

Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Ashford Economic Development Group

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the AEDG held at Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce on 20th March 2024 at 8.30am.

PRESENT	NAME	POSITION
	Susan Bonett (SB)	
	Jo Brown (JB)	
	Nettie Buss (AB)	Chair
	Maria Callow (MC)	
	Lee Collette (LC)	
	Katie Hodson (KH)	
	James McComas (JM)	
	Andrew Osborne (AO)	
	Tudor Price (TP)	
	Jason Rainbird (JR)	
	Tom Shaw-Dunn (TS-D)	
	Tim Sheppard (TS)	
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED FROM	Peter Heritage (PH) Richard Lloyd (RLL) Richard Stafford (RS) Dan Sherlock (DS) Pete Tomsett (PT) Steve Garnett (SG)	

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 20th February 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

AB shared that **RL** has retired and will no longer be attending the AEDG meetings. **TP** has put in a request to be a consultee on the KRF. **AB** mentioned Cllr Simon Betty will be invited to attend the next meeting.

4. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

EUROSTAR UPDATE

AO updated on the potential of using Bombardier site on Beaver Lane, Ashford as an alternative to Temple Mills. It has capacity but it might be too far, conversations are ongoing. **AO** mentioned the KMEP is seeking a meeting with the Minister for Rail.

TS-D mentioned a recent BBC feature that cited 50 seats are taken at peak times for passengers travelling from Ashford to St Pancras to access Eurostar. **AO** added anything over 35 seats should still be is a viable option.

AO shared the ABC Bring Back Eurostar video campaign had been launched. **TP** will explore the idea of instigating a PR campaign to run alongside the ABC campaign.

DEVOLUTION

AO mentioned the initial thoughts around potential three unitary authorities and potential four connotations to sit beneath that. It was agreed to make an agenda item for the May meeting.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

AB mentioned Katie Lam MP had set up a Farmers Club and a Business Club. **SB** requested an agenda item for the next meeting to discuss DfE 6% cut to national skills budgets and its potential impact of 1000s adults not being able to upskill – the metric is not clear. **TP** mentioned the chamber will be issuing a statement about the closure of Park Mall.

JM mentioned issues with SE Water, **TP** will look into if there is a water consultant to discuss further. **TP** mentioned the Skills 25 event was a great success and that the University of Kent Business Summit will be on 18th May.

6. CLOSE

AB thanked AEDG members for their continued support.

Date of next meeting - 8.30pm, 17th April.

There was no further business and therefore the chair declared that the meeting was closed at 9.50am.

.....Chair – Nettie Buss - Date