

A helping hand *back to work*

The Council's award-winning Working Communities Project is helping people regain their confidence to get back to work following its expansion across North East Derbyshire.

One-to-one support - including help with job search, writing CVs and interview technique - is now available in Killamarsh and Grassmoor. Have a look at the next page to find out how...

Top award for Council's credit crunch help



Work to support the local economy during the credit crunch has earned North East Derbyshire District Council a top business award.

Leaders of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) hand-picked the Council as the winner of this year's Small Business Support Award.

The accolade recognises the ongoing work which NEDDC does to help local firms, as well as the package of support which the authority has put in place to aid companies during the economic downturn, which has included:

- Help to access grant funding, including £2.4m available from the LEADER Approach project to boost new and existing businesses
- Exceeding a commitment to pay invoices within a 20-day deadline as part of a FSB campaign, by achieving a 7.5 day average payment time

- Free 'beat the credit crunch' advice sessions for businesses, backed up by a new dedicated area on the Council's website
- The launch of two new IT training suites at Coney Green and Westthorpe business centres, in partnership with Chesterfield College and the University of Derby, for use by businesses and distance-learning students

Cllr Pat Kerry, Member with responsibility for the Economy, said: "Helping businesses through these difficult financial times is a priority for us, and we have put in place a package of support to help firms across the district.

"We look forward to continuing this good work alongside our communities."

*Matthew with partner
Kelly and son Joshua*



When Matthew Robinson suddenly found himself out of work, with his first child on the way and a mortgage to meet, he wasn't sure which way to turn.

Unemployed for the first time in his life, the 30-year-old says he felt overwhelmed by the pressure to provide for his

growing family - especially at a time when jobs seemed few and far between.

More than 60 job applications later with no success, the future looked bleak.

"Having worked all of my adult life, when I was made redundant it was really daunting and I wasn't sure what to do next," said Matthew, a former timber yard worker.

"It's a massive blow anyway, but knowing that our first child was due just piled on the pressure."

Now the picture for Mark and his new family couldn't be more different.

Just two weeks after spotting an advert for NEDDC's Working Communities project, Mark - the proud dad of baby Joshua - landed the first job he applied for.

Now enjoying his new role as a postman for Royal Mail, Mark says his success is thanks to the support he got from the scheme - which was named as one of the best regeneration projects in the country in the 2009 Government Business Awards.

"I was given all the help, advice and support that I could ask for," he said.

"I can't believe how things have turned around for us. The job is a change of direction for me, but I really enjoy it and haven't looked back since."

To find out more about the Working Communities Project contact Mark Szadura, Community Employment Advisor, on (01246) 217534 / 07973 343383 or markszadura@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk

Beat the credit crunch:

Information *for businesses*

Succeeding in the business world can be difficult at the best of times - but keeping your firm afloat in a recession comes with a lot of added stress and worry.

But help is at hand. There are a range of organisations and initiatives in North East Derbyshire focused on supporting the local economy, especially during the credit crunch.

Some of the key issues, and organisations that can help, are outlined below. More information is also available online at www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/credit-crunch

Business support and advice from North East Derbyshire District Council

For advice on a range of issues affecting your business - including who can help if your company is struggling - contact NEDDC's Business Support Officer on (01246) 217202 for one-to-one support.

Business Link East Midlands

This service provides companies with access to independent information, advice and support needed to start, maintain or grow a business. Call 0845 058 6644, email info@businesslinkem.co.uk or visit the website at www.businesslink.gov.uk/eastmidlands

Federation of Small Businesses

The FSB is the UK's largest campaigning pressure group promoting and protecting the interests of the self-employed and owners of small firms - find out more about how the local Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire branch could help you at www.fsb.org.uk

Creative businesses

If you're in the creative industry, visit www.creativegreenhouse.org.uk for details of the latest news and events, funding and skills development opportunities, an online resource library with useful links and downloads and an opportunity to profile your company in the business directory.

Finding new business

Over 3,000 new contract opportunities within the public sector are posted each month on www.supply2.gov.uk and you can find more local contracts at www.sourcederbyshire.co.uk

Funding opportunities

New and existing businesses looking to diversify could be eligible for funding from the LEADER project, which has £2.4m available for projects in North East Derbyshire (except Dronfield) and Bolsover. Contact the LEADER Office (01246) 347217, email: info@bned-leader.co.uk or visit the website at www.bned-leader.co.uk For information about other funding opportunities visit www.ne-derbyshire.gov.uk/financial-assistance



Government support - Solutions for Business

The government provides a range of support for businesses, from help to start up and expand, to developing innovative new business plans or getting a foothold in the international market. Known as 'Solutions for Business,' this comprehensive package of support includes grants and other funding, advice and information services and training.

To find out more about what's on offer visit the website at www.businesslink.gov.uk/solutions

Useful numbers

**Business Link East Midlands
0845 6644**

**Chesterfield Law Centre
(01246) 550674**

**Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire
Chamber of Commerce
(01246) 207207**

**NEDDC Business Support
(01246) 217202**