



**'BEST YET':** More than 1,200 people attended this year's Sussex Enterprise conference

**"ONLY business can pull the country out of recession."**

Lord Digby Jones, former director general of the eBI, was on typically bullish form when he addressed hundreds of delegates at this year's Sussex Enterprise conference.

His keynote speech focused on the current economy.

To a rousing reception, Lord Jones declared: "Without business this nation isn't going to trade its way out of anything."

Speaking exclusively to The Argus before his speech, Lord Jones added: "We must generate the wealth to pay tax and it is only business that generates taxation."

Lord Jones, who has been at the heart of British industry for more than 25 years as a corporate lawyer and Government adviser, also warned of tough times to come even though the economy is on the road to recovery.

He said: "The recession is over. Not a single sector is saying that things are getting worse."

"[But] the pain hasn't started yet,

**by SAM THOMSON**  
**Business Editor**

"We are going to have to cut the public sector and raise tax:

"I wish there was more of a business attitude in the back office of the public sector, though not the frontline workers like teachers and police officers.

"A lot of things could be done with less people.

"That is what is happening in the private sector so it should also happen within the public sector."

In his speech, Lord Jones described how a skilled workforce was essential in the global marketplace and how manufacturers must "add value" to what they made, rather than try to compete on price.

He emphasised the need for improved vocational skills gained through apprenticeships rather than focusing wholly on a university education.

Better skills, he said, would lead to a "safer, healthier and richer society".

Dave Bridges, managing director of Brighton-based

Fruit Design was one of more than 1,200 people to attend the conference, which featured about 50 exhibitors and other speeches throughout the day.

He said: "This year's conference was the best yet.

"Not only did I meet up with my existing clients but I also made two key new contacts.

"And Lord Digby Jones was inspirational."

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**SPEECH:** From left, Rob Little, Lord Digby Jones and Tim Griffiths

## On hand with expert advice

AS WELL as issuing a rallying call to Sussex businesses, Lord Digby Jones was also on hand to give firms his expert advice.

Tim Griffiths, managing director of Hillingar, based in Middle Street, Brighton, won a one-to-one peer review, along with Blueshift, Networks of Horsham.

Mr Griffiths started his company, which helps businesses maximise the benefit from their

stock and is a re-seller of TXT e-solutions software, in June last year - in the middle of the recession - and wanted to make sure his business plan was going in the right direction.

He was impressed with Lord Jones' forthrightness and no-nonsense attitude.

He said: "Lord Jones is not afraid to speak his mind. If he says something is not a good idea then you believe him.

"But our feedback was very positive. He said that businesses can find coming out of a recession just as dangerous as getting into one because cashflow problems can grow as the businesses try to expand.

"That is where we can help.

"Lord Jones also provided us with names from some of the major banks, which will help greatly as we go to market."