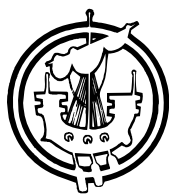


# Your Business Advantage Bulletin

Issue 55 – 17/04/2007



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## LOCAL NEWS

### **CnES Press Release - Warning For Self Catering Businesses**

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Trading Standards Officers at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar are warning Self Catering establishments to be wary of any cold calls they receive looking for their business details.

Several local Self Catering operators have been contacted and asked to confirm their business details. Later in the conversation, the recipient is told that they had previously agreed to an advert in a business directory and will now be invoiced for £95.

Trading standards advise not to give out payment details and to put the phone down on any such unsolicited calls.

If you have received a similar call and are concerned that you may have inadvertently agreed to an advert please contact Trading Standards on 01851 709577

### **Last Chance for Highland 2007 Support**

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Highland 2007 recognises and celebrates the area's culture, combining traditional and contemporary Highland culture through working with individuals and communities throughout the North West Scotland, and further a field, to bring together a bespoke cultural celebration of the Highlands and Islands throughout 2007.

The final two deadlines for including events in the Highland 2007 printed brochure that is distributed locally, nationally and internationally is nearly upon us. Therefore log on to the website below and upload your event and it will also be included in their printed material if you meet the deadline. Please note that any event can benefit from H2007 promotion (not just those in receipt of H2007 funding).

The deadlines are:

**Highland 2007 Programme issue 4 for events during September to December: 1 June**

For more information please follow this link:

<http://www.hi-arts.co.uk/h2007register-form.html>

### **CnES 'Buying with Confidence Scheme'**

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This new scheme that the Comhairle is fronting is aimed at reassuring consumers that the trade companies they are employing have been checked on compliance with the law and that they are trustworthy. The Comhairles' Trading Standards Service tests the companies against a Partnership code to assist you that you can buy the goods and services with confidence.

It is recommended that all trade companies in the Western Isles participate in the scheme as it not only gives you a competitive edge that your customers are reassured that they are buying quality goods but also portrays your commitment to supplying a high quality service.

For further information on becoming a member of the scheme, you can contact the Trading Standards on 01851 709577 or e-mail [mmacsween@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:mmacsween@cne-siar.gov.uk)

For more details please press Ctrl + Click on the following link:

<http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/buywithconfidence/index.htm>

### **Public Sector Entrepreneurship Scheme**

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The Public Sector Entrepreneurship Scheme (PSES) is a new scheme that is being introduced by the Scottish Executive and co-ordinated locally, in the Western Isles through Comhairle nan Eilean Siar here at Business Advantage.

This pilot scheme which will allow public sector workers in Scottish rural communities the opportunity to test out their business ideas by guaranteeing the individuals up to one year's unpaid leave from their current employment. Therefore providing long term job security if the idea does not prove successful.

The overall aim of the PSES is to encourage the *sustainable development of the local economy* in the Western Isles.

The scheme will shortly be launched in the Western Isles. You can presently read the press release on the Scottish Executives website at:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2007/03/05115801>.

### **VisitScotland Challenge Fund**

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The VisitScotland Challenge Fund assists collaborative group marketing projects that attract more visitors to Scotland and make it easier for tourists to book their visit.

The aim of the scheme is to enable groups of tourism businesses to extend current marketing activity or test a new market or activity, which could bring additional visitors. Funding is provided on a one-off basis at a percentage of the total cost of projects, up to a maximum of 50%.

Applicants, which include all sectors of tourism businesses, may apply for assistance between £2,500 and £65,000 towards, for example:

- marketing print linked to clear distribution/fulfilment methods;
- advertising in appropriate media;
- attendance at trade events and exhibitions;
- direct mail to targeted consumers;
- on-line communications eg eblasts;
- consumer research and evaluation of campaigns;
- promotion of websites by email marketing, on-line advertising & search engine optimisation.

The deadline for the submission of applications under Round 9 of the VisitScotland Challenge Fund has recently been announced as 31 May 2007.

Please contact Alan MacKenzie at VisitScotland Outer Hebrides on Tel: 01851 701 818 or [alan.mackenzie@visitscotland.com](mailto:alan.mackenzie@visitscotland.com) and also refer to the VisitScotland Website at [http://www.visitscotland.org/challenge\\_fund.htm](http://www.visitscotland.org/challenge_fund.htm)

## **HI Links Small Business Seminars**

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### **UHI HI Links Small Business Seminars Small Scale Renewables and your Business**

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**Venue: Lews Castle College (Lecture Theatre) - Stornoway**

**Date: Wednesday 2 May**

**Time: 10:30 to 12:30 (registration from 10:00 and buffet from 12:00)**

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**Venue: Nunton Steadings, Benbecula - Uist**

**Date: Wednesday 2 May**

**Time: 16:30 to 18:30 (registration from 16:00 and light buffet from 18:00)**

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These free seminars on 'Small Scale Renewables and your Business' are bringing together the local initiative Greenspace and John Currie from Napier University who together with some of Scotland's leading academics in the renewables field.

The seminars will aim to highlight various technologies; research and expertise that are available in the field locally and nationally whilst also provide a networking opportunity with those in the renewables sector. HI Links will demonstrate how they can assist small businesses to develop and fund new products and services through collaborating with educational and research institutes.

The seminars are free however please book your place in advance through the following link: [http://www.hilinks.uhi.ac.uk/events/booking\\_system.html](http://www.hilinks.uhi.ac.uk/events/booking_system.html) or by emailing [david.chapman@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:david.chapman@uhi.ac.uk) or 01463 667357. For more information visit [www.hilinks.uhi.ac.uk](http://www.hilinks.uhi.ac.uk).

## **Fusion Events – Stornoway and Benbecula**

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### **FUSION WESTERN ISLES: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES LUNCH**

Fusion and Creative Industries are hosting a lunch and networking event for media businesses and freelancers on Wednesday 25 April at 12.15-2.15pm in the County Hotel, Stornoway. The main speaker will be Donald Campbell, Chief Executive of Gaelic Media Services, who will talk about the innovative developments with the new Gaelic digital channel and related business opportunities.

## **FUSION WESTERN ISLES/FUSION SKYE & LOCHALSH JOINT CONFERENCE:**

### **ENTERPRISE IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS**

This joint conference will take place on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 June at Nunton Steadings in Benbecula though more details on this event will follow in due course and therefore please refer to their website, <http://www.fusionlinking.co.uk/TOP.html>, nevertheless whether your interest is in enterprise in rural areas in general or outdoors enterprise in particular, please make a note of these dates

All are welcome to attend each seminar however pre-booking is essential and can be done by contacting Paul Kirby on 01463 667302 or email [info@fusionlinking.co.uk](mailto:info@fusionlinking.co.uk).

## **BUSINESS TIP**

### **Particulars of Contracts of Employment**

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A contract 'or statement' of employment must be issued by employers to new recruits within two months of commencing employment. This contract must be in writing and should include the employee's terms and conditions of employment.

By law, the contractual document should include the names of the employer and employee, the date of commencement of employment, the amount that they are to be paid and how often, their hours of work, holiday entitlement, their new job title and place of work.

Other information such as pension schemes, special leave and disciplinary rules can either be discussed in the contract or references can be made to the company's employee handbook and therefore all staff could be guided to there.

For more information please refer to an example by pressing Ctrl and click on the following link: [http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/9/6/A5\\_written\\_statement\\_1\\_1.pdf](http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/9/6/A5_written_statement_1_1.pdf) and further information is also available at <http://www.dti.gov.uk/employment/employment-legislation/employment-guidance/page16367.html>

## **BUSINESS NEWS**

### **New Companies Act 2006**

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The new Companies Act came into force in April and as discussed in a previous bulletin does bring about a number of changes that will affect private companies.

The DTI website (<http://www.dti.gov.uk/files/file37956.pdf>) has a quick reference guide to the key points that the new act has raised.

The main points do include:

- ~ Company Secretaries are not necessary.
  - ~ All companies must have at least 1 director.
  - ~ Private companies will no longer require AGM's.
  - ~ Written resolutions will be easier to use.
  - ~ All documents, electronic and paper, must have company information displayed on them including the number and registered office.
  - ~ All private companies must file their annual report within 9 months of the year end.
  - ~ Solvency procedures are now easier.
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It has been predicted that the new changes in this law are to save businesses up to £250 million a year as it aims to simplify common law.

## **OTHER NEWS**

### **PAYE Deadline Incentive**

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Small businesses are being urged to file their 2006/07 Pay As You Earn (PAYE) end of year return in exchange for a £150 tax-free payment. The deadline is the 19<sup>th</sup> May however the HM Revenue's and Customs have produced a free CD-ROM to assist employers in completing their forms.

For more information please follow the link:

<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=276624&NewsAreaID=2>

### **Change of name – The Patent Office now known as UK-IPO**

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Please note as from April 2007 the Patent Office is now known as the 'UK Intellectual Property Office (UK-IPO)'. They are also updating their rules however this is still in the consultation stage.

For more information please press Ctrl + Click:

<http://www.patent.gov.uk/press/press-release/press-release-2007/press-release-20070312.htm>

### **New Minimum Wage Rate Announced**

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From October 2007 the National Minimum Wage will increase to £5.52 an hour. The low rate for 18-21 years olds will also increase to £4.60 and for 16-17 years olds it will rise to £3.40 from £3.30.

Read more about the changes by following this link:

<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=269285&NewsAreaID=2&print=true>

### **New Funding Available To Scottish Music Industry**

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Highlands & Islands Enterprise, in conjunction with Scottish Enterprise and the Scottish Arts Council, are spearheading a new funding scheme to assist the Scottish Music Industry. There will be £500,000 available to support future artists.

For more information please follow this link to the Highlands and Islands Enterprise website:

<http://www.hie.co.uk/default.aspx.locid-Ofinewlbr.Lang-EN.htm>

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If you have any feedback or suggestions for us to make this service more relevant please e-mail your comments to [business.advantage@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:business.advantage@cne-siar.gov.uk). If you wish to discontinue your subscription to Business Advantage please send a blank e-mail to [business.advantage@cne-siar.gov.uk](mailto:business.advantage@cne-siar.gov.uk) putting UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject box. Remember that we guarantee never to sell or give your e-mail address to anyone else.

**Good luck**

## **The Business Advantage Team**

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