

## **COUNCIL MEETING 16 DECEMBER 2003**

### **REPORT OF COUNCILLOR N P CAVILL – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PROPERTY AND TOURISM**

#### **Lyons Report**

Recently, two of our officers attended a presentation meeting in London, along with representatives of some of the Departments likely to relocate. It would appear that the relocation might involve more people than first considered. At this meeting, it was apparent that the preferred relocation sites were two in the Midlands and two in the South West of which Taunton is one. At subsequent presentations both the RDA and SCC said they would assist us in promoting Taunton.

#### **Firepool site**

Further to information provided elsewhere, the planning for this site has moved another step forward. Abbey Manor has been working constructively to produce a positive solution, bearing in mind our Highway requirements for the Firepool site.

#### **Egg packing station at Halcon**

Having, at one stage, believed that we had been seriously outbid for any future redevelopment of this site, Chesterton's have now informed us that the competing bid has been withdrawn.

#### **Broadband**

As a Council we are working with local communities to raise awareness of the benefits of Broadband, for both business and private users. In particular Emma Morrice is working to bring forward the availability of Broadband to all areas of Taunton Deane. There will be two roadshows, 14<sup>th</sup> January at SCAT, and 22<sup>nd</sup> January at Victoria Rooms, Milverton. We are trying to encourage everyone with an interest to register their requirement with BT on the website, [www.bt.com/broadband/](http://www.bt.com/broadband/).

#### **Business networks**

A successful group has been running in Bishops Lydeard for a year, and a similar group is now set up in the Milverton area. They are available to all business people who work from home or sole traders. The potential benefits of these groups have been well recognised by participants.

#### **Agricultural Development Officer**

Our officer Rob Jackson, has recently been involved with FWAG who organised a meeting for people interested in growing *Miscanthus* (Elephant Grass). As an alternative enterprise, it has uses from horse bedding to bio fuel. He also organised a diversification meeting at West Monkton, with presentations from DEFRA, Humberts, Business Link, and ourselves. Both meetings were well attended.

#### **Taste of Taunton Deane**

This event was held in September, in partnership with Somerset Food Links. It has helped to provide producers and buyers the opportunity to come together in one

location, to view and taste samples, create local supply chains, share knowledge and help the Taunton Deane economy.

### **Tourism**

Destination Management System (DMS). We are signing up to this system, as are the other districts. It will be a one-stop shop allowing a quicker more efficient and more cost-effective access for our visitors and ourselves, to holiday and visitor destinations in Taunton Deane. The system facilitates on-line bookings for accommodation and attractions. The data from the system will inform the Visitor Guide.

Tourist Information Centres (T.I.Cs). These are much used facilities, and whilst in three years time, the DMS may replace them, at present it would be a retrograde step to lose them.

### **Asset Management Plan (AMP)**

Recent requirements on plant and equipment within Leisure facilities have meant re-prioritising replacement and improvement of power plant and some equipment.

This will impact on work that we had hoped to do for further improvement of other assets.

**Councillor Norman P Cavill**