

**Joint Business Forum
thePlace, Athenaeum Street, Sunniside
25th February 2009 at 3pm
Meeting Notes No. 1**

Introductions and Apologies

Les Scott welcomed attendees to the meeting and explained the agenda. He informed members that the meeting was the first Joint Business Forum following the success of the Daytime and Evening Economy meetings.

He introduced William Dowson from the Bank of England.

Presentation by William Dowson – Bank of England, Current Economic Outlook

William Dowson stated that he worked from the North East regional office and would be conducting a presentation on the current economic outlook.

All attendees were invited to ask questions following the presentation.

Louise Hardy – City Centre Manager

Louise Hardy explained that the Best Bar None scheme was being concluded. Assessors have carried out visits and all details are with the judging panel. The award ceremony will be on Sunday 15th March 2009. This national award is being used as a means to promote safe industry.

Louise informed the group that a pilot for the Polycarbonate glasses used in pubs and clubs had been successful. The polycarbonate glasses are new style plastic glasses and market research has been very positive. Broken glasses are reduced and their shelf life is four times longer. A report will be available in March and will be presented at the next meeting. **Action Louise Hardy**

Sunderland will be hosting a new festival called Sunderland Live which will run in conjunction with the Take That and Oasis concerts in June 2009. The festival is aimed at visitors and residents. The theme will be music and will include band concerts, busking, street theatre etc.

Louise said that all businesses in the city had the opportunity to promote their business for FREE with concert related offers via the Sunderland Football Club website. Mick Thurlbeck explained that the Sunderland Football Club website receives over 4 million hits a month. Any business that wishes to partake part in related promotions can contact the **City Centre Management team on 0191 565 8306**.

Louise explained that a Christmas working group has been set up to organise the Yuletide Wishes festival for Christmas 2009. This will also include city promotion, communications and marketing to create seasonal ambience. Anyone with ideas or who would like to get involved should contact Louise at her office.

Louise stated that the team are working on creating Retail Awards to celebrate the daytime economy businesses. Details are being prepared and will be presented to the Joint Business Forum at future meetings. **Action Louise Hardy**

Northumbria Police Update

PC Paul Thomas reported that the only incident recently reported was a break in at thePlace. There was nothing stolen and someone was arrested and charged. Paul Thomas stated that skateboarders are being moved from Sunniside Gardens.

Emily Taylor, Communication Manager, Marketing Update

Emily informed the group that the Explore Sunniside 10% discount card was going well. Almost 10,000 cards are in circulation and feedback has been positive. Emily requested feedback from other users and said that people could call her on **0191 568 9880**.

A Metro Radio campaign to promote the Sunniside Card is being launched in conjunction with a competition to win tickets for the Oasis concert and will be running for 2 months in the lead up to the concert. Listeners will be directed to the Metro Radio website where they can request a Sunniside card and automatically be entered into a competition to win tickets to the Oasis concert.

The Sunniside Card has recently been advertised in Eastwise magazine and council publications Sunrise (which goes to every household in Sunderland) and Workwise (which goes to approx 14,000 council employees).

Emily informed the group that window vinyl posters are being created at the moment, for shop windows and will be distributed shortly. A campaign targeting metro train stations will also start shortly. Subject to funding the next phase of the campaign will include adverts in bus shelters, telephone boxes and a new website. A restaurant and shoppers guide and Sunniside map is also being explored.

Emily explained that Sunniside would feature heavily in a soon to be screened programme for Sky called The Great Property Review.

She pointed out that Sunniside press cuttings were available to look through at the meeting. Coverage includes the interest from hotel operators in the area and a recent art installation involving Joplings and other shops in the city centre. Emily said it was really encouraging to see businesses in the area working together on joint media promotions and gave an example of Hawksley House teaming up with Sunniside Leisure, Adorable Angels photography and Thai Manor on a Valentine's competition in the Echo. She said it was worth businesses thinking about forthcoming events and occasions to take advantage of e.g. Mother's Day, Easter.

Emily Taylor stated that a representative from the Sunderland Echo would be at the next meeting. She reinforced the Echo's keenness to promote the area.

Other recent, positive news stories included C&C Design moving into thePlace, an excellent food review of Twelve² and a string of awards received by Sunniside businesses. These awards include: Paprika - Best Restaurant in Sunderland and South Tyneside at the North East Restaurant Awards; Amore - runner-up at North East Restaurant Awards and recipient of Customer Excellence Award; Eastern Dreams - Customer Excellence Award; Café Rocco - Building Excellence Award. thePlace building is also up for several awards over the next few months.

Emily finished by highlighting several events that Sunniside Partnership would be involved in over the coming months, including the Tyne & Wear Commercial Property Show (selling the area to potential new businesses), The Journal Culture Awards (including advertorial and editorial on Sunniside) and the North East Festival of Architecture (using Sunniside as an area for region-wide events and promotion).