

Paterson pledge to grow Chamber



Archie Paterson (centre) outlines his plans as he starts a three-year term as president of Midlothian and East Lothian Chamber of Commerce. Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

New Midlothian and East Lothian Chamber of Commerce president Archie Paterson has pledged to continue to grow the organisation.

Mr Paterson, who is also the centre manager at manager of the Midlothian Innovation Centre, takes over from East Lothian-based Keith Barbour who has completed his three-year term.

And the former banker said: "The chamber has developed over the last number of years to try and grow and support the businesses in Midlothian and East Lothian.

"The economic conditions have been difficult but there is a real opportunity now to grasp the nettle and the chamber is here to help businesses increase their profitability.

"By networking we can help find other opportunities to buy from and sell to.

"My aim is to develop this further and to grow the membership of the chamber to the benefit of all its members."

He added: "It is accepted that previously in the world of finance the bank manager was there to provide a sounding board and provide a degree of advice to businesses.

"To a degree banks are not providing that any more in terms of a dedicated bank manager.

“There is an opportunity through the chamber to find like-minded people to help your business grow and develop.”

Mr Paterson’s appointment was confirmed at the organisation’s annual general meeting in Edinburgh College.

Members also agreed that the currently membership fee would remain the same.

Mr Barbour said the board felt the best way of encouraging more members was to keep the current rates in place.

Neil Fraser, a long-serving board member, has also stood down. George Archibald, the chamber’s chief executive officer, said that membership retention was strong.

And he said that the chamber continues to grow despite tough economic times.

He urged non-members to look at what the chamber had to offer and to consider joining.

A full programme of activities was planned for the next 12 months including breakfast meetings, seminars and workshops.

Netwalking and Netgolf were new innovations this year and would be continued.

And so would mentoring for schools and embryonic businesses.

He added that chambers continue to influence policy at local government and national level.

And he welcomed a new Chamber Partner in Edinburgh College which had thousands of talented students plus facilities like meeting rooms which businesses could tap into.