KENT INVICTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MINUTES OF THE ASHFORD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
HELD ON
THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2016
AT
ASHFORD BUSINESS POINT

Present: Terry Botfield, Annette Bunn, Andrew Osborne, Malcolm Vint, Hugh Summerfield, Linda Marsh, Mandy Bearne, Clare Clifford, Jo Fowler, Simon Webster (Guest)
Apologies: Peter Corr, Richard Stafford, Heather Grigson, Graham Galpin, Ian Cowell, Bryan Hall

		ACTIONS
1.	**Minutes of the last meeting** The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as being a true record and were signed by TB All actions have been completed.	
2.	**Planning and Updates** The Barclays Local Insights brochure (copy attached) was discussed. Apprenticeships were discussed at length with the general feeling being that schools are not fully equipped with what is actually available. Future AEDG meetings:- April – Richard Alderton from A.B.C. will give an update May – Jo Fower TB informed the group that the chairperson of John Wallis School Young Chamber would be attending the April meeting. Powergen Site – the application is for 400 dwellings and TB asked for the groups views. HS brought up the fact that a lot of new homes are being built but without car parking facilities. The group were happy to support the application. Lower Thames Crossing – Highways England have outlined their proposals for public meetings to discuss the proposed location of the crossing. TB told the group that JJ has asked that people log on to the website and respond as individuals as a company is only counted as one response. An event is to be held in March to cover the plans for option C. Option A has not been put out as a possibility. Victoria Road – It has just been announced that Aldi are hoping to come to Victoria Road and a possible 200 new homes. Planning details will be announced in the near future. Kennington – there is an outline for new houses in this area. HS declared an interest in this. AO said that no plans have been put forward for this yet. HS said the proposed site is grade 1 land. HS asked why there were not more houses being built in the villages. AO said most building is around the towns and building in the villages is based on the housing needs.	
3.	**Schools Project** Linda Marsh gave an overview of the schools project which is a BCC initiative.	

Its aim is to take businesses back into schools to work with the schools. So far two events have been held – Pent Valley School in Folkestone and The Towers School Ashford and both were very successful.
LM will be working with RL and JJ over the next year on a new model for Young Chamber.
The Chamber was approached by Young Kent to hold a two hour workshop which was very successful and also attracted students with learning difficulties.
Membership – there is a lull in the Ashford area at the moment and we need to raise the profile of the Chamber in the community. There has been a change of membership representatives in both Maidstone and North Kent. The new representative in Maidstone is taking longer to get established than the one in North Kent.

4. **Portfolios**

AO – had nothing really to report on as TB had covered most areas but mentioned junction 10a and the A28

JF – reported that there are a lot of changes in the pipeline as there is a reshuffle and restructure within. Funding is being looked at and more information will be available in due course.
An apprenticeship training agency is being set up.

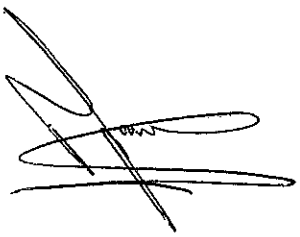
CC – things are very buoyant and very positive at the moment but the skills shortage is still a massive issue.

MV – the market is still very strong but there is a shortage of properties both to sell and to let. Houses prices are still going up in the area but the right kind of houses are not being built for those people that want to down size – more bungalows are needed. There are a lot more first time buyers at the moment and more buyers moving down from London but not so many investor buyers.

AB – lack of skills across the board and a lack of shed space.

HS – nothing to report

MB – nothing much to report. Will be close to target at the financial year end but not quite there.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 16 March 2016 at 4pm