark Suite Ivybridge Tue 25th May – 9.30 -1.30pm

Reduce your business costs through improved product and packaging design. Attract your customers by using packaging that really 'talks' to them. Reduce your carbon footprint. Come along to meet the speakers from Manufacturing Advisory Service and Food Innovation Service

Soil Management - Okehampton Business Centre - Tuesday 25th May at 7.30pm – 9pm

This workshop will include cross compliance issues and maximising fertiliser efficiency. Led by Facts and Basis qualified advisor David Hinshelwood

RDPE Grant Programmes for the Land Based Sector

Okehampton Business Centre – Wednesday 26th May at 7.30pm – 9pm

This workshop is a comprehensive walk through what is a complicated picture by our grants expert Stewart Horne

Managing Finance

Tavistock Business Centre – Thursday 3rd June at 7.30pm – 9pm

This workshop will examine the medium term prospects for interest rates and actions that can be taken to reduce the impact of changes on an individual business, by our senior business advisor David Hinshelwood.

Every effort has been taken to ensure the information contained in these notes is correct, however, West Devon Business Information Point will not be liable for any loss arising from the use of these notes or any omissions or errors contained within.



“The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in the rural areas”