

Minutes of meeting held by the
East Kent Economic Development Group (EKEDG)
08/07/2015
Hosted by Brachers at Discovery Park

Ray Johnson Chair of the EKEDG introduced himself and explain that he would later talk about the Kent Invicta Chamber and how it supports Kent. He thanked Lee May from Brachers for hosting the meeting in advance.

He provided an overview and confirmed in future meetings there will be a suitable agenda. On this occasion it was to provide our inaugural informal meeting, which will be confidential. The group provides economic development opportunities for Shepway, Dover and Thanet. It comprises key players from the business and public sector to discuss, formulate and respond to various aspects including:

- Planning
- Infrastructure
- Transport
- Skills
- Training
- Retail
- Business support
- Overall economy
- Housing
- Employment

The aim is to assist the economy, provide strategic input in an effort to develop employment. Findings are then communicated to the main board of the Chamber and this is then conveyed as appropriate to various parties including members, the British Chambers of Commerce, the LEP, KCC, local authorities and other business groups as appropriate.

He emphasised that he wanted to “push and drive forward”, provide support and prosperity, and in particular provide action and not a talking shop scenario! We need to work with all parties including local authorities as there is room for improvement and communication between all the stakeholders.

Meetings could be bi monthly or monthly depending on issues raised. There will be challenges and we are here to aid the economy.

Apologies:

Tim Waggot – Dover Harbour Board

Danny Martin – Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway

David Hall – Business Flow

Absent:

Tim Ingleton – Dover District Council (Economic Development Manager)

Introductions of attendee's

1. Ray Johnson (Chair) from Independent Insurance Services – board member Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
2. Gareth Johns from BCS and TBN (Thanet Business Network)
3. Lee May from Brachers covering all aspects of Law, Family, Business, planning
4. Andy Cruttenden from Martello Building Consultancy
5. Paul Sayers from East Kent College
6. David Illsley (standing in for Katharine Harvey) from Shepway Council
7. Daniel Sangiuseppe from Castlewood Hotels
8. Jonathan Clarke from Morgan Jones Recruitment
9. Louise Askew, Thanet District Council Economic development officer
10. Kim Anderson (standing in for Paul Barber) from Discovery Park and Invest Thanet
11. Dan Deed from Woodley Coles LLP (construction)
12. Roy Atack from Ernest Roberts Health & Safety Ltd (local directory/quote system, H&S services and supply of subcontractors to development Companies).
13. Jo James, CEO of Kent Invicta Chamber
14. Richard Lavender, board member of Kent Invicta Chamber

Jo James gives a brief explanation of Kent Invicta Chamber of commerce.

In 2006 the Chamber took over from Canterbury and Maidstone Chambers as they closed. At this stage the Chamber became Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce. Thames Gateway Chamber then closed and as all are aware East Kent Channel Chamber of Commerce ceased trading December 2014 and so now KICC cover the entirety of Kent.

There are two main offices, one based at Ashford and the other is in the Innovation House in Medway.

The Chamber assists pre-start and start-up businesses as well as already established businesses.

It is a member organisation and is an accredited Chamber by the British Chamber of Commerce and helps businesses to trade internationally.

The Chamber supports growth and enterprise. It creates a local link and speaks as a whole voice.

Any issues to be raised?

- Louise Askew: TDC have regular meetings with other authorities. Will feed back to the EKEDG what happens at these other meetings.
- Jo James KICC: It is important that we get involved in other groups.

- Lee May: We need to look at solutions to the issues.
- Ray Johnson: Clear communication is key.
- Kim Anderson: Strategy ideas, encourage businesses to work together. Talked about Manston.
- Jonathan Clarke: Support Manston plans.
- Paul Sayer: This is an investible area, but skills is an issue.
- Louise Askew: Manston needs integration with the community.
- Ray Johnson: Let us have Manston as our first action point by bringing the group together **(Action Point)**. Ray to ensure all members receive invite.
- Daniel Saniuseppe: Identify opportunities in Shepway.
- Louise Askew: Talked about land opportunities. Brown field sites.

Richard (representative of KICC)

Richard provided an overview of his involvement and experience within economic development groups and the various aspects relating to Kent. These included:

- Email members asking for any issues they wish to be discussed.
- Businesses presenting to the Board.
- Manston site.
- Ebbsfleet Garden City. To be talked about at a future meeting.
- Port of London Governs all ports, they should all come together.
- Dartford Crossing (3rd crossing).
- Operation stack (national problem).
- Environmental portfolio.
- Education and training.
- Transport and infrastructure.
- KCFG and engineering.
- Business legal.

Jo mentioned about the forthcoming Lower Thames Crossing breakfast meeting and Ray agreed to send information on to members of the new group. **(Action Point)**

New discussion.

Ray invited members to mention any immediate concerns or items for consideration in the future and the main outcomes were:

- Jo James: Send invites and set up presentations for presentations for EKEDG meetings.
- Daniel Saniuseppe: Paramount being built at Dartford. Concerns and what part can this group play in this development.
- Richard in reply: KICC are looking into it.
- Paul Sayer: Housing is a concern.
- Jonathan Clarke: Employment is an issues (construction) and the flow of people.

- Jo James in reply: There is going to be an impact on wage.
- Louise Askew: Local projects.
- Gareth Johns: Developing SME's to keep apprenticeships.
- Dan Deed: KCC tend to use big contractors from outside of Kent.
- Andy Cruttenden: Commercial space needed and a SME's link for local projects.
- Paul Sayer: Promote apprenticeships.

Next meeting TBC

Ray Johnson: Thank you all for attending