

## **Skills Summit with Natalie Elphicke MP**



*Leading training providers met in Dover to discuss skills and training needs*

**Dover District Chamber of Commerce President, Natalie Elphicke MP, held a skills summit at the Dover Marina Hotel and Spa on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 with businesses from across the area.**

Mrs Elphicke spoke about the challenge of the pandemic business landscape and praised businesses for their resilience and fortitude over the last 20 months. Mrs Elphicke discussed OECD data which set out that UK economic growth was predicted to outstrip the Eurozone and United States economy this year. While unemployment had fallen to the lowest rate since Spring 2020, with over a million job vacancies in November 2021.

The Summit looked at the range of training and job opportunities for young people and discussed how Government programmes like Kickstart were working. Expert contributions were made by the Education & Skills Partnership on courses at Levels 1 to 5 as well as by Canterbury Christ Church University about GradForce, Unitemps and their training and job entry schemes.

Training providers, like Fair Employment Training Ltd, based in new offices at Maybrook House in Dover, and Windmill Education & Training Services told the summit how they had adapted to supporting training and recruitment in the virtual and online environment, as well as face-to-face. Let's Go Escargot outlined its innovative plans for French language classes for children and adults.

Mrs Elphicke welcomed the Institute of Construction Management as a new member of the Dover District Chamber of Commerce and presented ICM's Director of Education and Training, David F Jones, with his membership certificate.



Natalie Elphicke MP said:

“Business is not out of the woods yet – from the pandemic itself or the post-pandemic recovery. Hospitality and retail have had a particularly tough time, while some online businesses have moved ahead. Locally we have secured new opportunities and significant investment.

“The Skills Summit is about making sure that all parts of our community have opportunities to learn and develop. This includes younger people in the most deprived parts of our community, as well as older people looking for a mid-life career change.

“I was so impressed at the commitment and enthusiasm of our local businesses. I look forward to working with them all in the New Year to continue to support enterprise and employees make the most of their futures.”

Dover District Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive David Foley added:

“The Skills Summit provided a wonderful opportunity for businesses to discuss with our President, Mrs Elphicke MP, their challenges and opportunities as they have moved through the pandemic. Everyone found the summit most useful and we look forward to repeating the event during the coming year.”

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## **Information**

Thanet & East Kent and Dover District Chambers of Commerce provide professional business support to the East Kent coastal business community.

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