

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 November 2025 at 8.45am.

PRESENT	NAME	POSITION
	Jo Brown (JB)	
	Nettie Buss (AB)	Chair
	Maria Callow (MC)	
	Lucy Clark (LAC)	
	Steve Garnett (SG)	
	Katie Hodson (KH)	
	James McComas (JM)	
	Luke Mullaney (LM)	Guest
	Tudor Price (TP)	
	Jason Rainbird (JR)	
	Tim Sheppard (TS)	
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED FROM	Lee Collette (LC) Peter Heritage (PH) Tom Jenkins (TJ) Andrew Osborne (AO) Tom Shaw-Dunn (TS-D) Dan Sherlock (DS) Richard Stafford (RS) Natalie Ward (NW)	

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 8.45am.

2. APPROVAL OF PRIOR MINUTES

Minutes of the board meeting held on 16th October 2025 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

AB welcomed Luke Mullaney (**LM**) from GSE. Luke presented the proposal for 'A20 Court Wood Interchange' a potential new truck stop in Dover. **LM** set the context that Ashford

International Truck Stop is the largest of its type in Europe, it has 660 spaces. Yet currently it is operating at 100% capacity and turns away from 40 to 100 trucks each night. There is a national shortfall of Truck Stops.

Kent has 60% of outbound HGVs (2m trucks) a year. **LM** shared that research shows there is a necessity to hold 1,000 more HGV spaces in Kent. The proposal is to have a new lorry park and holding area in Dover. Dover TAP is a visible demonstration of this demand need.

LM proposed that the new Truck Stop would support a solution to offer 600 lorry spaces with secure parking, a build based on the award-winning Ashford Truck Stop offer. The Truck Stop would occupy 25-27 acres of the 77 acres of AONB, Natural England. The remainder 50 acres would be used for drainage and biodiversity initiatives.

LM stated that this would be a world class facility on the doorstep of the world’s busiest roll on roll off port. The challenges are that it would be on an AONB, Natural England; it would have a local visual impact and there could be potential traffic management issues.

The next steps will continue with stakeholder engagement. The application will be submitted in Q1 2026 with the aim to be onsite by the end of 2026 with a 12 month build. The new Truck Stop is anticipated to create 100 jobs and will be part of the solution to alleviate Brock.

2026 AGENDA

AB suggested potential key areas of discussion looking ahead to 2026. Topics include:

- Eurostar
- Inviting Katie Lam MP to attend a meeting
- Ashford College Phase 3
- Nutrient Neutrality
- Town Centre business rates

These are to be agreed early in 2026.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

RS had submitted concerns over public walk way access in the town centre where the new Edinburgh Road car park will be built. **KH** will contact Keli Nolan-Lyons at ABC to capture any town centre feedback about this. **SG** will contact Perry Court Farm to see if they might be a potential agricultural contact to join the AEDG.

LAC asked for AEDG to use their networks to encourage business engagement and support with Ashford College. There is a planned business event in February 2026.

6. CLOSE

AB thanked AEDG members for their continued support.

Date of next meeting - 8.30am, 15th January 2025.

There was no further business and therefore the chair declared that the meeting was closed at 10.00.

.....Chair – Nettie Buss - Date