

# new year new venture



After 24 years experience in the beauty sector, hairdresser and nail technician Jane O'Connor felt the time was right to open her own business and be as successful as those she had recently managed.

Mode Unisex Salon is based in Oxford Road and offers a complete package of beauty services.



Jane spent almost two years turning her dream in to reality, "I always knew where I wanted my business to be but finding the right premises to offer all our services was difficult. I originally considered renting a shop but then the opportunity to buy a property came up and I couldn't turn it down."

The premises Jane identified needed a lot of work to bring it up to date, rewiring, new windows, re-roof and a complete new shop front. "I originally approached Inbiz for advice in setting up a business. They were a great help and put me in touch with Julia Pinchen, Business Liaison Manager, who gave me advice on the grants that were available through New Deal for Communities. I also attended self-employment training courses with Alison Soulsby (New Deal for Communities Enterprise Development Worker) and received support from Hartlepool Borough Council through the Women's Development Fund and the Enterprise Development Fund."

After leaving school Jane attend Hartlepool College of Further Education and qualified as a hairdresser and nail technician. It was there she met Alison Harding-Smith and they have remained friends over the years. Alison now runs the hair salon at Mode with an extensive clientele. They are also joined by Susan Walker a qualified Beautician offering reflexology, aromatherapy and blending of the oils. In addition to self employment opportunities they have been able to take on a hairdressing apprentice who will be joining them this month.

Mode is able to offer clients a full package under one roof, hair and beauty, nails and massage and sun-beds. Gift vouchers and jewellery have proved to be very popular.

Mum to nine year old Diaz, Jane explained, "Being a single parent I have always needed to work and I rely on Diaz's Grandparents a lot to help me. They have been wonderful and very supportive throughout this process."

"This venture has given me the opportunity to provide a more secure future for my daughter. Although I have taken on a big responsibility it has been very satisfying and the best decision I have made."

What advice would she give to others considering self-employment? "Don't be afraid to ask questions. If you don't ask you don't get, and it's amazing what you find out and who you meet. Always keep in touch with who you have met along the way, you don't know when they can help you in the future."

For further information:  
Tel: 01429 281043  
68 Oxford Road, Hartlepool.



## new business ventures



## new developments



## business meetings



## events for your diary

# welcome

Welcome to Newslink, a newsletter for businesses within the New Deal for Communities Commercial Areas.

A New Year brings a new design. As with past issues we hope Newslink will continue to keep you informed of future events, new developments and business opportunities.

If you are a new business tell us why you chose self-employment, or an established business let us know your secret to success.

If you would like to appear in Newslink or would like to see specific advice and information in future issues please don't hesitate to contact me.

May I take this opportunity to thank Reactive Design for their advice and patience!

Regards,  
Julia Pinchen  
Business Liaison Manager  
NDC Commercial Areas  
Tel: 01429 284304  
Email: [julia.pinchen@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:julia.pinchen@hartlepool.gov.uk)

# riding high on success

**Jack's Cycles is a business venture of school friends Mark Fisk and Alan Hurst.**

Named after Mark's son Jack, the friends both worked for and managed businesses selling and repairing cycles. Following a short spell unemployed the friends decided to turn their interest in cycles in to a business opportunity.

Mark explained, "We have worked with cycles since we were boys and after a short spell in the care sector I never lost that interest in cycles."

Alan gained business experience while managing a cycle department for a well known sports outlet. "I am familiar with the brands of cycles available and we are the only outlet in Hartlepool who stock Barracuda cycles. Although we cater for all ages the children's range has proved the most popular."

"It has been a great few months. We are also looking to import from the USA and possibly expand in to motorised bikes."

What advice would you give to anyone considering self employment? "Do your research, find out what is and isn't available in your area. And, make sure you have financial support as we needed a lot of stock to start."

For further information:  
Tel: 07926 879193  
133 Stockton Road, Hartlepool.



# wedding belles are ringing...

**The special occasion of her daughters' wedding gave Maggie Gagan the incentive to open her own business.**

Wedding Belles is a joint venture of Maggie and her daughter Hayley Gagan-Anderton.

"We are proud to be the only supplier of Eden Bridals gowns in the Northeast, offering the latest designs direct from America and Canada."

"A custom made service is also available catering for sizes 4 - 32. We also offer Etiquette men's formal hire at fantastic prices. Special offers are available, the more you buy the more you save."

Hayley explained, "Being your own boss is very rewarding and when you have family commitments you can be that bit more flexible. We had a lot of support from family who helped to refurbish the shop."

What advice would you give anyone considering self-employment? "Look for a good location. We chose Oxford Road because it's a busy shopping area on a main bus route. Lots of customers have spotted us just by driving past."

For further information:  
Tel: 01429 268268  
[www.weddingbellesnortheast.com](http://www.weddingbellesnortheast.com)  
104 Oxford Road, Hartlepool.



# metaquatics

A hobby of more than 16 years has turned in to a unique business opportunity for a young family.

Metaquatics was recently taken over by Chris Cannell and his partner, Joanne, when the previous owners retired. The long established business could not have flowed in to more experienced hands.

Chris explained. "What makes this business unique is the Marine Room we have developed where you can view live coral and live rock, invertebrates and a large selection of quarantined fish stock which is hand picked. We have a very good relationship with well known suppliers KKC, TMC and Bolton Fish Farm."

"Metaquatics has a very good reputation in this field and we want to not only maintain but improve on that to encourage customers from far and wide."

Joanne says, "If you are thinking about keeping fish we can help you through

every step. We offer a free advice service, and free delivery and setting up of the tanks. Also we have a good selection of stock, dried goods and accessories."

For further information:  
Tel: 01429 869157  
129 Stockton Road, Hartlepool.



# to let

NDC Commercial Properties



- **@ The Business Centre, Scarborough Street**  
Office facilities and meeting rooms available  
Close to transport and amenities  
Tel. 01429 864042

- **103b Park Road**  
Ground floor shop unit  
Suitable for retail/hair salon/barbers  
Tel. 07814 936580

- **Derby Street (Oxford Road area)**  
Ground floor shop unit  
Suitable for retail or office use  
Tel. 07950 003905

- **The Arches, Park Road**  
Ground floor shop unit available  
Suitable for A1 use  
Tel. 07919 612408

- **39 Park Road**  
Ground floor 2,000 sq ft  
Suitable for retail/office use  
Tel. 01642 615535 or 07976 848398

If you have a vacant property in the NDC Commercial Areas and would like to include them in the next issue of Newlink please contact Julia Pinchen - Tel: 01429 284304

# hartlepool business awards 2007

The 2007 Hartlepool Business Awards have been officially launched, with all types of businesses across the Borough encouraged to enter.

There are eight awards categories: Retail, Service, Manufacturing, Best New Start, Export, Community, Training and ICT - the winner of each being awarded a £1000 prize. Businesses can enter more than one category, but are encouraged to make each application individual and relevant to the specific area in question.

The top accolade, Business of the Year, will go to the best overall category winner who will be presented with a £2000 prize. Last year's Business of the Year, Deepdale Solutions, have experienced a great knock-on effect from their achievement, with increased levels of staff morale and high customer confidence.

The prestigious Awards Dinner will be held on Thursday 8th May 2008 at Hartlepool's Borough Hall, where £10,000 worth of prizes will be presented to the winners.

Businesses can enter the nomination process in a number of ways: applying online via the Hartlepool Mail or Hartlepool Business Forum websites; or by contacting Hartlepool Enterprise Centre (details below) for an Awards leaflet. The judging panel will then shortlist three businesses from each category, and may arrange a visit to gain further information and evidence of merit.

If you would like further information please contact Sue Stephenson at Hartlepool Enterprise Centre on 01429 867677 or email [sue.stephenson@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:sue.stephenson@hartlepool.gov.uk). The closing date for awards entries is 10th March 2008.



# york road

Work has started on a new retail development which will see the removal of the advertising boards on York Road. The development will include four retail units on the ground floor with eight apartments to the upper floors and associated parking to the rear. For further information contact: McNicholas Estates Ltd. Tel: 01429 263264 or Mobile: 07885 776288



# changes to business rates for empty properties

If you are responsible for business rates on a commercial property that is currently empty, you need to know about the changes that are going to be introduced from 1st April 2008.

## Background to the changes

The Government has changed the way business rates are worked out for empty properties in that from 1st April 2008, most empty properties will be subject to a business rates charge.

The empty property charge is being introduced as an incentive for owners of empty properties to bring the property back into use, to increase the supply of premises to let, which will in turn reduce business rents and improve the competitiveness of the UK. It is also hoped that more brownfield sites will be re-developed, reducing the need for new development on environmentally valuable Greenfield land.

## How will this affect my business rates bill?

As of 1 April 2008, commercial properties that have been empty for more than three months – or, in the case of industrial properties, for more than six months – will no longer receive business rate relief.

If, for example, you own or rent a commercial property that is empty, you will receive a 3 month free period during which you will not have to pay any business rates. If the property is classed as 'industrial' the 'free' period will last for 6 months. Once the 'free' period ends you will then have to pay the normal 100% business rates charge.

## Exceptions to the Empty Property Charge:

There are some exceptions to the new charge:

- Listed Buildings
- Companies in Administration
- Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs

## How will my business rates bill be affected if my property is only partly occupied?

If a property is only partly occupied, the Council can ask the Valuation Office to apportion the property's rateable value between its' occupied and unoccupied parts. The Council will then send you a bill which will include a full business rates charge for the occupied part of the property, based on the occupied rateable value.

The bill will also include a 3 month free period from business rates (or 6 months if it is an industrial property) for the unoccupied part of the property, based on the unoccupied rateable value.

At the end of this free period, in most cases an occupied business rate charge will apply to the whole property, even if part of the property remains empty.

This means that the whole property and not just the occupied part, will qualify for any occupied business rate relief – such as small business rate relief.

If a property still qualifies for a full exemption from the empty property charge, because it is a listed building or owned by a Charity or Community

Amateur Sports Club or a company in administration, no business rates would be payable on the empty part of the property.

## Can I appeal against the empty property charge?

The fact that you are now paying rates on a commercial property as a result of these changes is not grounds for appeal. However, if you disagree with the rateable value of the property, you can appeal against it under certain circumstances, by making a 'proposal' against it to your local Valuation Office.

Your rights of appeal are not affected by the introduction of empty property rates.

For further information about making an appeal, please contact Teesside Valuation Office at: St Marks House, St Marks Court, Thornaby S17 6QR - Tel: 01642 416700

## Do I still have to pay an empty property charge if my property is in poor condition and is not worth repairing?

If your property is in poor condition, not fit for occupation and is worth repairing, you should contact the Valuation Office as they may decide to take your property out of the business rates list altogether.

For further Information telephone the Business Rates Team on: 01429 284277  
Email: [revenues@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:revenues@hartlepool.gov.uk)  
Visit: [www.hartlepool.gov.uk](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk)



# h'art'lepotz pottery painting studio

Looking for a unique way to entertain the kids? Then look no further than H'art'lepotz Studio.

Tracey Elliott opened her studio just over a year ago and has provided a popular alternative to the usual party scene.

"We can accommodate parties for not only children but also for adults, such as hen parties or a group of friends who get together but want to do something different."

"How does it work? You choose a piece of pottery, pick your design, select your colours and create your masterpiece. Leave it with us to glaze and fire. It's a great opportunity to create a unique gift

for birthdays, Mothers day, Fathers day, wedding plates, christening plates and baby hand and foot prints."

"It's very rewarding to see children's faces light up when they see what they have created."

Tracey received help to set up her business from the Hartlepool Borough Council Women's Development Fund and advice from Inbiz. Security improvements were installed with support from the NDC Business Security Grant.

For further details:  
Tel: 01429 264357, Mobile: 07731 994682  
Email: tracey.elliott1@ntlworld.com  
13 Lowthian Road, Hartlepool.



## business meetings update

### york road (south) business meeting

The first meeting was to update businesses of the proposed start date of the York Road Environmental Scheme. The businesses were given the opportunity to raise issues relating to their area:

**Environmental Scheme Phase 1** – work to relocate the services (NEDL) to commence January 2008. The main scheme to commence summer 2008, to include new paving, bus lay-by, parking lay-by and zebra crossing;

**Parking** – concerns were raised by businesses affected by the recent resident only parking scheme implemented in Whitburn and Houghton Street, Bathgate Terrace and Elwick Road. HBC Parking Services Manager agreed to look at the possibility of a customer parking scheme.

**PCT Health Centre Development** – it was agreed to invite a PCT representative to the next meeting to display plans and explain the services, access to site, etc.

### murray street meeting

Following meetings with local businesses the following issues are being addressed:

**Alcohol Restricted Areas** – the Crime and Disorder Coordinator met with local businesses to discuss taking forward an application for the Murray Street area to be considered a restricted area. Businesses agreed to provide CCTV evidence of alcohol related anti-social behaviour to support the application;

**Anti Social Behaviour** – it was reported crime in Murray Street area and Grange Ward has decreased, it was agreed this

was due to partnership working between business, residents and agencies such as PCSO's, Community Safety;

**Additional signage to the car park** – businesses requested additional signage on the car park to inform customers of the free 30 minutes parking available. This is being addressed by HBC's Parking Dept;

**Future meetings** – the timing of meetings is under consideration to allow both daytime and night-time traders to attend future meetings.

### stranton business meeting

Recent meetings with the local business community identified several issues:

**Environmental Scheme** – businesses have been involved in the design of the scheme and will be working closely with the appointed contractor;

**Anti-social behaviour to the rear of the shops** – this has been addressed by cutting back the overgrown bushes and two new light columns are to be installed;

**Safety/security of pedestrians walking from Stockton Street (duel carriageway) and past All Saints Church** – new paving, landscaping and three new light columns are to be installed;

**Parking** – residents living above the business premises have requested part of the area be allocated to residential parking, this issue is being looked at by HBC's Parking Dept.

events for  
your diary

# hartlepool business forum programme

## Access to Finance (with a difference)

Gillian Duffy, Graham Moore,  
Simon Hamilton, Mick Emerson  
5.15 p.m. Tuesday 26th February  
Sir William Gray Suite,  
Hartlepool Maritime Experience

## Marketing and Advertising

Stuart Butler, Iain Willis, Mark Rycraft  
5.15 p.m. Thursday 27th March  
Sir William Gray Suite,  
Hartlepool Maritime Experience

## Motivation/Interpersonal Skills and Body Language

Speaker to be announced  
5.15 p.m. Thursday 17th April  
Sir William Gray Suite,  
Hartlepool Maritime Experience

To book a place contact Sue Stephenson at Hartlepool Enterprise Centre on 01429 867677 or email: [sue.stephenson@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:sue.stephenson@hartlepool.gov.uk)

# work smart seminars

Please find below a list of Work Smart seminars until the end of March 2008. If you would like to book place(s) simply send an email giving your name, company name, address plus any access or dietary requirements to [sheila.watson@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:sheila.watson@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Effective Appraisals

A look at the appraisal process and getting the most out of the appraisal discussion

Tuesday 26th February 2008  
9.30am – 12.30pm  
Innovation Centre, Queens Meadow

Thursday 27th March 2008  
9.30am – 12.30pm  
Innovation Centre, Queens Meadow

## Recruitment and Selection

A look at legislation surrounding recruitment and getting the ideal candidate

Wednesday 5th March 2008  
9.30am – 12.30pm  
Innovation Centre, Queens Meadow

## Contracts of Employment

An in-depth look at contracts which shows how to get things right from the outset

Thursday 13th March 2008  
9.30am – 12.30pm  
Summerhill Visitor Centre

## Employment Legislation Essentials

The key things you need to know as an employer

Tuesday 18th March 2008  
9.30am – 12.30pm  
The Ward Room,  
Hartlepool Maritime Experience

## Managing Poor Performance

causes of poor performance in the workplace and steps you can take

Monday 31st March 2008  
9.30am – 12.30pm  
Place in the Park, Ward Jackson Park

newslink - New Deal for Communities Commercial Areas



c/o Julia Pinchen • Business Liaison Manager • NDC Commercial Areas  
Bryan Hanson House • Hanson Square • Hartlepool • TS24 7BT  
T: 01429 284304 • M: 07769 918132 • E: [julia.pinchen@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:julia.pinchen@hartlepool.gov.uk)