

DUNMOW AND STANSTED Observer

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STILL BEATING THE RECESSION

SHOPKEEPERS have confidence in Stansted's high street, despite the loss of one of its main businesses.

Home interiors entrepreneur Matthew Wylde has shifted both his outlets from Lower Street to his new premises H@me & Eat on the Birchanger Industrial Estate in Bishop's Stortford, blaming parking problems for his decision to quit the village.

New businesses, however, have been quick to fill the cluster of buildings left by H@me on the west side of the street.

Ray Newbrook, owner of Henham Reclaim, opened on part of the site on Saturday and Paris Legore flowers and gifts is preparing to open its shop in September.

Mr Newbrook said: "So far, the response has been quite satisfactory with a lot of new faces and people looking round, and enough sales to make me confident that when people know where I am and what I'm doing, it will be a good move."

The H@me Interiors shop on the east side of Lower Street is still empty but neighbouring businesses are not worried.

"It is general evolution," said Lloyd Jordan, manager of Yeoman's café and tea-room, which has been open six years.

"There is a recession; there is not as much money about as there was and that's not just Stansted, it's across the country. Stansted is a lovely village and people do support us and I think a lot of shops are like that."

Next door, at Kings Family Butchers, owner Peter Apps said: "I love it here, it's a

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lovely place to work. I have been here for five-and-a-half years; that's virtually the whole of the recession.

"The traffic is a bit heavy and we don't see the traffic wardens enough. Some of my customers do moan about parking, but the traffic wardens don't come down all the time to move people on [from the one hour bays outside the shops]."

He urged villagers to support their local shops and businesses.

"Stansted has got a lot to offer; I think the problem is we don't promote it enough," said Cllr Alan Dean, a Stansted member of Uttlesford District Council.

"What the district and parish councils want to do is to promote the place.

"Uttlesford District Council is preparing an economic development strategy for the district and I would be expecting that supports business regeneration in Stansted."

Cll Dean, who would also like Station Road enhanced, added: "I think we have got to look beyond this [the recession] and not sit and moan but plan for the future. Stansted is an excellent location; people I speak to in Lower Street say it is an excellent place [to trade, with good road and rail links].

"It won't happen overnight, but the district council does have some money from central government, £100,000, for improving town centres and we are hoping to see some of that coming to Stansted."



SURE THING: Local businesses are confident the former H@me shop in Stansted will be filled soon. Inset, Matthew Wylde, with a golden sheep in honour of Elsenham's Ben Maher

Photo:
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