

View from the Chamber of Commerce



District Chamber of Commerce General Manager **Lisa Bates** writes exclusively for the *Herts Advertiser* every fortnight – discussing the latest developments taking place on the local scene. For more information about joining the Chamber of Commerce and becoming a member go to <http://www.stalbans-chamber.co.uk/join-us/>



BY the time you read this week's column the budget will have been announced and all will have been revealed.

There has been a lot of speculation about a VAT increase to as much as 20 per cent which could put some brakes on spending – will it go that far or has all the pre-budget talk been so that we now feel relieved?

The other issue from an increase in VAT is that it means an automatic increase in inflation which will bring forward the day on which interest rates go up which is always a depressant for business.

At the same time we are going to see big cut backs in government spending and the public sector, it's already happening with a rise in unemployment that will go with that.

So Chamber members doing business with the public sector may find things more difficult.

Can the private sector drive enough business growth to cre-

ate some job opportunities and halt the rise in unemployment?

The Chamber always seeks to support our members through difficult times and has business advisors available to offer sound professional advice at a very low cost for all types of business, however big or small.

This is delivered locally by Mel Hilbrow and Michael Weaver from the St Albans Enterprise Agency (STANTA) if you would like to discuss any business issues in confidence please get in touch with them advice@stanta.co.uk telephone 01727 837760.

STANTA will be presenting at the next Chamber breakfast when we launch the St Albans District Business Directory.

This online joint venture with the Chamber, STANTA, Centre for Voluntary Service and SADC is much more than a business directory, it also uses technology which allows for feedback so that users can see

which businesses are recommended.

It aims to include every business free of charge for a basic entry – interested?

For full details go to our events webpage link or call the office to discuss further 01727 863054.

Finally, the Chamber Directors and all staff would like to offer their sincere condolences to the family and friends of Kate D'Arcy, aged 37, founder of Darcy's restaurant, St Albans who lost her seven-year battle against cancer and sadly passed away last week.

Our thoughts are with her family at this very difficult time. The funeral takes place today at West Herts Crematorium in Garston.

We are sure that Darcy's will continue to be a very successful and well-regarded restaurant in the hands of the award-winning team Kate produced over the last eight years with business partner Ruth.

Annabel has all the right curves

A ST ALBANS model has become the face of a new underwear range celebrating colour, curves and femininity.

Annabel Finley Kensett was chosen to represent Staffordshire-based KNX Lingerie by its owner, Sean Shuter, after he stumbled across her photo on the company's Facebook fan page.

The new range of lingerie, which is aimed at the more voluptuous woman and comes in ranges in sizes from 10 to 32, needed a stylish model to front its publicity material, but Sean struggled to find someone suitable.

It was only when Annabel purchased a garment from the company's website that she came to Sean's attention.

He explained: "I first saw a picture of Annabel on the social networking-site Facebook and instantly thought "Wow!" Annabel is a lady who loves colour, loves to wear elegant lingerie and looks absolutely amazing in images."

KNX Lingerie model Annabel said: "As a woman with a passion for beautiful underwear, I had purchased an order from Sean, the owner of KNX and through a fan page of his company became better acquainted with him



Annabel Finley Kensett

and the wonderful plus-size ranges KNX offered.

"I was searching for colourful, exciting underwear when Sean introduced me to his dream KNX range. When the striking red camisole set arrived with its feminine detail, my

face lit up.

"It felt fantastic on and I knew any woman would love to own it."

You can find out more about the range of underwear Annabel will be modelling by visiting www.knxlingerie.co.uk

Search for a new Apprentice

IF you'd like to experience what it's like running your own business, then this could be the deal for you.

Hertfordshire-based Space Solutions is inviting one person to join them on a taster week to experience what it's like working in the family-run business and although there will be plenty to do, they promise not to be as tough on you as Lord Alan Sugar!

You will join existing CITB apprentice Jason Smart (pictured), who is from St Albans, and find out more about how the company operates, under its ethos of helping young people find employment through gainful work experience.

Owner Jason Shepherd said: "It's a Catch 22 these days when applying for posts, as candidates who are well-qualified often lack any hands on experience; we're aware of this and want to further reach into our community to help young enterprising people gain some practical experience in the work place, or indeed, help to ignite their entrepreneurship fuel."

If you would like to experience what it feels like working for the company simply send an email outlining what you think the most important factors are when running your own business to space@space-solutions.co.uk. Please include your contact details, as well as your address.

The winning candidate will be notified by the end of June.



Want to find out what's happening in the world of business locally? Why not sign up for our weekly **business** eshots - just visit the Business section on our newly-redesigned website at www.hertsad24.co.uk to register for updates.

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To book a free hearing test call your local store or find out more at specsavers.co.uk/hearing

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