

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Ashford Economic Development Group

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the AEDG held at Ashford College on 18th April 2024 at 8.30am.

| PRESENT | NAME | POSITION |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Nettie Buss (AB) | Chair |
| | Susan Bonett (SB) | |
| | Jo Brown (JB) | |
| | Tim Butler (TB) | Guest |
| | Maria Callow (MC) | |
| | Matthew Fell (MF) | Guest |
| | Richard Lavender (RL) | |
| | James McComas (JMcC) | Guest |
| | Lyn Newbury (LN) | |
| | Andrew Osborne (AO) | |
| | Tudor Price (TP) | |
| | Jason Rainbird (JR) | |
| | Dr Patricia Rice | Guest |
| | Tim Sheppard (TS) | |
| | Dan Sherlock (DS) | |
| | Richard Stafford (RS) | |
| | Prof Jonathan Wadsworth (JW) | Guest |
| | Joseph Wilkinson (JW) | Guest |
| APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED FROM | Lee Collette (LC) Steve Garnett SG Peter Heritage (PH) Sharon Norman (SN) Tom Shaw-Dunn (TS-D) | |

1. NOTICE AND QUORUM

The chair reported that enough notice of the meeting had been duly given and that a quorum was present. The chair declared that the meeting was open at 8.30am.

2. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

Minutes of the board meeting held on 21st March 2024 had already been approved. The chair had been authorised to sign them as a complete record of the relevant meeting.

3. ANY MATTERS ARISING/PREVIOUS MEETING

No matters arising.

4. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Welcome

AB welcomed members of the Low Pay Commission, Dr Patricia Rice, Prof Jonathan Wadsworth, Matthew Fell and secretariat members Tim Butler (Chief Economist) and Mr Joseph Wilkinson (Head of Policy). In addition the AEDG welcomed James McComas (General Manager at Champneys Eastwell Manor Hotel & Spa) and LN in replacement for SN's absence.

Update on Ashford College

ILO's

To follow on from the previous meeting a key challenge for the college is to secure Level 2 Electrical and Plumbing placements for 200 students. In total approx. 350 placements will need to be filled.

Ashford College need more Industry Liaison Officers ILO's to secure more industry placements. Two or three organisations can share one student placement over a period.

British Chamber of Commerce (BCC)

TP mentioned Shevaun Haviland, Director General of the British Chamber of Commerce was visiting Kent today. There would be a key meeting in Dover to discuss the issues around the pending Entry Exit System (EES).

Low Pay Commission

MF introduced the purpose of the visit from the Low Pay Commission. They are holding a series of meetings with employers and workers. They want to hear first-hand evidence about the impact of the National Minimum Wage. That evidence will help shape their recommendations to the Government on the future of the minimum wage.

The key themes of discussion were around:

- The economy, outlook for pay and the labour market in our area
- How businesses are impacted by the rising minimum wage
- Views on the future of the minimum wage

All views shared were treated in confidence and evidence gathered will be anonymised as appropriate.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NB suggested Tom Shaw-Dunn (TS-D) from Retaingroup join the AEDG, this was agreed.

AB agreed to follow up with James McComas from Eastwell Manor who joined us as a guest this morning.

6. CLOSE

AB thanked everyone for their continued support.

Date of next meeting - 8.30am, 16th May 2024 at Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce.

There was no further business and therefore the chair declared that the meeting was closed at 9.55am.

.....Chair – Nettie Buss - Date