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Business Guide & Directory



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Published by:

Burrows Communications Ltd

Cantium House, 2nd Floor, North
West Suite, Railway Approach,
Wallington, Surrey SM6 0DZ
Tel: 020 8773 3000

Email: postmaster@burrows.co.uk

Web: www.burrows.co.uk

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Foreword

In recent years, the Borough Council has made economic regeneration a new key priority. Whilst Tonbridge and Malling is an outstanding place to live, work and visit, the Borough Council recognises the need to promote and support the growth and expansion of our existing business community as well as welcome further economic investment at appropriate locations across the borough.

Our recent track record in this regard has shown that we mean business:

- **Between 2010 and 2015, nearly 2,300 new homes were built in the borough. In comparison with other boroughs in Kent, this represents the second highest level of growth.**
- **Over 85,000 sqm of new commercial floor space was built in 2014/15.**
- **Peters Village, a new settlement on the banks of the River Medway incorporating 1,000 homes, community facilities, primary school and open space is now well under way.**
- **Tonbridge is benefiting from public investment in the High Street and surrounding parks and gardens, as well as commercial investment in and around the town centre.**

I hope this Business Guide and Directory will play a role in encouraging further growth in the borough – not only helping to promote the borough as a key location for economic regeneration, but also providing information to help source services and supplies locally within the borough.

I would like to thank all of our partner organisations and local businesses who have supported the publication of this Business Guide and Directory. I hope you will find it a valuable information source.



Nicolas Heslop

**Nicolas Heslop,
Leader of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council**



About Tonbridge and Malling Borough

- Located in the heart of West Kent
- Population of approximately 120,000
- 92 square miles
- There are two main urban areas:
 - Tonbridge is a market town with a population of around 39,000. It is located on the River Medway, approximately 4 miles north of Tunbridge Wells. The town dates back to at least the 11th century and was recorded in the Domesday Book as 'Tonebrige'.
 - the 'Medway Gap' urban area in the north of the borough is located along the M20/A20 corridor to the north-west of Maidstone. It encompasses the parishes of Aylesford, Ditton, East Malling and Larkfield, Leybourne and the town of Snodland.
- Much of the borough is rural in character and comprises a number of attractive rural centres – such as West Malling, Borough Green, Hadlow, Hildenborough and East Peckham - as well as environmental designations such as the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- There are a number of key employment sites in the borough, including:
 - New Hythe Area, Larkfield
 - Quarry Wood (including Priory Park)
 - Forstal Road, Aylesford
 - 20/20 Estate, Aylesford
 - Kings Hill
 - Tonbridge Industrial Estate



West Malling High Street

Local Economy Overview

The following is a snapshot of the Tonbridge and Malling economy:

- The number of jobs in the borough is now around 70,000 – an increase of over 25% since the late 1990s.
- There are around 5,400 businesses, with around 4,000 (75%) of these employing 0-4 people.
- **Key sectors in the economy are:**
 - a) Business Services (12.4% of jobs)
 - b) Construction (8.9%)
 - c) Transport (8.7%)
 - d) Wholesale (8.5%)
- Some of the major employers that have chosen to locate in the borough include:
 - **Kimberly-Clark** - around 280 people work at the Kings Hill offices in Consumer and Professional Sales & Marketing, Customer Services, Finance, HR and IT.
 - **Waitrose** - has a Regional Distribution Centre in Aylesford which opened in 2007.
 - **Gallagher Group** - a local building, civil engineering, quarrying and property business based in Aylesford that has expanded considerably over the past 40 years.
 - **Fidelity** - a global financial investment company with offices in Hildenborough.
 - **Smurfit Kappa Townsend Hook** - one of the leading providers of paper-based packaging solutions in the world, employing 120 people at their Snodland site.
 - **Amazon Logistics** - moved in to New Hythe Business Park in 2015 leading to the creation of 160 new jobs.
- The average weekly salary of people working in the borough is £520, whereas the average weekly salary of people living in the borough is £640.
- 43% of the working age population are qualified to NVQ Level 4 and above.





Communications

The borough enjoys high quality communication links by road and rail to the M25, London and the Channel ports.

Main east/west roads are the M2, M20/M26 and A20, with the A21 linking Tonbridge with Hastings, Sevenoaks and London via the M25.

There are two main rail services provided to London from Tonbridge and from West Malling, as well as other local stations. A local rail connection is also available serving the Medway Valley linking Maidstone, Strood and Paddock Wood. Access to high speed train services to London St Pancras is via Snodland, Maidstone West and Ebbsfleet International Station.

25 minutes - Ebbsfleet International Station with Eurostar Services to Paris, Brussels and Lille and High Speed services into St Pancras.

40 minutes - Eurotunnel with regular shuttles to Calais, France.

45 minutes - Gatwick Airport with flights across the world.

60 minutes - Dover Port with ferries to Calais and Dunkerque.



Regeneration and Development

Tonbridge Town Centre is currently enjoying a renaissance as a result of a number of key regeneration sites in and around the town that are helping create a strong sense of identity and vibrancy. These include:

- High Street Improvements Scheme – this has helped to create a much more pleasant visitor experience, allowing cafés and restaurants to spill out into the street, and reducing the dominance of traffic along the High Street. New directional signage has also been installed to give visitors clearer information on how to get around the town by foot. Plans are now being taken forward for improvements along River Walk and Tonbridge Railway Station.
- Memorial Gardens – just off the High Street, the Memorial Gardens were fully refurbished in September 2014 by the Tonbridge Memorial Gardens Trust in partnership with the Borough Council, creating an outstanding

place for quiet reflection. The scheme won a BALI National Landscape Award in 2015 recognising the high standards of the project.

- Town Lock – a partnership between the Borough Council and the Environment Agency to improve flood defence for the town, create a fantastic new open space along the River Medway, as well as a new boathouse and telemetry system. Works were completed in March 2016.
- Retail Developments – there has been new investment in the town centre in recent years, turning Tonbridge into a destination for shopping and dining.

These improvements to the town have also been supported by the Tonbridge Town Team, which delivers a range of events throughout the year, including the annual Dragonboat Race, as well as the Tonbridge Loyalty Card. For more information go to www.tonbridge-ourtown.org.uk



Peters Village will soon become a new community comprising a village of 1,000 homes on the banks of the River Medway, supported by the construction of a new bridge across the river which opened in summer 2016.

The net area of Peters Village development is approximately 35.05 hectares (86.61 acres) with 11.1 hectares (27.3 acres) set aside as public open space.

The development will be mostly low rise, and includes a showpiece riverside promenade with timber and composite riverbank cladding and block paviors for the walkway/cycleway. A few slightly taller homes will echo the riverside elevation of the former cement works that used to occupy the site.

A new local centre next to the river will include: community centre, medical centre, shop, public house and employment units.

This wide-ranging project also includes: a new primary school, new areas of open space and playing fields, plus the protection and management of the Peters Pit nature reserve.

Development is scheduled to be completed in 2022.





The regeneration of the RAF base at **Kings Hill** began in the late 1980s and now provides an exceptional environment for homes and businesses. It offers a beautiful, quality, clean and safe mixed-use, sustainable community where everything needed for an active and aspirational lifestyle is on the doorstep. The vibrant community enjoys shops, restaurants, leisure and community facilities and transport links which are outstanding for a rural location. Substantial investment has been made in the soft and social infrastructure needed to create a true community.

A number of big companies are now based at Kings Hill, including Rolex, Kimberly-Clark, Sekisui and David Lloyd.

Most recently an application for a further extension to Kings Hill was granted in October 2014, including:

- 635 new homes,
- a two-form entry primary school with

associated playing fields and land safeguarded for an extension to create a three-form entry primary school. The new school will be on the site of the existing County Supplies building on Gibson Drive which has been demolished as part of the development;

- a multi-functional extension to the community hall;
- a youth recreational facility;
- high quality and attractive on-site public open space including a new linear park, trim trails, woodland paths and green spaces.

Aylesford Newsprint closed in February 2015 with the loss of around 230 jobs. Since this time, administrators KPMG have appointed consultants to develop a new masterplan for the site. In March 2016, a number of community consultation events took place to seek the views of local residents regarding potential uses for the site. In summer 2016, an outline application was submitted to the Borough Council for a scheme comprising a mix of residential and commercial uses.

Development at **Nepicar Business Park** near Junction 2A of the M26 started in early 2016 and was completed by mid-2016. It offers a total of 35,000 sq ft and has the capacity to accommodate up to 15 businesses.

Building upon a century of horticultural and agricultural research and development, NIAB EMR have plans to develop a Biotech Hub in East Malling, including state-of-the-art research facilities that will support innovative crop production in the UK and overseas.



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West Kent LEADER is a source of funding available to farmers, growers, foresters, rural businesses and communities to help secure a sustainable future for rural West Kent.

The LEADER Programme is a community-led approach to the delivery of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), which is funded by DEFRA and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) funds. The planning, decision making and implementation is done at a local level,

carried out by a Local Action Group (LAG) which is made up of private, public and community sector volunteers with a wide range of experience and knowledge of local rural issues.

For more information go to www.westkentleader.org.uk

Kent County Council operate a 0% loan fund offering funding to local businesses with growth potential. To register your interest contact escalate@kent.gov.uk





The following is a list of useful business support organisations:

- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council – economic development (01732 876011), business rates (01732 876335), planning and building regulations (01732 876311), refuse collection (01732 876147), food safety and hygiene (01732 876190), or go to www.tmbc.gov.uk/services/business/business-support-and-advice
- Kent & Medway Growth Hub (signposting service to available support and funding) – www.kentandmedwaygrowthhub.org.uk or 0300 4563565
- Locate in Kent (inward investment and relocation support) – www.locateinkent.com or 01732 520700
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce – www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk or 01233 503838
- West Kent Chamber of Commerce & Industry – www.wkcci.com or 01732 366644
- Kent & Medway FSB - www.fsb.org.uk/regions/kent-medway or 01892 541399
- National Centre for Micro-Businesses (support for home-based businesses) - www.thecentreformicrobusiness.co.uk or 0300 030 9660
- Pro-Actions (business advice and support) – www.pro-actions.com or 03333 440517
- Better Business for All (a partnership designed to improve the way regulation is delivered to ease the burden on the local business community) – www.bbfa.biz



East Malling

Quality of Life

Tonbridge and Malling offers a fantastic lifestyle to its residents. The following are some key facts:

- House prices are over a third cheaper than average price of London (average of c. £340,000 compared to average of c. £530,000 in London).
- Overall deprivation is very low in the borough, with a ranking of 268 out of 326 districts and boroughs across the country (1 being the most deprived).
- Unemployment levels are one of the lowest in Kent at only 1%.
- 73% of the borough is Metropolitan Green Belt with areas to the north of the borough included within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- There are a number of highly successful educational establishments in the borough including Tonbridge School, Hadlow College and the University of Kent.
- The area is rich in heritage, including Tonbridge Castle, Hadlow Tower, Ightham Mote, the Hop Farm at Paddock Wood and Aylesford Priory, as well as well-preserved historic high streets in West Malling, Aylesford and Tonbridge.



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