

# Renfrewshire Chamber takes off



**Bob Davidson is the enthusiastic and ebullient chief executive of the Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce. And it is these characteristics, one suspects, that have driven an astonishing revival of the fortunes of the 'local branch' of what in other areas may sometimes still be regarded as being dry-as-dust.**

Bob's background is anything but dry, having worked for a variety of drinks companies in supply chain and global project roles.

In the 13 months since he arrived at the Chambers headquarters at Bute Court in the heart of the Glasgow Airport campus, Davidson has overseen a racking up of activities – and a turnaround in profitability – that is a great example to his organisation's membership.

"As one of seven accredited Chambers in Scotland, we have 420 members, our

best-ever; but I want to increase that to at least 500 by the end of March," he declares. "So we are focusing on where there are concentrations of companies, in business parks such as Hillington.

"We are also enjoying our highest-ever public profile in terms of media attention and general awareness – demonstrated by our 400-strong Twitter following in the space of just two months."

He cites as an example of being 'The Ultimate Business Network' – the Chamber's official strapline – the recent members' meeting with guests speaker Jim McColl, one of Scotland's most successful businessmen, who recently acquired much of the Weir Group to add to his worldwide power station engineering empire.

"We had eighty people in attendance," he says proudly. "It was one of our most successful events."

The Chamber's events schedule is now awesome, with more than 80 dates in the

current calendar year, double what was offered in 2009.

"Our ideal member comes to some of these events, and gets his face known and his company known. There are some who say they don't get anything back, but I believe that's because they don't understand the networking process."

Bob Davidson insists that networking is the Chamber's Number One activity, by which means brands, companies and products get greater recognition. But the Chamber is also proud of its burgeoning mentoring activities.

"Our mentoring arrangements are free to non-members as well as members," he says. "With hundreds of expert mentors on our books, we have organised over 150 one-to-one matching sessions this year, 50% more than last year. And, increasingly, we set up mentoring groups for neighbouring Chambers such as Inverlyde and Dumbartonshire – with a wide range of subjects."

The Chamber held three such group sessions at Hillington Park, at Merlin House, on the subject of employment law and human relations. More are planned.

"But more than half our income comes from our export documentation service. We handled 120,000 documents in the past year alone, including all of Chivers' documents and most of Diageo's. And, of course, we are ideally placed at the airport, with so many freight-forwarding companies nearby, including Hillington."

So how much does membership cost? That depends on the size of the business in staff terms, but the basic fee starts at a very reasonable £125 per annum. Sounds very pursuing, don't you think?

Contact: Bob Davidson, 0141 847 5450, [www.renfrewshirechamber.com](http://www.renfrewshirechamber.com)

**RENFREWESHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
The Ultimate Business Network

## Designs on ROCCOs

**Innovation Centre-based NS Design and Bridgell are going head-to-head twice, having been short-listed in not one but two categories of this year's prestigious ROCCO business awards, run by Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce.**

Creative web experts NS Design are one of three companies with a chance of winning the Innovation and Technology award sponsored by Reid Kerr College, and they have also been nominated for the award for the outstanding performing business with fewer than 25 employees, an accolade they have already won previously.

Bridgell develops world-leading software solutions for the finance, utilities and libraries markets across the UK and US.

Anna-Marie Taylor, Marketing Manager at Hillington Park Innovation Centre said, "It's fantastic to see NSDesign and Bridgell being recognised for their business performance over the last few years as well as their outstanding innovation. I wish both companies best of luck."

The awards will be announced at the ROCCO awards dinner, hosted by broadcaster Fred MacAulay at the Normandy Hotel, Renfrew, on Friday November 12. Anyone wishing to book tickets for the event should visit the website [www.roccoawards.com](http://www.roccoawards.com).

**ROCCO**  
RENFREWESHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
BUSINESS AWARDS 2010

## Four-way test for Rotarians

**Another organisation with a distinguished pedigree is also looking to recruit new members from Hillington Park: Rotarians are a cross-section of people who live or work locally – volunteers who wish to make a charitable impact on their local communities, with specific global projects.**

"We are non-political, non-religious and open to all cultures, races and creeds," says John Stuart, President of the Renfrew Rotary Club. "Our main objective is service in the community and throughout the world. We give of our time, raise funds and ensure those funds go where the need is greatest, whether at home or abroad.

"We have no overheads. Every penny of the money we raise goes to the people we support. We build goodwill and peace, and encourage high ethical standards in all vocations. With 1.2 million members worldwide and a seat in the United Nations, we

also have an international voice."

Rotarians have a four-way test to assess the worth of any project:

- Is it the truth?
- Will it build goodwill and better friendship?
- Will it be beneficial to all concerned?
- "We get together on a weekly basis for a meal, some fun and some business, with regular guest speakers on many different topics and a broad spectrum of social activities. As well as the parent club, there is a Rotaract Club, for the 18-30 age group, and an Interact club for those aged 12-18."

The Rotary Club is always recruiting new members, and drop-in sessions are to be held at Hillington Park soon. To help gauge the level of interest, please contact membership convener Martin Moir on 07850371046, personally or by text.

This district has Rotary clubs in Renfrew, Paisley, Erskine, Johnstone, Govan and Gryffe valley, each meeting at different venues and at various times.  
Web: [www.renfrew-rotary.org.uk](http://www.renfrew-rotary.org.uk)



## Go forth and Twitter

**Hillington Park's most enthusiastic user of 'social media' networks – Gary Ennis, managing director of NS Design – enthralled an audience of two dozen who attended his seminar on the subject last month at the Innovation Centre.**

NS Design is one of the more mature fledgling companies incubated at the Innovation Centre. And Gary Ennis' talent for promotion has brought the potential of the likes of Facebook and Twitter to the attention of a wide range of businesses.

Earlier this year, Scottish Enterprise launched their 'Interactive Scotland' campaign with a 'Digital Inspiration' strategy for the digital media sector, including the BBC and Channel 4. The campaign is being spearheaded by Innovation Centres Scotland, the umbrella organisation which runs the Hillington Park and Alba Innovation Centres.

Back in April, Gary Ennis was entirely in his element when, with the volcanic ash cloud in Iceland disrupting flights all over Europe, he persuaded Glasgow Airport to communicate strongly to passengers using Twitter.

The airport's Twitter following increased by nearly 50% in the first week of the air travel crisis in April, as more holiday-makers and business people chose to get their information by this means.

NS Design worked with the airport to create the Twitter account as part of a bigger social networking project which has become invaluable to passengers, staff and other stakeholders.

"One of the main aims of the new social media strategy was to enable the airport to communicate more effectively with travellers," he explained. "And Twitter was crucial in getting the latest information out there during the disruption.

"Glasgow Airport's use of Twitter is a brilliant example of using social media to communicate during a crisis, and we have highlighted their experience during our regular workshops."

At his seminar last month, Ennis also spotlighted other companies which had embraced social networking – including You Tube – with success. But it was clear that Twitter is his favourite fad, as he outlined how savvy operators – even plumbers! – can attract business with minimal input and at low cost, demonstrating such methods 'live' to the assembled audience.

And, in December, there's a chance for remaining sceptics to subject themselves to a one-to-one 'Twimast' consultation with NS Design, who are offering such a service free in the lead-up to Christmas, following the success of a similar scheme over the past two years.

Contact: Gary Ennis, NS Design, on 0141-585 6390 or visit the website: [www.interactivescotland.com](http://www.interactivescotland.com)

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