

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 21st May 2026 at 8.30am.

PRESENT	NAME	POSITION
	Nettie Buss (AB)	Chair
	Lucy Clark (LC)	
	Phil Galpin (PG)	
	James McComas (JM)	
	Katie Hodson (KH)	
	Tom Shaw-Dunn (TS-D)	
	Tim Sheppard (TS)	
	Richard Stafford (RS)	
	Jason Rainbird (JR)	
	Dan Sherlock (DS)	
	Natalie Ward (NW)	
	Doug Jackson (DJ)	New member representing agriculture
	Vernice Lamberton (VL)	Guest
	Siobhan Matthews (SM)	Guest
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE RECEIVED FROM	Maria Callow (MC) Steve Garnett (SG) Peter Heritage (PH) Andrew Osborne (AO) Tudor Price (TP)	

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 16th April 2026 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

Introductions were made by all in attendance and **AB** welcomed **Doug Jackson**, who will be joining us to represent the agricultural sector.

Update on LinkedIn AEDG. **AB** will follow up with **JR** at a future date.

4. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

PRESENTATION FROM SM & VL

Siobhan & Vernice are both from The North School and were invited by Jo Brown (EKC) to promote the work that the Schools in the Ashford area are doing together – a full copy of the presentation is attached.

The key points were that they need to work with more employers, the schools are working together to ensure all students are not requesting work experience at the same time and how employers can assist in ways other than work experience.

PG agreed to introduce them to the LSIP team here at the Chamber.

A discussion followed as a Q&A which cemented the feeling that more employers need to be aware of the 'asks' that government guidance is putting on to schools to enhance students awareness of the world of work.

BORDER FORCE

TS and **PG** have arranged a visit – details to be circulated to the board

KATIE LAM MP

AB as emailed Katie's contact and had a response and will try to co-ordinate a date for a meeting

ASHFORD TOWN CENTRE

A town centre update at the next meeting has been requested of **AO**.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Nothing noted

6. CLOSE

AB thanked AEDG members for their continued support.

Date of next meeting - 8.30am, 18th June 2026 at the Ashford Designer Outlet.(TBC)

There was no further business and therefore the chair declared that the meeting was closed at 10am.

.....Chair – Nettie Buss - Date