

Corporate Social Responsibility for Dacorum businesses



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Welcome

I have an extremely varied role and no two days are the same. To give you an example of some of the unusual requests I get – a request came to me recently via other agencies for a family in Tring who have a disabled son. They had won a grant for some garden play equipment but it arrived flat packed and could I find anyone to put it up for them. Another request was for a local company wanting to put on a summer event for their staff and advice on where they could hold it. Got any unusual requests? Maybe I can help.

Results from Independent Survey

You may remember last year we asked you to complete a survey which was being conducted by the University of Hertfordshire. The focus of this project was our working relationship and the services that are developed as part of that collaboration in order to fulfil our clients' CSR needs and objectives.

Thank you to those of you that completed the survey. The main findings were that overall you were satisfied with Connect Dacorum and what we offered was value for money. We have never raised our prices at all during the past 11 years and the majority of you thought that this was still a satisfactory charge. You also enjoy the well organised events and relevant speakers.

Suggestions for improvement or development also were mentioned and there some great ideas which will be introduced.

A suggestion to promote press coverage and be more vocal about the work we do was highlighted and I will endeavour to push out on our social media items like new members, opportunities and press coverage, so do make sure you are connected to us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. The Gazette newspaper is great at putting articles of interest from my emails, newsletters and press releases.

One comment was that there were 'an overwhelming number of charities' at our events. I will highlight in future how many attended from businesses, charities and statutory. We never have more charities than businesses, but the USP of Connect Dacorum is to connect businesses to each other but also to the local community.

Finally, I will be putting together some informational help on small business focus and also how to incorporate CSR into your business. Thank you so much for your comments and suggestions, and any other suggestions are welcome as we like to develop with our members' needs.

February's Networking Lunch

Our first networking lunch of 2017 was hosted by Aubrey Park Hotel and was held in their very new extension which is suitable for large events and weddings. Everyone was really impressed with the new facilities. With 82 attendees (40 from businesses, 31 from charities and 11 from statutory) it was certainly going to be a busy event.

David Timmis, General Manager from Aubrey Park welcomed everyone and gave a great potted history of Aubrey Park Hotel, culminating in the new extension.

Dan Dark, Senior Vice President of Warner Bros Studios in Leavesden was next up to speak. As the subject of the event was on Volunteering Dan gave a very moving talk on a recent volunteering expedition to Chios in Greece that he made with a small group of Warner Brothers staff. Chios is one of the islands which was inundated with refugees who were arriving after fleeing Syria and had dangerously crossed the 7km stretch of water from Turkey in overcrowded dingys and the clothes that they wore. At the height of the crisis there were around 25 boat arrivals per night with 60 people to a boat.

The group took with them a lorry load of donated clothes and equipment and while they were there, helped organise the donations "warehouse", watched out for arriving boats (with 213km of shoreline to monitor), and provided arriving refugees with water, food, blankets, warm clothing, but also with compassion, dignity, respect and smiling faces. When the audience learnt of the attack on the camp from far right activists, I don't think there was a dry eye in the house.

A hard act to follow but Karen Gosen from Gaddesden Place Riding for the Disabled was up to it and talked about the impact of volunteers at their stables. Gaddesden Place is a dedicated RDA centre giving children and adults with special needs and disabilities the opportunity to ride and have fun. The unique relationship and movement of the horse will develop a rider's ability helping them to improve muscle tone & core strength, aid balance & coordination, learn a skill and increase self confidence.

The stables have a variety of volunteers and Karen had recently worked out that if they had to pay all their volunteers for just for their time in sidewalking and leading in lessons, it would cost the charity £82,000. Connect Dacorum has been a great help to Gaddesden Place RDA in terms of providing team volunteering activities for companies to get involved in, links with companies that can provide help or technical assistance and even a couple of longer term younger volunteers helping with their new vaulting class.

The Mayor of Dacorum, Cllr Bob Mclean attended the lunch with his wife and spoke about how he has been humbled by the people of Dacorum who help each other out and how delighted he is that there is a facilitator in Connect Dacorum enabling us to do this.



*Fantastic new facilities at
Aubrey Park Hotel*



Captivated audience



*Karen Gosen / Dan Dark
Gaddesden RDA / Warner Bros Studios*



*Cllr Bob Mclean
The Mayor of Dacorum*



Dragons' Apprentice Awards Night

Dacorum students raise over £10,000 for local charities in Dragons' Apprentice Challenge. Winners of 2016/17 Challenge announced after budding entrepreneurs pitch to SuperDragons at Shendish Manor finals

Think Tank team from JFK School has been proclaimed the overall winner of the 5th annual Dacorum Dragons' Apprentice Challenge which is organised by Connect Dacorum. The team was one of eight who completed the challenge and invited to present to the SuperDragons - leaders from the world of business, education, local government and charity - at the Challenge Finals at Shendish Manor Hotel.

*Think Tank from JFK
Overall Winners*



*Community Action Adeyfield
Most Money Raised*

All teams were supplied with £100 stake and challenged to turn it into £1,000 or more, with support and advice from mentors within the borough's business community. The teenage tycoons in waiting stepped up to tackle a charity challenge and were showered with praise on Monday night. The SuperDragons were impressed with their all round business abilities as well as the confident way in which they presented themselves, always representing their charity.

Cllr Bob Mclean, Mayor of Dacorum, presented the awards and inspired the audience of young people, businesses and charities by emphasising the practical value of the Dragons' Apprentice Challenge.



*Longdean Dragons
Most Innovative Business Idea*

Named as overall winners on the night were the team from JFK School, who scooped a Snow Centre session for their efforts in support of Druglink charity. Their Dragon was Peggy Barnard from Barnard & Co Employment Law Solutions. Peggy said "I am delighted of the hard work that Think Tank has done over the past six months and the teamworking skills that they have now developed."



*Longdean Dragons
Most Innovative Business Idea*

Other winners were:

Community Action Adeyfield for Most Money Earned, prize of Tea and Cakes from Shendish Manor Hotel

Longdean Dragons for Most Innovative Business Idea, prize of a meal from Nandos Restaurant in Jarman Park

Wisdom Waters from JFK for Close Co-operation with your Charity, prize of a game of footgolf at Little Hay Golf Club

Kings Langley Warriors for Best Display, prize of a voucher towards a meal from McDonalds Apsley

Team Sigma from JFK for Best Presentation, prize of a Costa voucher

As they celebrated their successes all the teenagers agreed that the Dacorum Dragons Apprentice Challenge was both a lot more work than they had ever realised but a test that both developed their skills and gave them a chance to get involved in their community. If you want to take part next year as a Dragon, Charity or School, email cindy@communityactiondacorum.org.uk

Any school, businesses or charities across Dacorum that are interested in taking part in Dragons Apprentice 2017/18 should contact Cindy.

Great Companies Doing Great Things

Storax Racking kindly donated a telephone system to Dacorum Community Trust.



RES donated Lever Arch and Box Files to DCT, DCFL, CAD and Longdean School.



DNATA Ground Handling company at Heathrow Airport donated cafeteria tables and chairs to Hemel School.



A team from the housing department at Dacorum Borough Council recently volunteered half a day to tidy up the surrounding gardens and shrubbery at Grovehill Community Centre, organised by Connect Dacorum.



Osborne will be refurbishing loos at Community Action Dacorum and has offered to help a local family with a disabled child put up some specialist play equipment in the garden.



Employability Days

We will be again running the Employability Days at local schools during 2017 and we are looking for volunteers to help with CV writing and interview skills. Timings are from 8.30am to 1.30pm on each day

4th May – Longdean School

4th and 5th July – Hemel Hempstead School

Charity Golf Day

Our very first Connect Dacorum Golf Day will be held on **Friday 19th May 2017** at the prestigious Harpenden Common Golf Club. If you would like to come on your own, or put together a team from different companies, that is also an option.

The aim of the day is to have fun whilst raising money for two local charities - Age UK Dacorum and Community Action Dacorum (Connect Dacorum). If you would like to take part, or sponsor a hole, please email cindy.withey@dacorum.gov.uk

Whatever your business: large, medium or small,

Cindy can help you support your community in many different ways. Give her a ring or email to arrange an informal appointment to discuss the best form of CSR for your company.

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Connect Dacorum is a service provided by Community Action Dacorum (charity number 288080) and is supported by Dacorum Borough Council, The Volunteer Centre Dacorum, Dacorum Community Trust and numerous other organisations and local businesses.

