## WOMEN WORK TOGETHER TO GIVE ENTERPRISE WINGS

A SEEDA inspired initiative to encourage more female entrepreneurs is forging ahead with help from two business "ambassadors" and supported by MP Anne Milton.

Sandra Young, director of the Wilky Group and facilitator Lucia Bardoul, of Alchemy in Company, are both among about 1,000 nationwide ambassadors in a government project to address the shortfall of female entrepreneurs. Asked how they could help promote women's enterprise at the launch of South East England Women's Enterprise Ambassadors Network by SEEDA chief executive Pam Alexander, the two businesswomen decided to collaborate.

Wilky has offered office and meeting facilities at their Parallel Business Centres for graduates of the 'She's the Business' start-up programme to meet regularly. Cams Hall, Fareham or Fetcham Park House near Leatherhead are two heritage buildings that along with the centre in Guildford have been a springboard for many successful start-up businesses.

Sandra Young said: "With Sandra Leslie, the managing director of our business centres operation, I have gained wide experience of the needs of start-up businesses. The Wilky Group is a long-term supporter of the local Business Enterprise Trust, Enterprise First, and has started a number of its own businesses. We have found that new and developing businesses really value practical help such as the chance to network with like-minded people in small groups on a regular basis."

Lucia Bardoul, who this year managed and delivered the well-received Enterprise First/Business Link programme for aspiring women entrepreneurs called 'She's The Business', said: "One of the benefits of the programme was the way women learnt from each other. They have been encouraged to keep in touch and several groups have done so meeting in each other's homes. Parallel's offer will help women access mutual support in terms of advice, ideas, companionship and doing business."

MP Anne Milton has encouraged the project. She said: "It is so important for people with mutual hopes and facing similar challenges to meet, share their problems and find solutions together. Sometimes we need to give ourselves a bit of time to look after ourselves and in doing so we find we help others too."

Lucia Bardoul, coordinator of this project, can be contacted on tel. 01252 712952 or by email at <a href="mailto:lucia@alchemyincompany.com">lucia@alchemyincompany.com</a>



**Caption:** From left: Sandra Leslie of Parallel Business Centres and Sandra Young of The Wilky Group, MP Anne Milton, Lucia Bardoul of Alchemy in Company and Laura Young of The Wilky Group.