

# Celia is a winner in decision making

AN INNOVATION consultant has won an award for a new decision-making idea.

Celia Gates, from Seaford, received the Gold Award at the British and World Invention, Innovation and Technology Awards for "The Whether? Forecast" way of thinking.

The Awards were held at Alexandra Palace, London.

The "Whether? Forecast" is a decision-making process with a difference.

By encouraging and stimulating lateral and creative thinking, the Whether? Forecast aims to provide solutions to problems by drawing the user's attention to their true sense of purpose.

Among the benefits are saving the time you would have spent worrying, arguing or debating a difficult decision and combining skills and knowledge to reach a more rounded decision.

# Scheme promotes eco firms

A NEW scheme aims to reward small firms with a green agenda.

The South East England Development Agency (Seeda) Innovation Voucher scheme offers small to medium-sized companies a voucher of up to £4,000 for a programme of sustainability consultancy work with a university.

Examples of the areas of work which could be covered include renewable energy resources and better energy management.

A company can choose to work with any university in the UK, but the company applying must be based in the Seeda region.

To find out more, visit [www.brookes.ac.uk/business\\_employers/research/consultancy\\_vouchers](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/business_employers/research/consultancy_vouchers)

# Dynamite reputation

A BUSINESS-to-business express delivery company has won plaudits for reducing its carbon emissions.

TNT has been awarded the Carbon Trust Standard awarded to organisations which go the extra mile in trying to cut their carbon footprint.

Independent assessors examined how TNT has managed to reduce carbon emissions and the company's commitment to continuing to do so in the future. A number of initiatives at TNT Crawley, based at Newton Road, Manor Royal Industrial Estate, have contributed to the company's overall reduction in carbon emissions.

Mark Roscoe, general manager at TNT Crawley, said: "We are delighted to receive certification with the Carbon Trust Standard, which further confirms our green credentials."



GREEN: CEO of the Carbon Trust, Harry Morrison, and director of Health, Safety and environment at TNT Neil Griffiths

# Business leaders fear maternity pay burden

by JOHN KEENAN Business Editor

BUSINESS leaders fear that a new law on maternity and paternity leave will result in firms being out of pocket.

The European Parliament has voted through proposals that will extend maternity leave to 20 weeks on full pay and introduce a compulsory full paid paternity leave of two weeks.

According to the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), the plans will cost small businesses an extra £7,000 each.

Trevor Constable, chairman of the Worthing and

# Changes from European Parliament will cost £3bn

Adur Branch of the FSB, said: "Small businesses are known to be flexible employers and it is unfortunate that maternity and paternity leave is one of the biggest barriers for them when looking to take on staff.

"The FSB fears that these changes will result in an increase in the cost of maternity and paternity leave and will mean these costs have to be shared between Government and the employ-

er, at a cost of more than £7,000 to a small business - placing a further strain on cash-flow.

"We all know it is important to have adequate, flexible maternity and paternity leave but it should be for elected Governments to decide how much their economy can afford to give on leave and pay, and how it is to be delivered.

"This directive should be about setting minimum

health and safety standards for pregnant workers, not adding new payroll costs for overburdened companies and national social security systems.

"The idea those employers or our public finances can bear an additional £3 billion per year is deeply out of touch with economic reality. UK businesses will be hoping that member states can now curb the worst excesses of these proposals".

Mark Froud, chief executive of Sussex Enterprise, said: "The vote in the European Parliament will leave business dismayed.

"At a time when the country is facing £83 billion worth of cuts to Government spending, it is outrageous that the UK exchequer will be saddled with a bill for nearly £3 billion."

Tony Mernagh, chief executive at the Brighton and Hove Economic Partnership, described the law as "self-defeating".

He said: "It could deter some businesses from employing women of child-bearing age."

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# BIZ LIFE



NATALIE PAGE and Mike Escott



VIKKI and Paul Arthur



DAVID Amos and Nina Flinders



CHRIS, Sue and Brian Jay



HELENE Hammond and Cheryl Lovering



NETWORKING at Eartham House and Great Ballard School



SARAH Hopkin and Heather Barrie

EMPLOYERS, business owners and decision makers in the Brighton area, met last week at The City Business Club. Hosted by City Business Skills at City College Brighton and Hove, the event was an opportunity for business leaders to meet, make connections and discuss current issues. The next event will feature the launch of a new employment bureau, City Jobs, and take place on November 16.



LEFT, Liza Weisse, Emma Blaikistone and Richard Pearson.



RIGHT, Naomi Nunan, David Maguire, Laura Murphy and Lisa Hewitt

### Can you explain what you do?

I help people move home, extend their leases, remortgage and other property-related work.

### Why are you better than the rest?

I actually care, don't duck issues and achieve the best possible result for my clients. I get frustrated by companies who go through the motions.

### What time do you set your alarm?

6.30am. I'm not a morning person but have dogs to walk and other animals to sort out. I have spent years trying to teach them to walk themselves but it just hasn't caught on.

### What time do you get home?

6.30pm. I believe in having a good work/life balance so if I need to do extra work I have home/office access.

### Do you live to work or work to live?

Work to live. It sounds clichéd but you are a long time dead so should make the most of your life.

### Best advice you've been given?

Think about the solution not the problem. It is



Warren Robertson is partner at Quality Solicitors Howlett Clarke in Ship Street, Brighton.

easy to say it can't be done but usually you just need to think things through.

### Worst advice you've been given?

If you go to the end of this road, turn left then second right etc. Directions never seem to work well with me.

### What do you love about working in Brighton?

It is the vibe of the town. It is very cosmopolitan, diverse and chilled out. A great place to do business and socialise in. I grew up along the coast and Brighton was almost a mythical place where my friends and I ventured occasionally.

The reality is better than the myth. In my view it's the best town in the world. Wherever else I visit it never matches up.

### What do you hate about working in Brighton?

It only takes something very small to snarl up the traffic and I'm sure they put up road works just to annoy me personally.

### Who's your business guru?

None. There are lots of people who administer advice but the best thing I think you can do is treat people well and you will get treated likewise.

### Business lunches - "Just water for me thanks" or "can I see the wine list?"

Depends on the setting. Probably one glass of beer or wine followed by water. The days of solicitors disappearing at lunchtime on Friday are sadly long gone. Nowadays we are expected to spend the majority of our time at work working. Madness.

### Dragon's Den or The Apprentice?

I like both but probably Dragon's Den. You get to see other people's ideas and passions. Some

are plain barney but the passion shown by people to try and realise their dreams and ambitions can be inspiring.

### Global warming - are we doomed?

Potentially doomed although we now have our first Green MP so maybe people are slowly waking up to our responsibilities. Too much emphasis is placed on the economy and money to the point of obsession like we are all missing the bigger picture. Brighton always seems to be ahead of the times in terms of ideas so no surprise to me the green movement is so strong here.

### Is business responsible and can business save the day?

Business is not responsible. It talks about being responsible but in my view mainly pays lip service. That said business has the power to do good and make money at the same time.

### Most detestable piece of business speak - eg "thinking outside the box".

I hate buzz words and phrases. They are usually an excuse to say something which sounds impressive but is meaningless.



CLIVE Bonny and Phil Frier



RICHARD Excell, Jenny Sladen, Clare Hall and Helen Guinness



TERRY Wilmot, Tim Cobb and Robert Morris