

Chamber launches regional wide business awards

The Chamber will be recognising the talents, innovation and entrepreneurship of companies from across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Swindon, as it launches its first ever business awards event for the wider community.

With 11 major categories, members and non-members alike from across the Thames Valley, will have a chance of entering with the winners announced at a black tie gala dinner on Thursday 11th October 2018.

Gavin Spencer, the Chamber's Head of Member Services commented: "It's incredibly exciting to be officially launching our first set of industry awards covering the entire Thames Valley. This is a first for the region and one that we are proud to be leading.

"We have always been a strong advocate and champion of local businesses and what better way than an awards ceremony celebrating business excellence throughout our innovative region."

Winners on the night will automatically enter the national British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) awards. Now in their 15th year they celebrate the role of 'business in delivering growth and prosperity for the UK and local communities'.

Categories include:

- Best use of Social Media
- Best use of Technology
- Commitment to People Development
- Education and Business Partnership
- Excellence in Customer Service
- Export Business of the Year
- Health and Wellbeing
- High Growth Business of the Year
- Small Business of the Year Thames Valley
- Thames Valley Newcomer of the Year
- Thames Valley Business of the Year

Watch out for information about applying for the Awards on the Chamber website:

<https://www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk/thames-valley-chamber-of-commerce-business-awards-2018/>



Slough Chamber Council votes in popular Vice President to support local businesses

Nancy Lalor, Acting Chief Executive of Learning to Work, the Slough based charity working for the benefits of local young people, schools, colleges and businesses, has been elected as the new Vice President of the Slough Chamber of Commerce. In a unanimous decision she was voted by members to support the Chamber Council in its key role and planned activities.

Commenting on her new appointment: "Fantastic to be working with the Slough business community and bridging the gap between education and business as outlined in the Chamber Council's local policy priorities document. The challenge to maintain sustainable growth of the talent pool available to companies and to keep home-grown talent in the town is paramount to our ongoing success.

"With its excellent transport links, close proximity to Heathrow and home to some of the biggest companies in the UK, Slough has become a champion of economic prosperity and, quite rightly, one of the most successful regions in the UK."

Working closely with Thames Valley Chamber which has overall responsibility for Slough, Nancy will play a major role in encouraging academic ability to become employability for the benefit of both local schools and businesses. She has been actively engaged with the Slough Chamber of Commerce for more than 10 years and has a

passion for networking and bringing people together.

Wendy McGuire, Corporate Business Manager, who leads events and represents the Chamber on the local Chamber Council commented: "Absolutely delighted that Nancy has been elected in her new role. Her enthusiasm and passion to make a difference is both inspirational and infectious and she brings to the table a great and diverse wealth of experience in both the commercial and education sectors which is invaluable in helping to achieve our local key policy priorities."

Nancy joined Learning to Work more than 14 years ago having started as a work experience executive and moving towards the role of Operations Director. More recently she became acting CEO for the company. She is an active member of the Berkshire

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Nancy Lalor

business community, working with various stakeholder groups including Heathrow Ltd Economic Development for Education, Director of Slough Aspire and sitting on the economic development groups for both Slough and Bracknell.

Thames Water: Shaping your Water Future

There is no doubt that most people take availability of water for granted. Apart from a few hosepipe bans in the recent past, there has been minimal impact on the water supply. However, things are changing. Thames Water Utilities, as well as other providers in the UK, has a statutory requirement to plan for 25 years ahead with a review every five years. Thames Water, however, has taken the decision to look ahead to 80 years. This has led to the creation of a draft Water Resource Management Plan which is now in public consultation until 29 April 2018. A draft Business Plan covering water and wastewater services is also being developed which focuses on the first five years (2020 to 2025) of the period covered in the resource management plan.

Our region is fortunate to be in a strong position, but we still face significant challenges which if not addressed will hinder our future growth. A significant shortfall is forecast between supply and demand in the Thames Valley, with the deficit forecast to reach 20m litres a day by 2040 if no action is taken. Water use restrictions might have to be put in place that would limit the availability of water to particular sectors or even to all businesses. The economic cost to the region of such restrictions has been assessed as ranging from £600m to £2.1bn in an extreme drought and we will therefore need a step change in the level of water supply resilience in our region.

To find out more Ginette Gower talked to Richard Aylard, CVO, External Affairs and Sustainability Director at Thames Water. Prior to the one to one discussion, Richard led a Business Alliance Roundtable hosted at Blake Morgan's offices in Oxford which gave leaders at high profile organisations in the region the opportunity to express their views on this important issue. Feedback will contribute to shaping the approach Thames Water will take which will go for approval from the Secretary of



Richard Aylard at the Roundtable

State for the Environment.

Before expanding on some of the issues, Richard shared his background. He joined Thames Water, which is headquartered in Reading, in 2002 as Corporate Responsibility Director. He leads the company's engagement with external stakeholders, including Government, the Environment Agency and the Consumer Council for Water, and is the principal spokesperson with the media and other audiences. As Sustainability Director, Richard is the Executive team member with responsibility for environmental and social issues.

From 1974 Richard served in the Royal Navy. He held a wide variety of appointments, including service in HMS Invincible during the Falklands campaign, and retired in 1988 in the rank of Commander. His previous positions have included a spell at Burson-Marsteller, an international corporate communications company. For 11 years, Richard worked in the Prince of Wales's office, initially on secondment from the Royal Navy. There he was Private Secretary, Treasurer and Head of

Household from 1991 to 1996.

Richard is a Senior Associate of the Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership, an Ambassador for WWF (UK) and an Associate of Forum for the Future. He holds a degree in Applied Zoology and Mathematics from the University of Reading and is an Honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management.

Richard has had a varied and fascinating career. I asked why he decided to join Thames Water and what changes had he seen in the past 16 years?

"As a fisherman, sailor and biologist I have always been fascinated by water! Seriously, I felt this was a really important challenge to ensure clean water is available to all in the best and most sustainable way possible. My first role was Corporate Responsibility Director which at that time covered 26 countries. In fact, we had more customers in the USA than the UK! Subsequently we realised we had to put all our efforts into London and the Thames Valley, so this is now our sole focus.

"We are constantly making improvements and looking at things differently such as sustainable drainage which is very important. The public must have trust in water and we must eliminate risks. In an emergency situation, we can shut Heathrow Airport, motorways, power etc but we can't stop sewage works which operate 24/7. So, we have this extra responsibility to provide an essential public service. Many of our employees are close to customers and it is important they have complete confidence".

Thames Water, with its 5,000 employees (plus approximately another 10,000 indirect through alliance partners), is responsible for managing the water and wastewater networks, such as the pipes to and from customers' property boundaries. This also includes the sourcing, treatment and transporting of water, as well as the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater. The Thames Water region covers 10 million people and 215,000 businesses: 2,600 litres of water a day are supplied every day to

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