

Praise for firm's eco-credentials

MP Lee Dillon visits Lower Way's Kennet Crayfish Company to talk sustainability

By MADISON ROLFE
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AN award-winning business received a visit by Newbury MP Lee Dillon to talk all things sustainable.

The Kennet Crayfish Company, based in Lower Way, Thatcham, welcomed Mr Dillon to speak about protection of the region's chalk streams, which he says is one of his top priorities.

During the visit, the company outlined how its operations remain as environmentally conscious as possible, including using gentle traps that are safe for other river wildlife and processing the catch humanely as possible in its bio-processing facility.

Mr Dillon said: "The Kennet Crayfish Company is a fantastic example of local innovation and entrepreneurship in action."

"It's great to see a Newbury business using creativity and sustainability to turn an environmental challenge into an opportunity."

The team's drive to diversify, create new products and open up new markets really shows what can be achieved when local businesses think differently



Kennet Crayfish Company managing director Andrew Leech

"The team's drive to diversify, create new products and open up new markets really shows what can be achieved when local businesses think differently."

"Newbury has so much to offer – a strong business community, a talented workforce and a location that connects us to so many opportunities."

"I'm proud to see companies like this leading the way and look forward to watching them go from strength to strength."

The firm was formed when businessman John Bennett stepped in with investment that enabled the



Lee Dillon and businessman John Bennett who stepped in with investment after the company was hit by the live transportation ban

formation of The Kennet Crayfish Company, after managing director Andrew Leech's previous business was shut down when the transport of live crayfish was banned.

Through this partnership a unique bio-secure processing plant was set up, and licences were obtained to trap and process crayfish, and a system of extracting and returning water from and to the River Kennet.

As crayfish are seasonal from June to late autumn, the company has diversified to create income all year round – this includes creating its own award-winning gin, Kennet

Crayfish Gin.

Mr Leech said: "We are on course to generate more crayfish sales to the hospitality sector, as well as keep building our base of direct sales to consumers."

"Our mission is to convert far more of the British public to the wonders of this delicious crayfish and to our extended range of culinary produce."

"In addition we are also investing in solutions to improve our packaging to make them more recyclable, compostable and eco-friendly in turn also trying to increase the product shelf-life."

THATCHAM

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Oddfellows society offers friendship

THE Oddfellows friendly society is inviting newcomers to get in touch and go along to its next community event.

The not-for-profit Reading branch organises and hosts around 23 events a month, including regular meet-ups in Thatcham, Pangbourne and Tilehurst.

These include singing and exercise groups, friendly get-togethers and games afternoons, as well as day trips and an annual holiday, offering a mix of light-hearted social events and enriching experiences.

The society was founded to improve the quality of people's lives through friendship, care and charity.

It is inviting new people to go along to its Thatcham meeting, starting at 7.30pm on Thursday, November 27, at Thatcham Memorial Hall, Brownsfield Road, RG18 3HF.

To find out more about upcoming activities or to request a free information pack, including a diary of local events, call (0118) 957 3354 or email readingdistrict@oddfellows.co.uk

Poetry competition for children

A POETRY competition asking children 'what does Thatcham mean to you?' is now open for entries.

Mayor Petra Pemberton has announced the exciting new children's poetry competition celebrating the theme 'What Thatcham Means to Me'.

The challenge invites young people to share what makes Thatcham special to them – from favourite places and people, to memories and dreams for the future.

Whether it's a heartfelt verse, a rhyme, or free-flowing, the competition is a chance for young voices to express themselves.

It is open to anyone aged 18 or under who has a connection to Thatcham in any way.

Poems can be up to 30 lines, in any style you like – rhyming, free verse, acrostic or something entirely your own choice but the poem must be your own original work.

If you'd like to enter, email your entry to enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk, with your name, age, postcode and school.

Entries are open now but close tomorrow (Friday), so be quick if you haven't entered already!



Thatcham mayor Petra Pemberton

Winners will receive a special invitation to take the stage at the Thatcham Christmas lights switch-on on December

5, where the mayor of Thatcham will proudly read the winning poem aloud in front of the gathered crowd.

Woman must pay £596 for drug-driving

A WOMAN has been caught behind the wheel after taking cannabis.

Sue Pound appeared in the dock at Reading Magistrates' Court on Tuesday, October 21.

The 47-year-old, of Marsh

Road, Thatcham, admitted driving a Renault Clio on Burys Bank Road in Newbury on August 9 when the amount of the Class B-controlled drug in her system exceeded the prescribed limit.

Pound, who was legally represented,

was fined £426.

No order for costs was made because of her limited means but she was required to pay a statutory victim services surcharge of £170.

Finally, Pound was banned from driving for 12 months.

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