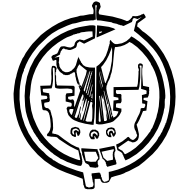




Your Business Advantage Bulletin

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LOCAL NEWS

Who Cares Wins Workshops



ANGLERS WELCOME – 29th May, Benbecula
WILDLIFE WELCOME – 30th & 31st May, Castlebay
CHILDREN WELCOME WORKSHOP – 1st June, Stornoway

Anglers Welcome

If you are looking for ways to extend the tourism season, then this event will benefit frontline tourism operators, in particular accommodation providers, keen to attract visiting anglers. The workshop provides delegates with information such as marketing their business, the types of angling enquiries they might receive and what facilities visiting anglers may require.

Wildlife Welcome

Day one of the Wildlife Tourism workshop will assist you to guide visitors to wildlife and natural heritage resources in your local area. Provide you with knowledge on the variety of wildlife on land and in the seas around, as well as appreciation of what visitors may be looking for and some tips on how to make their experience more rewarding. Day two, a familiarisation trip will provide you with awareness of local wildlife visitor attractions and give you the opportunity to meet with experts at the visitor attractions and ask questions.

Children Welcome

Children Welcome has been developed to show tourism businesses that by providing suitable surroundings and facilities, and proactively encouraging children, they will improve the number of return visits by their parents, which in turn will lead to further recommendations and profit.

A Delegate fee of £15.00 + VAT is applicable. Lunch and refreshment breaks will be served throughout the day so please let us know if you have any special dietary requirements. As standard practice we automatically request a vegetarian option. The venue for the workshop will be confirmed upon registration.

To book a place on any workshop or course, please contact Lisa Maclean

If you would like us to run a workshop in any other area please let us know.

**For the full programme please visit the Who Cares Wins website
www.whocareswins.org.uk and click on the business section.**

**Lisa Maclean
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E-mail: info@whocareswins.org.uk

Connecting with Broadband

It has been claimed that a Broadband Internet Connection can help small business owners achieve a better and more enhanced work/life balance. A report by BT has found that 82% of small businesses credit broadband, and its high-speed internet connections, to increasing their sales whilst also giving the individuals increased flexibility and access to consumers and suppliers in remote areas.

One network connection in the Western Isles is through the 'Connected Communities' Hebrides.net portal. The service allows residents of the more remote areas who can not receive broadband through the traditional means to obtain the connection through a wireless means by the Relay masts that are progressively connecting local residents to the information highway. Therefore Connected Communities wireless broadband network connection has allowed residents of Lewis, Harris, North Uist, Benbecula, South Uist and Barra to connect to a network allowing a faster speed and increased access to more information on the internet.

Furthermore the success of the project has been internationally noted as it has recently been voted the 3rd best (equal) European project at the "Bridging the Broadband Gap" event in Brussels. The Connected Communities project was chosen from over 50 other pan-European projects which all aim to connect rural and remote areas to broadband.

To find out more information on Connected Communities please press Ctrl + click on the following link www.connectedcommunities.co.uk.

The BT report is available at:

<http://www.btplc.com/News/Articles/Showarticle.cfm?ArticleID=c465d851-d851-4454-b4c7-0bb056571312>

Cearcaill na Gaidhlig – The Gaelic Rings

Cearcaill na Gaidhlig, 'The Gaelic Rings', is a new pilot initiative aiming to boost cultural tourism in the Outer Hebrides and the West Highlands of Scotland. The initiative aims to exploit the use of the area's current transport infrastructure with allowing tourists to learn about the Gaelic language and culture through establishing a 'trail' that they can follow.

The first ring will be launched in 2007 taking participants from Oban to Barra and Eriskay up through South Uist and Benbecula to North Uist where they can board the ferry back to Skye and then by means of the Mallaig to Armadale ferry to travel back to mainland Scotland.

Businesses are currently being invited to get involved in the 'Rings' initiative to help promote the areas landscapes, landmarks and where the trail followers go to eat, sleep and drink on their voyage. Upon

registering your interest you will be forwarded a free promotional pack about Cearcaill na Gaidhlig and its development.

For further information on participating, please contact Anne Murray at Comhairle nan Eilean Siar on 01851 709277 or amurray@cne-siar.gov.uk.

INDUSTRY FOCUS – CATERING/FOOD SUPPLIERS

Ethnic Caterers Guidance

The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) 'Safer Food, Better Business' project aims to provide caterers with more information on safe food hygiene preparation. They have currently published guidelines on food safety on ethnic cuisine which discusses useful tips and procedures that can be followed.

The guidance is available at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/regulation/hygleg/hyglegresources/sfbb/sfbbcuisines/>

Good Practice Guidance

The FSA have also issued new guidance on preventing food incidents and to assist with increasing prevention and response plans. The guidance allows businesses and authorities to strengthen controls and prevent major food incidents by identifying good practice and principles for responding effectively. It also thrives on the principles of traceability of all the products that a business uses. The Food Incidents Task Force also included step-by-step advice on identifying potential hazards.

For more information press Ctrl + click on the following link:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/pressreleases/2007/apr/guidancefoodincident>

Download the summary version of the guidance at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/taskforcefactsheet23mar07.pdf>

SALSA

SALSA is the 'Safe and Local Supplier Approval' Scheme to assist food and drink producers to supply their products to local and national buyers. Thus reassuring customers that they are purchasing safe and high quality goods and services, whilst not only allowing supplier's access to professionally qualified mentors but also a stepping stone to further quality certification.

Read more about this at: <http://www.brc.org.uk/details04.asp?id=1122&kCat=&kData=1>

Western Isles Food Safety

Further information on Food Safety including legislation, complaints procedures and the Healthy Living Award in the Western Isles is available on the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar website at:

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

BUSINESS TIP

Forecasting Cashflow

A forecast is usually projected over a six or twelve month period to enable the businesses to project its future cash income and outgoings to allow for other purchases and expenditure to occur. Accordingly this is an important management tool allowing strategic decisions to occur allowing the company to survive and grow.

Spreadsheets are commonly employed to assist with forecasting to easily identify the businesses receipts, payments and cash flow and any cash shortfalls that may arise in the upcoming months. There are also a number of guidelines that can aid the preparation of an accurate month by month cashflow forecast:

- Produce a separate 12 month Sales Forecast taking into account customer credit, cash and all sales.
- Ascertain if any other income will be received.
- Identify all your monthly payments/ outgoing payments including rent, salaries, insurance and marketing costs.
- Identify special purchases that may be necessary and only require a one-off payment
- Make notes when an estimated figure is inserted into the forecast to allow your accountants/ lenders to easily equate where the figure derived from.

Finally be aware that a contingency reserve of cash is also advisable to cover any unforeseen and unexpected costs.

For more information please refer to an example by pressing Ctrl and click on the following link:
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_06.htm and further information is also available at
<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1073924763>

BUSINESS NEWS

Maternity Legislation

Business Link has launched an online tool on how to legally deal with an employee who is due to go on maternity leave. The tool asks a series of questions to provide the employee with useful information on pay, leave allowance, benefits and responsibilities.

Together with information on new mothers and pregnant women the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) website also documents information on managing prospective adoptive parent's rights along with new father and same sex partner's parental and adoptive rights.

The tools are available at:

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.l2=1073858926&r.l1=1073858787&topicId=1077460344&furlname=maternity&furlparam=maternity&ref=&domain=www.businesslink.gov.uk>

The EOC pregnancy toolkit is available at: <http://www.eoc.org.uk/Default.aspx?page=19177>

Pay Up or Pay Fines

Alistair Darling, the Trade and Industry Secretary, has proposed that employers who do not pay the national minimum wage should receive fixed penalty fines. The fines would be linked to the number of underpaid staff that the business has and this could also result in paying interest on arrears that were due to employees who were being paid below the minimum wage.

Read more on this story at: <http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=284792&NewsAreaID=2>

Self Employed Home Workers Tax

Individuals who are self-employed, on a part and full-time basis, and work from home do not have to provide a record of all business expenses to the HM Revenues and Customs when they submit their tax claims. Furthermore home workers are also entitled to reclaim tax on a portion of their domestic bills for business purposes.

More information is available at: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/manuals/bimmanual/bim47815.htm>

Accomplish with Accomplice

'Accomplice' is a new tool allowing entrepreneurs and managers to manage and prioritize tasks, reports and lists by allowing you to organize your tasks efficiently. This is a FREE software tool that can work alongside and integrate with Outlook and other related software programmes. To name but a few of Accomplice's features the software allows you to manage your employees, take notes, sync with your PDA, attach files and spreadsheets.

Accomplice is free to download at: <http://www.accomplice.com/index.html>

OTHER NEWS

Warning to Painters

The Health and Safety Executive have reported that 96% of paint sprayers are likely to develop asthma due to being exposed to harmful chemicals in the paint mist. They are recommending that there should be a clearance time set to allow the mist to clear and people should either wear masks or stay away from that area until that specified time is over.

For more information please follow the link:

<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=281779&NewsAreaID=2>

USEFUL LINKS

The following are useful links that may also assist you succeed and grow in your sector by networking with other groups and gaining more tips and information:

- A regular 'Socio Economic Update' is published containing useful information on the local economy at: <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/factfile/index.htm>
- A new online forum has been launched by 'Aim-Hi' (www.aim-hi.org) for all Creative Industries - please feel free to register your interest and visit the site at <http://s4.invisionfree.com/aimhi/>.
- The Creative Industries section of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar also publishes a periodic newsletter on the website at <http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/eds/creativeindustries/index.htm>. Creative Industries focus on the arts, crafts film, and television, publishing, and new media sectors and therefore this is worth a read if you specialise in this sector to help you keep ahead of your competitors.

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. If you wish to discontinue your subscription to Business Advantage please send a blank e-mail to 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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