

Thame Business Forum

Established in October 2012, the Business Forum is an independent group with Town Council support. It is regularly attended by senior executives from the larger businesses and employers in the town to discuss matters of mutual interest and, of course, for business to business networking. In essence its aim is to fulfil the role of the now largely defunct Chambers of Commerce in relation to the non-retail sector.

The Forum meets every 8/10 weeks and is hosted in turn by members, meetings having taken place at both company premises and community venues including DAF Trucks, Unicarriers (Atlet), Groves & Banks, Windles, Box Technologies, CPM, Lucy's, BOC, Lord Williams's School, Meadow View Park (hosted by ASM), Thame Barns Centre, Thame Town Hall, Chinnor Rugby Club and Thame Masonic Lodge.

Who is involved ?

- Senior executives of the larger non-retail businesses and employers in Thame, regularly attended by DAF Trucks, ASM, Lucy Electric, Groves, Windles, Unicarriers (Atlet), MGR Foamtex, Box Technologies, Kubota, Orange Aero, and others.
- Smaller business-to-business service providers, including Thame Freight, Abbotts Office Solutions, Pentangle, E4S, and Sylo Associates.
- Senior Officers and Cabinet Members from the Town, District and County Councils; Lord Williams's School; and, whenever possible, by John Howell MP.

What are the aims ?

- to establish better links between business, local authorities, and the local community
- to better understand the needs of businesses in Thame
- to identify, discuss, and resolve common issues and opportunities through mutual cooperation
- to identify and discuss the challenges facing businesses in Thame, including infrastructure, skills, and resources
- to encourage better business-to-business communication and networking

The Business Forum has

- engaged with businesses in consultation regarding the Thame Neighbourhood Plan
- lobbied extensively to accelerate the provision of high speed broadband connections to Thame's industrial estates
- ensured that new industrial development in Thame has been occupier led, bringing sustainable new employment to the town
- improved communications between businesses and Lord Williams's School in relation to work experience, employment opportunities and apprenticeships
- highlighted potential opportunities for future cooperation, including waste and recycling
- received presentations from OxLEP (Local Enterprise Partnership), BT, RSA, SouthOxBiz, and Sylo Associates
- facilitated the Open Doors event in 2015 and 2016, where more than 25 companies 'opened their doors' to the public with exhibits in the Town Hall Chamber and Upper High Street.
- provided professional guidance on implementing new legislation, such as GDPR
- worked with Thame Town Council in evidencing the need for new employment space in Thame

The Business Forum does **not** facilitate pitches from companies canvassing for business, nor from charities seeking sponsorship or funding. We respect that senior executive time is valuable and do not allow the forum to be treated as a captive audience.

