

# Green cleaning bucks the economic trend

**"WHERE'S THERE'S muck, there's brass", is an age-old Yorkshire saying that barely travelled as far as the South East, but an Aylesford-based cleaning business has got the message so well that it is one of the fastest growing companies in the UK.**

Set up in 2004, Ridge Crest Cleaning has grown sales by more than 2,200 per cent, with annual turnover increasing from £93,000 in 2004/2005 to £2.15m in 2007/2008. This growth generated a pre-tax profit increase of 4,900 per cent over the same four-year period. Last year alone the company experienced an 86 per cent growth in turnover and 160 per cent pre-tax profit increase.

Ridge Crest delivers a complete range of facilities services to commercial, public sector, leisure and industrial premises using only environment-friendly and biodegradable products. Its breakthrough came in 2005 with the launch of the UK's first green cleaning contract in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council.

"It is all down to a commitment to delivering a quality personal service in an eco-friendly way," says Ian Beach, founder and managing director. "I wanted to make schools, offices and other business premises cleaner and fresher places for people to work in, with minimal impact on the environment whilst delivering that much-needed personal service. Our service is business-friendly and cost-effective. Use of fewer, but more effective products, offers up to a 20 per cent cost saving, so many of our clients can see an immediate return on investment early on in the contract."

Ridge Crest recently won the contract to clean Quantum Leap's 60,000 sq ft 'Battersea Evolution' venue in London and also work with the Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre in Tenterden, the biggest school in Kent.

The company's commitment to the environment is now an integral part of its ethos, with recycling, paperless working and the use of LPG-powered vehicles forming the day-to-day means of conducting



*Cleaning up... Ridge Crest's Ian Beach.*

business for its 350 employees. It is also working towards becoming carbon neutral by 2010.

"Earlier this year, in partnership with Ryan Jones, Wales rugby captain, Ridge Crest launched its highly-successful operation in Wales.

**Kings Hill** is celebrating one of its best years ever, having completed property deals on 156,000 square feet of office space in the first six months of 2008. Said Andrew Blevins, managing director of Kings Hill developer Liberty Property Trust UK: "It is our second best year ever, second only to 2006 when we completed on 180,000 square feet. With only 20,000 square feet of available space remaining, we are planning our next phase of speculative development and hope to start on site early 2009." Kings Hill is a thriving community with around 4,000 people living in the residential village; 15 per cent of all households have at least one person employed by a business on site. Around 100 companies are based at Kings Hill, ranging from international and national corporates to SMEs.

Bids for £11.6 million of transport investment in Dover and Shoreham (West Sussex) have been backed by the **South East England Regional Transport Board**. The South East is able to bid for cash from the Government's Community Infrastructure Fund now that the towns have been named as new 'Growth Points'. The money for transport improvements will support major new housing and

economic development. The region successfully secured £93 million in 2007-08 for 'Growth Areas' that included Kent Thames Gateway and the new bid covers projects including Dover Priory train station improvements, new bus lanes, real time travel information, extra bus stops, improved pedestrian crossings and better public transport access to White Cliffs Business Park

As UK banks talk to the European Investment Bank (EIB) to get a share of £4bn in loan finance, **Business Link in Kent** is reminding business owners that robust business plans make the difference between being approved or turned down for finance. Says Business Link Adviser Ian Netherton: "Lenders are unlikely to consider an application for funding without a comprehensive business plan. Our experience means that we know what the lender will be looking for in a business plan and we can help you prepare your plan in the best light possible." To book a clinic with a Business Link Adviser or to request a 'Sources of Finance for Small Firms' factsheet, phone Business Link on **0845 600 9 006** or email [info@businesslinksoutheast.co.uk](mailto:info@businesslinksoutheast.co.uk)

**London Ashford Airport (Lydd)** has spent £1.7 million and thousands of man hours preparing reports and undertaking environmental studies to support its planning applications. More than 20 volumes of information have been produced since December 2006, when the airport submitted its proposals for a runway extension

**Kent Profile** ☎ 01444 831512 🌐 [www.kentprofile.com](http://www.kentprofile.com)

**alexandrapatrick**  
marketing services | strategy | copywriting

West View | Marsh Road | Ruckinge | Kent TN26 2PU

T: +44 (0) 1233 733864 E: [maria.callow@alexandrapatrick.co.uk](mailto:maria.callow@alexandrapatrick.co.uk) W: [www.alexandrapatrick.co.uk](http://www.alexandrapatrick.co.uk)