

# Portrait of East Kent: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Prepared for chamber members in East Kent

## 1. Unemployment

	April 2022		Change since April 2021
	Unemployed	% of workforce	% of workforce
Canterbury District	3,240	3.1%	-35.7%
Dover District	2,795	4.0%	-36.5%
Folkestone & Hythe District	2,975	4.5%	-36.2%
Thanet District	5,225	6.5%	-33.3%
Kent	34,365	3.6%	-38.5%
Great Britain	1,616,725	4.0%	-31.9%

Based on the claimant count of jobseekers aged 16 – 64 years. Office for National Statistics (ONS) 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022. See [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

## 2. Key Data

	Canterbury	Dover	Folk & H	Thanet	Kent	
Population	166,800	118,500	113,300	141,500	1,589,100	a
Area of land in hectares	32,079	32,040	36,050	11,071	362,236	b
Median FT Gross Wk Pay By Workplace	£520.30	£607.90	£561.20	£535.10	£574.90	c
Median FT Gross Wk Pay By Residence	£578.50	£645.00	£607.80	£560.30	£631.90	c
Unemployed aged 18 – 24	2.6%	5.8%	6.8%	9.0%	5.0%	d
GVA Per Head	£20,726	£19,939	£22,128	£15,706	£24,877	e
Number of VAT/PAYE Enterprises	5,455	3,680	3,785	4,185	64,700	f
Enterprises with 0 – 9 Employees	4,865	3,300	3,415	3,760	58,440	g
Five-Year Business Survival Rate	41.4%	38.0%	40.0%	39.4%	42.6%	h
Total Tourism Value £millions	194.3	112.2	110.4	124.3	1,616.1	i
Tourism percentage of all jobs	10%	11%	9%	12%	7%	i
Coronavirus cases per 100,000 people	109.1	108.0	103.2	110.3	104.0	j

a) ONS MYE 2020 pub. KCC, July 2021 b) ONS & DCLG 2005 c) Earnings In Kent, KCC, Nov 2021 d) ONS 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 e) KCC Oct 2021 ref 2019. f) UK Business Counts by Employment Size ONS Oct 2021 g) UK Business Counts by Employment Size ONS Oct 2021 h) Business Demography Database ONS Dec 2021 i) Destination Research, 2020 Results, Visit Kent, Jan 2022 j) Case data for 25<sup>th</sup> Apr to 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2022, KCC 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022.

## 3. CPI Inflation

	Dec 2021	Jan 2022	Feb 2022	March 2022	April 2022
Great Britain	5.4%	5.5%	6.2%	7%	9%

Consumer price inflation, UK, ONS 18 May 2022

## 4. Bank Rate

	5 May 1850	15 Nov 1979	6 Oct 1989	5 May 2020	5 May 2022
Great Britain	2.5%	17%	14.875	0.1%	1%

Official Bank Rate History, Bank of England, retrieved 26 May 2022

## 5. Port of Dover

Period	Passengers	Cars	Coaches	Road Haulage Vehicles	Ferry Entries
2020	4,348,478	608,767	11,777	2,268,525	13,625
2021	3,102,599	336,296	4,476	2,149,595	15,538
Difference	-28.7%	-44.8%	-62.0%	-5.2%	+14.0%

[www.doverport.co.uk/about/performance](http://www.doverport.co.uk/about/performance), latest published quarterly and annual figures as at 26<sup>th</sup> May 2022

## 6. Issues for local business

### Dover

The economic downturn accompanying the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted how essential Dover is to UK business and import/export trade. As the commercial traffic figures reveal, HGV movements showed a relatively small annual reduction last year, a contrast to the sharp fall in cars and passengers.

## 7. Traffic congestion

Following large-scale restructuring at P&O Ferries on 17 March 2022, the cancellation of the company's cross-channel ferry services from Dover resulted in severe congestion on the roads leading to the port. Your chamber reflected your views on various media outlets. For a copy of one of the broadcasts when congestion was at its peak, email [admin@doverchamber.co.uk](mailto:admin@doverchamber.co.uk) with the subject line: "BBC Radio Kent 6 April 2022"

## 8. Retail

Following a fall in March, retail sales volumes rose by an encouraging 1.4% in April 2022, but the overall trend is a fall since last summer. The switch to on-line sales accelerated during the pandemic. The proportion of retail sales online rose to 27.0% in April 2022 significantly higher than the 19.9% in February 2020 before the pandemic. [Retail sales, Great Britain: April 2022, ONS, retrieved 26 May 2022]. The outlook for high street retailers in most categories is challenging. Many familiar names have ceased trading or closed their stores recently including established brands such as Debenhams, Dorothy Perkins, Wallis and Burton, Jaeger, Jessops, Topshop, Topman and Miss Selfridge. There are exceptions as witnessed by the sharp growth in barber shops and nail salons. A short back and sides is not currently available over the Internet.

## 9. Property

House prices in East Kent have remained robust and have outperformed other areas of the country. In the ten years to February 2022, the largest rise in UK house prices was in Margate at 102.5% with Dover not far behind at 95.6% and Broadstairs at 90.4%. By contrast, in the same ten-year period house prices in Middlesbrough increased by just 6%. [The Independent, 10 February 2022]. The attraction to house buyers of Dover, Folkestone, Ashford, Canterbury and Margate can be explained in part by the high-speed train service to London St Pancras, a mild climate and the increasing prevalence of working from home. For a commentary on developments in Margate, email [admin@tekc.co.uk](mailto:admin@tekc.co.uk) with the subject line: "BBC Radio Kent 9 May 2022".

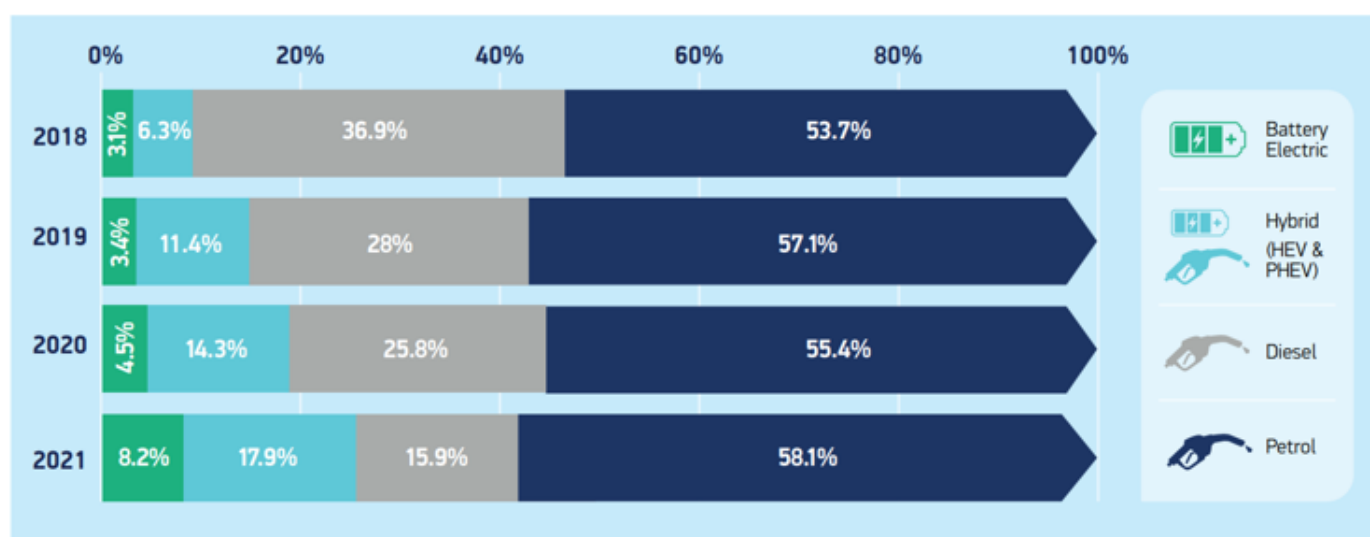
## 10. Energy Costs

Prior to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, energy costs accounted for 4% of the average household expenditure. With a further rise of 40% currently scheduled for October 2022, it is likely that energy costs will double to 8% of household budgets by the end of this year. Due to price cap mechanisms, the rises are likely to impact later in the UK than in many EU countries. [Bank of England Monetary Policy Summary, 5 May 2022]. Details of the governments Energy Bills Support scheme announced yesterday by the Chancellor of the Exchequer can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-living-support/cost-of-living-support-factsheet-26-may-2022](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-living-support/cost-of-living-support-factsheet-26-may-2022)

## 11. Cars

The British car industry employs directly over 156,000 workers with 800,000 engaged in the wider automotive industry which accounts for 11% of the total UK export of goods. Buying trends reflect significant changes in business confidence, taxation regimes and personal taste. In 2021, the Vauxhall Corsa headed the list of sales with 40,914 vehicles finding UK buyers followed by Tesla Model 3, MINI, Mercedes-Benz A-Class, VW Polo, VW Golf and Nissan Qashqai. Petrol and diesel powered cars accounted for 66.8% of sales but new Battery Electric, Plug-In Hybrid and Hybrid Electric Vehicles rose to their highest percentage yet of 33.2% of vehicle registrations. [SMMT MOTOR INDUSTRY FACTS 2022, retrieved 26 May 2022]. The all-electric Nissan Ariya arriving at Canterbury Nissan next week is expected to attract new buyers to the SUV market. The figures by fuel for four years of UK automotive production appear below.

### UK AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTION BY FUEL TYPE, 2018-2021



© SMMT 2022

## 12. Finding Workers

Given the sharp fall in unemployment across every district of Kent as illustrated in the official figures quoted above, it perhaps more important than ever for companies to liaise closely with education and training providers to ensure that new recruits have the skills, interest and motivation to contribute to their future success. Your chamber has pioneered a number of initiatives to promote strong links between industry and the schools, colleges and universities serving East Kent. Folkestone College hosted a Chamber Question Time (CQT) on 11 May 2022 when a panel of company owners and Chief Executives responded to questions from ambitious students keen to learn more about the realities of business today. Subjects covered included climate change, house prices, the perfect worker and telling the truth, see attached. For a copy of the radio broadcast, email [admin@doverchamber.co.uk](mailto:admin@doverchamber.co.uk) with the subject line "BBC Radio Kent 11 May 2022".

## 13. Finding Engineers

Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) has recently opened a £65 million Verena Holmes building, named after the UK's first female engineer. This splendid facility unites trainee engineers, scientists, doctors and healthcare students in a collective effort on-site to equip them with the technological and practical skills to ensure that our corner of Kent can produce graduates to interest any ambitious company keen to make the most of recent advances. With this in mind, on 12 May 2022 your chamber brought a party of 15 engineers to tour the building and speak directly to students and staff on how they can work together on a number of projects that have already begin to bear fruit. A reciprocal visit by CCCU staff and students to local engineering companies is in the planning and we expect considerable advantages to all parties to ensue. Some images from the visit are attached. We are grateful to our official photographer, David Frazer of Cloudcam, for providing such a memorable record of the day.

## 14. Immigration

Your chamber is often asked to comment on current business issues impacting on East Kent and we are pleased to represent the views of chamber members to domestic and international broadcasters. On 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022, your chamber joined Nicky Campbell of BBC Radio 5 Live in a live broadcast from Dover seafront on the sensitive subject of immigration and our obligations under international law regarding refugees and asylum-seekers. As always, your chamber sought to present a balanced case that accepted the need to help genuine refugees in fear of their lives but also recognized that in the UK we simply do not have the hospitals, schools or accommodation to meet the needs of every citizen who seeks a better life than they would otherwise receive in Europe, the Middle East or sub-Saharan Africa. To hear an excerpt from the broadcast, email [admin@doverchamber.co.uk](mailto:admin@doverchamber.co.uk) with the subject line "Radio 5 Live 17 May 2022".

## 15. East Kent Business Directory

The East Kent Business Directory published by this chamber always features a detailed diary, casebound with brass corners, which provides a handsome addition throughout the year on any business leader's desktop. The 2023 edition will include an alphabetical list of chamber member companies together with a classified section interspersed with full-colour adverts. Bringing together successful companies from almost every sector of our local economy, the publication is now recognized as a definitive guide to East Kent business contacts and suppliers. The 2022 directory drew some warm praise for the creative advertising featured on its pages. Over the next two weeks, we will be contacting all registered members of the chamber with details of the 2023 edition.



## 16. And Finally ...

Anxious about future rises in property prices around our East Kent coast, one chamber member contacted us earlier this month desperate to find a house for his daughter who would like to enjoy a healthy lifestyle in our corner of the Garden of England and commute rather than live in a confined space in a crowded suburb of our nation's capital. We are pleased to report that he secured a three-bedroom terraced property in Cheriton on the outskirts of Folkestone. Last week, he said he would like to buy his daughter a house-warming gift, but added "She is notoriously difficult to please and I do not want to get anything she does not like". On further enquiry, he revealed that she lacked some white goods for her kitchen. We suggested a big fridge might be an appropriate present. He contacted us a few days ago with the following words. "I am so grateful for your suggestion of a refrigerator. It could not better. She loves it, she really loves it." We asked him how he could be so sure and he replied. "I know she loves the gift because every time she opens the fridge door, her face lights up".

David Foley  
Chief Executive  
East Kent Chambers of Commerce