**KENT INVICTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**MINUTES OF THE AEDG MEETING HELD ON**

**THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2014 AT**

**ASHFORD BUSINESS POINT**

**Present:-** Terry Botfield, Jo James, Geoff Hilton, Andrew Osbourne, Paul Norman, Neil Shorter, Richard Stafford, Malcolm Vint, Hugh Summerfield, Mandy Bearne, Paul Nixon, Dave Lee

**Apologies:-** Heather Grigson

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| **1.** | Minutes  The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as being a true record and signed by the chairman.  Matters Arising  There were no matters arising. |  |
| **2.** | Chilmington Green Development  Peter Reed, Land and Planning Director of Hodson Developments gave a presentation on this development as per the attached. |  |
| **3.** | Chamber Update  JJ reported that the membership numbers had increased and now stood at 1229. The main reason for the growth was the fact that there was a new membership manager that has brought in new ideas and skills.  We have been asked by various town chambers and association groups if they could affiliate to us and an affiliation package is being looked at.  Financially the chamber is on target according to the budgets set.  Events/training attendance is continually increasing due to marketing campaigns and the use of social media.  Four B2B’s will be run across the county next year with dates just being finalised, together with the Construction/Manufacturing Expo  The Chamber Awards 2015 are ready to be launched in the next 2 weeks with categories being:-  Business of the Year  Most Promising New Business  Excellence in Customer Service  Excellence in International Trade  Entrepreneur of the Year  New: Young Person in Business Award  Two of our members are through to the finals of the BCC Awards- The Reynolds Group for Excellence in People Development and Kemet International for Best International Business.  The Chamber has been shortlisted for two awards – Chamber of the Year and Excellence in Membership Services.  LEP – Ashford continues to do well out of the SE LEP. The LEP is putting in a bid under round two of the LGF and the Ashford Spurs project is now ranked near the top of the list which would see a £2m contribution towards the project. Ashford Campus is getting full support under the skills funding as a priority project but there are timing issues on this project. Business support programmes for the European Structural funds will be looked at soon.  The Chamber is to launch a patron’s scheme priced at £5K recruiting a maximum of 20 patrons. Although the scheme has not yet been launched the Designer Oulet has already agreed to be the first Patron.  The DFT have asked to meet to update on the Lower Thames Crossing and JJ is looking at inviting the EDG chairs along. TB can then update the AEDG members following the meeting.  JJ is in the process of organising a meeting with representatives of Gatwick Airport and again TB with update members following the meeting.  JJ told the group that the Maidstone office is closing and that we are opening a larger office in North Kent. | **TB**  **TB** |
| **4.** | Chairman’s Comments and Report  Heathrow/Gatwick – A breakfast meeting is to be arranged so the representatives from Gatwick can present.  Cobbs Wood and Repton parking consultation – a response has been submitted regarding this.  Full Planning for Designer Outlet – comments on this are to be submitted by the 7 December – TB will send a link to members and asked that they feed their comments back to him. | **TB** |
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| **5.** | Portfolio Reports  Richard Stafford reported that his business has been very busy with a lot more deals than in the last 5-6 years and he is now looking to take on another member of staff.  Neil Shorter reported that ABC had been asked to redefine what the town centre is – the process is underway and will hopefully widen prospective.  Malcolm Vint reported that approval had been granted for 249 new homes in Tenterden . The numbers for first time buyers is now on the increase.  Andrew Osborne said there had been a change in the South Eastern timetable and there are to be more seats on the high-speed trains. ‘Love Ashford’ is now live and Ashford Christmas lights will be going on this Saturday.  JJ congratulated ABC on the stats for recycling in the area. |  |