

Corporate Social Responsibility for Dacorum businesses



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Berkhamsted Cricket Club



*Mark Mitchell
Community Action Dacorum*

Welcome

Lots to share with you this quarter, both with things that have been happening over the summer months, and the exciting stuff we have coming up in the not too distant future.

Tickets to our Big Business Quiz on the 12th October are going fast, there is only 1 table left, so do let me know asap if you are interested in coming along.

And there is a unique sponsorship opportunity available for Connect Dacorum's 10th birthday celebrations at the House of Commons next year. Details are on page 2.

Summer Party

September's networking event was held in the evening rather than the usual lunchtime slot and had around 40 people in attendance.

Berkhamsted Cricket Club was the venue for the evening and Pimms were on offer to everyone. The weather was dry but not quite nice enough for us to enjoy the evening on the decking. However, it was again another great opportunity to network and build those relationships.

There was a brief talk from Mark Mitchell, CEO of Community Action Dacorum (CAD), which is Connect Dacorum's parent charity. Mark talked about some of the other projects that CAD manage, projects such as Shop Mobility, Radio Dacorum and The Repair Shed that you may have already heard about but not necessarily known they also come under the 'Unilever type umbrella' of CAD like Connect Dacorum. Below is a list of all the projects that CAD run.

- Support for groups
- Community Transport
- Shop Mobility
- Creative Learning
- Herts Interpreting and Translation Service
- Connect Dacorum
- European Projects
- Radio Dacorum
- The Repair Shed

Sandwiches, cake and a lot more relationship building followed. Our next networking event is on Thursday 22nd October from 8.30am to 10.30am. Invites will be going out shortly so keep an eye out and book your place.

Hemel Cartridges organises Woodturning course at The Repair Shed

The Repair Shed is a Community Action Dacorum project. Hosted by Sunnyside Rural Trust at their Hemel Food Garden site in central Hemel Hempstead, it brings men aged 50+ together to stay healthier and happier for longer through making, mending and learning.

Having seen Project Manager Chris Lee’s presentation on The Repair Shed at the Connect Dacorum lunchtime meeting back in February, Martin Gomme of Hemel Cartridges decided to donate to the scheme a woodturning lathe that he no longer uses. The lathe needed some ‘tlc’ having not been used for several years and it would offer the chance for Repair Shed members to learn new skills and to make items to sell in support of the project – all three ‘mending’, ‘learning’ and ‘making’ boxes ticked!

As well as being a keen woodturner himself, Martin is also the Chairman of Herts & Beds Woodturners and he put together and presented an introductory woodturning course spread over three sessions covering personal safety, the use of tools and basic spindle and bowl turning. The club provided lathes, tools and perhaps most importantly, one-to-one supervision by experienced club members. The seven learners on the course attended all the sessions and they all went away with a piece of turning they made themselves – including a bud vase, a Japanese doll and garden dibbers.

Thanks to members of Herts & Beds Woodturners, Sarah Luke from Herts County Council’s Creative Learning team and Emma Matthars at Hemel Food Garden for their help in making this a successful course.



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Connect Dacorum’s 10th birthday celebrations

In 2016 Connect Dacorum will be 10 years old and we would like to celebrate our birthday on Thursday 12th May 2016 with a unique special event.

We are organising a three course dinner for 60 people in the Churchill Room at the Houses of Parliament with **Mike Penning MP** for Hemel Hempstead who is Minister of State for Policing and Criminal Justice, and **David Gauke MP** for South West Hertfordshire who is Financial Secretary to the Treasury. They will also do a tour of the Houses of Parliament for our guests before dinner.

There is an opportunity for only four sponsors to be involved in this event.

Sponsorship Package - £500
Logo on invite and any publicity
2 x places on a table with an MP



If you would like to be a sponsor, please contact cindy.withey@dacorum.gov.uk

Invitations to the event will go out to all our members early next year.



Mike Penning MP



David Gauke MP



Work Experience at Lumina Technologies

Work Solutions are a supported employment service supporting clients with a wide range of disabilities and mental ill health to secure and maintain paid employment. They assess their clients' skills and abilities by approaching employers to ask for work tasters (short term unpaid work trials) to ensure they can match their clients skills to the needs of the post they are applying for and are also helpful in gaining references to support their future applications.

A current client, Gemma, is a young lady on the Autistic spectrum (Asperger's Syndrome) who wants to work within the Admin sector. Connect Dacorum put them in touch with Richard McBarnet from Lumina Technologies Ltd who offer IT support for a wide variety of companies supporting them with software issues.

After an initial meeting a work taster was arranged for Gemma for 2 full days working alongside the team and supporting them with the running of the business. To enable Gemma to get the best out of the work taster Work Solutions devised a structured work list, explaining her duties for the duration of the time she was there. This was a great benefit to Gemma and she quickly got to grips with the work tasks and what was expected of her. She shadowed team members and had her own work station where she could complete duties independently. The feedback from Gemma was excellent, she felt part of the team and found them all very supportive and approachable.



Richard McBarnet from Lumina Technologies said 'I first became aware of Work Solutions at a Connect Dacorum networking event and was immediately impressed with what they had to offer and the support they provided to people who traditionally have found it hard to find meaningful employment.

Shortly afterwards an email went out from Connect Dacorum asking if anyone could offer a work taster to a young lady with Aspergers. Coinciding with our own desire to be more involved with the local community and to help disadvantaged people in the area and having had no experience of Aspergers we jumped at the chance as it seemed an ideal opportunity to "dip our toe in the water" and understand better the impact and reality of employing someone with the condition.

We arranged a short interview and met with Gemma who impressed us with her willingness and commitment to spending time with us. Gemma has so far spent two days with us during which we gave her a variety of areas to gain some exposure to, including technical documentation, checking data backups, updating our core database and auditing part of our remote access solution. The team have all been impressed with Gemma's dedication, attention to detail and warm disposition and her presence has certainly dispelled a few pre-conceptions of life with Aspergers.

We are now looking to see if we can offer Gemma an apprenticeship to give her a direct, paid, involvement with Lumina Technologies. Our experience with Gemma and with Work Solutions has been very positive and an involvement with the local community I would encourage all organisations to become involved with.'

Eckoh Staff Volunteer at Gaddesden Place RDA

On the 11th September a team of volunteers from Eckoh went to Gaddesden Riding for the Disabled stables to paint the indoor riding school. The day was arranged and coordinated by Cindy at Connect Dacorum. Joanne Truscott from Eckoh wanted a volunteering opportunity for their staff and Gaddesden Riding for the Disabled offered the perfect match. At a site visit, the details of the volunteering were arranged and it was full steam ahead.

Thankfully, on the day the weather was sunny. The team from Eckoh turned up full of enthusiasm and with paintbrushes and pots in hand they got started straight away. The stables kept the volunteers topped up with plenty of tea and soon the work was complete.

Karen Gosen, Trustee at Gaddesden Place Riding for the Disabled said "We are very grateful to the team at Eckoh who worked so hard to complete the much needed painting of our indoor riding school. They did a fantastic job and the school is now protected from weathering for at least another 5 years.

As a charity with no regular external funding we rely on the generous support of local companies such as Eckoh and the Dulux Centre in Hemel to help us with our projects - this means that we can direct our fundraising to subsidise our riders and look after the welfare of our ponies. So a big thank you from all the Gaddesden Place riders, volunteers and of course our 6 amazing ponies to Eckoh and The Dulux Centre"

Big Business Quiz 2015

Are you the brightest business in Dacorum? Then why not prove it and join us for the Dacorum Big Business Quiz 2015

NEW Mystery Quizmaster / NEW format / NEW challenge

Monday 12th October

Shendish Manor Hotel

Time: 7:30pm – 10.30pm

Table of 10 — £150 (Or £15 per person)

- includes supper
- cash bar available

Bring along a team from your company, or chum up with local business friends, to prove you are the cleverest company around. A fantastic opportunity for team building whilst raising money for charity and be crowned the 'Brightest Business in Dacorum'

Can't get a table of 10 together but still want to come along? Individual tickets are also available.

Don't miss your chance to take part in the Dacorum Big Business Quiz for 2015. Book now. Tickets available from cindy.withey@dacorum.gov.uk



Gaddesden Place
Riding for the Disabled



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Connect Dacorum is a community advice Dacorum project. charity number 286280



Hemel Hempstead School Employability Day

One Hundred and Eighty Year 10 pupils from Hemel Hempstead School took part in an Employability Skills event on Monday 29th and Tuesday 30th June organised and run by Connect Dacorum. The pupils were in groups of around 8, and each group had a facilitator from local businesses who had given up their morning to help the children with CV writing and interview skills.

All students were in the hall which instantly created a buzz. The event was interactive for the pupils – interviewing their facilitators, putting themselves in the mind of an employer looking at CVs for a new trainee graphic designer and critiquing them before moving on to looking in more detail at their own CVs and giving advice. The second session concentrated on interview skills with mock interviews and also a fun “speed interviewing” game. The pupils came away with lot of helpful feedback and advice directly from employers about what they look for in a CV, covering letter and throughout the interview process.

Cindy Withey, Manager of Connect Dacorum praised the pupils and facilitators for a great day “this is the first time Connect Dacorum has organised this at Hemel Hempstead School having previously run it for the past couple of years at Longdean School and it is great to see how much both the pupils and facilitators get out of the experience”.

The pupils also completed a feedback sheet at the end of the day with all of them of them saying that it was really helpful. One wrote “I have learnt how to speak and present myself during an interview or phone call and how to make a good CV”. Another said “Interviews are hard and scary but I will apply what I have learnt to gain confidence”.

The facilitators came from a wide variety of backgrounds and businesses (full list see below), all willing to give up their time to help shape the future generation and pass on valuable advice.

Richard McBarnet, Managing Director at Lumina Technologies said “I had the privilege of working with two groups [of children] over the two days and gaining a valuable insight into their aspirations and perceptions of the modern employment marketplace. It has been a genuine pleasure to be able to share what we, as employers, are looking for in school leavers and to be a part of giving them an increased chance of achieving their goals. Too often school leavers approach the job market woefully ill equipped to meet the expectations of prospective employers and it has always frustrated me when interviewing candidates how much better they could have performed if someone had just given them a few simple do’s and don’ts.”

Facilitators:

Alistair Budd – retired HR director
Amanda Winder – Strive Development
Bob Harbour – Governor at Hemel Hempstead School
Charlie Matthewson – Warner Bros Studios
Eli Tweed – Dacorum Borough Council
Gavin O’Donovan – Machins Solicitors
George Williams – Machins Solicitors
Gordon Dickens – The Tutor Doctor
Jag Hir – Provident Wealth
Julie Hopping – Careers Coach
Luca Ramusino – BAM Construct
Karen Gosen – Gaddesden Place RDA
Patrick Burke – Aid4Disabled
Richard McBarnet – Lumina Technologies
Ruth George – Ruth George HR Consulting
Sean Harrison – Machins Solicitors
Steve Coulam – Holiday Inn Hemel Hempstead
Tina Webb – National Rail
Zahra Lewis – Ashridge Management College

Great Companies doing Great Things in Dacorum

Clement Danes School gave school lockers to Sunnyside Rural Trust, Boxmoor Trust and Hertfordshire Scouts



EIC Insurance gave lockable filing cabinets to Woodhall Farm Community Centre and Sunnyside Rural Trust



Berkofest gave 5 family tickets to Woodfield School, Collett School, Gaddesden Place Riding for the Disabled, Dacorum Communities for Learning and Sunnyside Rural Trust.



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.

Connect Dacorum
c/o Civic Centre, Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
HP1 1HH

T: 01442 228216
M: 07908 896281
E: cindy.withey@dacorum.gov.uk
www.connectdacorum.org.uk



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.



Focus on Community Action Dacorum

Connect Dacorum is a project of the charity Community Action Dacorum (CAD). Each newsletter there will be focus on one of the other projects offered by CAD.

Radio Dacorum is a 24/7 online community radio station that...



- Lets residents, voluntary groups, public authorities and private companies promote their activities.
- Encourages a sense of pride in Dacorum and helps people get involved in their community.
- Plays great music - our shows reflect the diversity of our community so there's something for everyone, no matter your generation or interests.

Promote your events or activities - We offer opportunities to community groups and local businesses to advertise and promote events/activities.

Volunteer as a Production Assistant - All of our production assistants and presenters are volunteers and in return for your time we offer a great opportunity to learn new skills and become part of a growing project.

Connect Dacorum members get a special advertising rate.

To advertise on Radio Dacorum contact Matt Hatton at matthatton@radiodacorum.org.uk