

Maintaining a better society

John O'Conner has always believed that commercial success is directly linked to being a good corporate citizen and our Chairman's values continue to shape our approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR). To build a successful, sustainable business in today's competitive market, we must continue to develop long-term relationships with our customers, communities and suppliers, and demonstrate our keen sense of civic responsibility.

Over the years we have made considerable progress in embedding CSR into our everyday operations. However, we have never been a company to shout about our achievements. Nevertheless, our public sector stakeholders have an increasing need for information about our CSR performance, and communication to meet those needs is a challenge, primarily because it needs to cover such a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues. We are addressing that challenge everyday, and this is something we shall focus on over the forthcoming year.

Our staff proudly give their time and energy to support local, regional and national initiatives that make a genuine difference to communities and improve people's chances in life and this edition is dedicated to sharing some of their achievements and stories.

From being the very first company in Herts and Beds to support the government's new extended work experience programme to some cross-dressing turf laying the Big Society agenda is alive and kicking at John O'Conner's.



Opportunities for young people

John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance is the first company in Herts and Beds to sign up to the government's new extended work experience scheme working in partnership with Jobcentre Plus.

The first five work experience placements started on our St Albans City and District Council contract back in March 2011. The scheme was such a success that it has been extended to other JOC contracts and so far, over 40 unemployed young people, aged between 18 and 21, have been given the opportunity to gain valuable experience with John O'Conner without loss of benefits.

Paul Brady, Senior Contract Manager for John O'Conner, said: "I was only too happy to get involved. We hope these work experience placements could be a way of unlocking a pool of hidden talent that might otherwise go unnoticed."

Employment Minister Chris Grayling said: "Our new work experience scheme will give young people the chance to get valuable experience for up to two months, which will

make a real difference to their confidence, their employability and their prospects."

Richard Shwe, Head of Community Services for St Albans City and District Council, added: "We are happy to be involved with this work experience programme. It provides a great opportunity for young people to gain knowledge and practical experience helping to maintain our parks and open spaces in St Albans City and District."



Investors in People status for JOC

LANTRA

Another important first for the industry, as John O'Conner leads the way, achieving the new LANTRA Investors in People status.

LANTRA is the one and only dedicated sector expert licensed to deliver the Investors in People programme and John O'Conner is the first company in the land based industry to reach this prestigious standard.

Investors in People Assessor, Estelle Caddoo thanked everyone at John O'Conner who contributed their time and views to the process and said, "I offer my congratulations to everyone at John O'Conner on being found to meet the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard."

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In the community

John O'Conner were delighted to present to the RNLI a cheque for £306.34 raised by staff from the company's local Rother District Council and Amicus Horizon contracts.

JOC's Senior Contract Manager, Sean Towey, said " I am delighted with the generous efforts made by so many of our team here at Rother over the past year, for what is not only a worthy cause but an appropriate one for us all here, living on the coast. In addition to this effort, much local charity and community work has been done by the team over the past year, including Mayoral Golf Charity Tournament, tree planting for Demelza House and bulb planting with local school children. Moreover, I am delighted to announce that a unanimous vote was cast before Christmas to nominate the Demelza House as our 2011 charity, again which will be supported both financially and in physical effort."

Lou Purdy of the RNLI commented, "The RNLI's volunteer crew and lifeguards can only continue to save lives at sea with the support from the local community and with donations such as yours so on behalf of everyone at the RNLI thank you to John O'Conner and all who got involved in helping to raise funds for us."



Billy Piggott (JOC) presents a cheque to Ms. Lou Purdy (RNLI)

The Great Duck Down Derby at North Herts

The North Herts Depot "did something quackers for money" on Comic Relief day. The Great Duck Down Derby was staged on Friday 18th March.

A huge thank you to all who supported the event either financially or by turning up to watch. Everyone who was there agreed it was great fun – there are obviously a few people we need to thank as without them it would not have been possible.

Thanks to Mark and Piotr for risking a soaking by starting the race, Kevin and Rob for building a finish line and bravely standing firm to fish out the ducks, Helen and Joan for organising the event – thanks also to Jasper for collecting the remaining stragglers. The final amount raised was a fantastic £220 and we all look forward to doing it again next time!



and they're off

Eat, drink and be Mary



Ricky Doust

Ricky Doust, of recent NVQ2 fame (and who now has a rather different reputation) raised £118 for the Rother Contract 2011 nominated charity, the Demelza Childrens Hospice and also achieved a life long ambition by laying turf while dressed as a woman.

The worrying part of Ricky's endeavours was that he appeared to enjoy, more than one should, the occasion – seemed to all to be a 'good excuse' for wearing the other half's clothes!"

Well done Ricky for being such a good sport.



My first day as a woman and already I'm having hot flushes...

Well done Paul

Paul Maddox, from our Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust contract does sterling work for Cancer Research both locally at Alexandra Palace and in the surrounding area. Paul is pictured below (centre).



Pitching in at Sue Ryder

A team of willing John O'Conner staff volunteers from our North Hertfordshire Contract, were joined by Directors and support staff, to help transform a neglected Sue Ryder wasteland into a functional outdoor space.



Neil, Gareth and Matt work while Shaun supervises



eagerly awaiting the ducks

The John O'Conner 2011 Photography Competition

Are you, or a member of your family, an amateur photographer and a keen photography enthusiast, with an eye for capturing that perfect moment? If so, then this is the competition for you!

The competition is open to all John O'Conner employees and family members and you can enter up to three photographs. There is no specific theme but your pictures should reflect, in some way, the work we do or the people who do it. Great imagery is everything and imagination is the key ingredient. Be creative and have fun. Deadline for entries is 16th December 2011 and winners will be announced in February 2012.

What can I win?

There are two awards to be won!

- **The Judge's Choice Award**
- **The Chairman's Choice Award**

Winners of each category will receive a fantastic Red Letter Days Experience Gift Card worth £75. The winning recipient can select from a wide range of exciting experiences, including: Cocktail Masterclass, Cowboy Riding Adventure, Horse Riding, Ice Climbing, Snowboarding for Two, Indoor or Bridge Bungee Jumping, A Day at Diggerland for Four, Adult and Child Karting, Honda Offshore and Zapcat Powerboating, to name but a few.

How to enter?

You may submit prints and/or digital files. Prints should not exceed 11x14 inches in size. Do not submit original prints. Digital submissions must be no longer than 800 pixels on the longest side and saved as Jpegs (.jpg), in RGB format and not exceed 4MB each file. Do not send originals prints. John O'Conner is not responsible for lost or damaged prints.

Entries can be submitted via e mail to:
jane.wilson@johnoconner.co.uk

or posted to: 2 Great North Road, Welwyn, Herts, AL6 0PL

Use of images

All entrants understand that any image submitted to the competition may be used by John O'Conner for marketing and promotional purposes including in any media such as print and digital media directly. There will not be any monetary compensation. By winning or placing in the competition you are agreeing to these conditions.



photograph your colleagues (but get their permission)



be creative and capture the mood and emotion of the landscape



showcase your very own work

Caption Competition

Our pest control officers from North Herts are clearly passionate about what they do and have sportingly agreed to be the subject of this edition's caption competition. Please submit your humorous (and printable) captions by 1st August to: jane.wilson@johnoconner.co.uk

or
2 Great North Road
Welwyn, Herts
AL6 0PL

Alternatively pass them to you manager or supervisor



Contract spotlight - Island Life

"On the 4th January 2011 we entered a new chapter of the John O'Conner business with the commencement of, in our Chairman's own words, the companys 'first overseas' contract, on the Isle of Wight.

Having only received the official order for the Contract on 9th December 2010, time was of the essence to mobilise for an immediate start after the Christmas period. With support from a host of colleagues on the mainland (or North Island as the locals refer to us!), within the first quarter we moved from an empty (not to mention dilapidated) central depot to a fully resourced and professional operation.

Our teams are up and running to schedule across the island. Our Parks, Gardens and Highways teams proudly display the John O'Conner name on uniforms. We have invested in a brand new liveried fleet and comprehensive outlay of new machinery, the majority intentionally purchased from island suppliers, seeking to build long term investment relations from the start.

The above success is now being met by effort out on the ground, with the revised maintenance regimes firmly on track in line with the scheduled Works Programmes.

Welcome to Stan (Manager), Dale (Assistant Manager), John (Supporting Supervisor) and the whole team, to the company – we look forward to the IOW contract becoming part of the JOC success story in the coming years."

Sean Towey



Employee spotlight - Simon Bird, GM Chargehand, Isle of Wight

• **Why did you choose Grounds Maintenance as a career?**

My Dad owned his own Grounds Maintenance Company and encouraged me to work for him. When I moved to the Island 5 years ago I was lucky enough to secure a job working for the Parks Department. I also like working outside and meeting new people.

• **What's a normal day for you?**

Turning up on time, organising my team for the days grass cutting, litter picking and pitch marking.

• **What's the best part of your job?**

When the public compliment my team on how nice the parks & gardens are looking.

• **What do you do in your spare time?**

I am a keen gardener. I also play snooker and I do some sketching

• **What do you find most challenging?**

Keeping Town Centre flower beds looking pristine during the Summer season.



Simon Bird