

BUSINESS MATTERS

Optimistic about future for gateway to Europe

With summer starting to appear round the corner, maybe it was just the sunshine.

But whatever the cause, I left Humber Business Week feeling fairly optimistic about our future here at the gateway to Europe.

As you might imagine, we had a fairly hectic schedule on the Mail business desk.

If you spotted a grey suit rushing towards the KC Stadium, it was probably me.

But although there were some inspirational speakers, the most interesting thing about the week was the mood of the audience.

People seemed to be in fairly good spirits – and they came from a very wide range of industries.



With **James Burton**
Business Editor



CONFIDENCE: Humber Business Week.

I sat through tips for traders, dialogue with digital start-ups and economic updates for accountants. In all cases, there was a sense of positivity.

Whatever you think about the new ruling party, it's fair to say the stability of majority Government has helped, especially when everybody expected weeks of pre-coalition wrangling.

I picked up plenty of good feeling about the Northern Powerhouse initiative to give cities more autonomy, although some firms were concerned we might get left behind.

Our politicians are working on a solution to that but, as always, I would urge businesses with a viewpoint to make their feelings known.

The corporate world has a role to play in this debate too.

That aside, there was an upbeat feeling about. Deals were being done, people said, loans were being granted and turnover was rising.

If you tend to trust facts over gut feeling, today's commercial property supplement also suggests we're going in the right direction.

I'd draw your attention to two particular stories – the final letting at Marfleet Environmental Technology Park, and the first tenant announced for technology building C4DI – they suggest ambitious property developments are paying off.

This kind of speculative building work is only successful when the demand is there. It shows real confidence.

BUSINESS



TRANSFORMED: Sewell on the Go managing director Patrick Sewell, centre, with the team at the opening of the revamped Maybury Road fuel and convenience store. Pictures: Jerome Ellerby

Bidding to capitalise on shift in spending

Fuel and convenience store reopens after renovation

By **Catherine Lea**

Business Reporter
c.lea@hulldaily.co.uk

A HULL business is bidding to capitalise on shifts in consumer spending with a major investment and a focus on local produce.

Sewell on the Go has reopened its fuel and convenience store in Maybury Road, east Hull, after a renovation that has almost tripled its shop space.

The cash injection, which has also upped staffing levels by 25 per cent, has resulted in the addition of a Costa coffee and hot food area, a large selection of wines and spirits, and a wider variety of regionally produced goods.

Managing director Patrick Sewell said: "Buying habits continue to evolve. Customers have moved away from the monthly 'big shop' concept and are keen to convenience shop, grabbing lunch as they



MORE SPACE: Inside the store.

fill up their car and picking up dinner as they pass on the way home from work.

"To remain relevant, we have to continually evolve and make sure our offer meets our customers' needs and current buying habits.

"The Maybury store was designed 20 years ago and this renovation has transformed the retail space. We now have three times the space and three times the product lines."

The revamp is part of a multi-million-pound spend on the independent retailer's estate, with works also beginning at the company's service stations in South Cave and Sutton.

It comes at a time when shoppers are moving away from the "big four" and instead shopping closer to home.

Mr Sewell said: "What's happening with the big supermarkets is a plus for us.

"Shoppers are now more keen to shop locally and also buy local, so in response to this, we now sell about 100 lines from local suppliers, such as Wold Top Brewery and Pipers Crisps."

Sewell on the Go Maybury is one of 12 fuel and convenience stores operated by the retailer in Hull and East Yorkshire.

Work on site was carried out by Sewell on the Go's sister company, Sewell Construction.

TAKE IT FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ...



Tony Bullock

The managing partner of Duffon Moore Chartered Accountants and Business Advisers talks tax credits

RESEARCH and development relief is a corporation tax relief that may reduce your company's tax bill by more than your actual expenditure on allowable research costs.

An enhancement of up to 130 per cent over and above the amount spent is available.

The Government has extended the incentives in recent years in the hope that it will put the UK in a strong position to benefit from high-tech industries.

The tax relief is encouraging the British spirit of innovation, as figures have shown an increase of a third in the number of companies taking it up.

It was introduced more than a decade ago to encourage research and innovation in British industry and keep us ahead of the world.

The continued strong uptake of the tax credit is good news, as it supports companies seeking to bring new products and services to market, which can only be positive for our economy.

Perceptions have been changing and many small and medium firms are realising it is not just for the manufacturing or technical sectors.

The tax relief can apply to many other sectors developing innovative processes or products, or resolving technological difficulties or uncertainties.

Putting skills at the top of the agenda

EVENTS: The human resources director from Siemens is one of the speakers at this year's Transforming The Humber Conference.

Mike Jones will be joined by Siemens' Finbarr Dowling, pictured, Chris Brown, of the CIPD, and Paul Sewell, of the Sewell Group, to debate the key

issues around skills, recruitment and workforce development.

Mr Dowling said: "Our investment in creating world-class wind turbine manufacturing and assembly operations in Hull will involve the largest recruitment project this region has seen for many years, so issues around skills,

learning and development and human resources are top of our agenda."

Organised by the Humber Branch of the CIPD, the event takes place at the Mercure Hotel in Willerby on Thursday, June 25, from 8.30am to 1pm.

Visit www.transformingthehumber.org for details.

