

Foreword to the 2023 East Kent Business Directory

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The East Kent Chambers of Commerce are pleased to present this East Kent Business Directory and Chamber Diary for the year 2023. We share a commitment and a passion to serve your best interests in all aspects of our operations.

We inherited from 2022 a sustained period of rising inflation, successive increases in the bank rate, sharp rises in energy costs and wide staff shortages. The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian military on 24 February 2022 resulted in multiple embargoes, targeted sanctions and a general destabilisation in international trade.

While anxieties about Covid-19 remain, face-to-face meetings and free association have almost returned to pre-pandemic levels. In the past year, owners, shareholders and senior managers have become more aware of the impact of their operations on climate change and there has been a welcome focus on the importance of supporting good mental health practices in the workplace. Greater use of on-line meetings and flexible home-working policies have reduced travel costs and boosted the attraction of East Kent to city dwellers looking for a better quality of life for their staff and workers. Many companies have responded to calls for more transparency and greater diversity in senior management positions with the result that key decision-makers have become more representative of the communities they serve. We expect all these trends to continue throughout 2023.

The Dover District Chamber of Commerce can trace its origins to the year 1850. Although history ensures strong roots and widespread recognition, it is essential that we address your immediate and future concerns. Thanet & East Kent Chamber and Dover District Chamber of Commerce are still constituted as separate entities, but it has often been helpful to present ourselves nationally as East Kent Chambers of Commerce in order to offer a strong collective voice in support of business in our corner of the United Kingdom. Our board of directors is now common to both chambers and we have a new website to support the branding.

We have been pleased to receive advice and intelligence from just about every sector of the local economy. We represent these views to the BBC, ITV, local radio and a variety of media at home and overseas. Established formal links with the Bank of England, Southern Water, Manston Airport, Canterbury Christ Church University, the EKC Group and many elected bodies when added to the informed contributions of our three Presidents on the floor of the House of Commons ensure that the voice of East Kent business is heard and acknowledged by those best placed to implement change.

Our East Kent Business Advice Clinic sessions, Chamber Business Networking Breakfasts and sector-specific meetings play a valuable role in supporting sustainable enterprise throughout East Kent. The success of these initiatives owes much to the contribution of our guest speakers, consultants and venue hosts.

I would like to add a personal word of gratitude to our directors who give their time and considerable skills without complaint and without recompense; an example of community spirit from which we all benefit. I should also express our thanks to the advertisers in this publication and to all those companies with contact details on the following pages. We encourage all Chamber members to view the listings and classified section before making their purchasing decisions during the year.

On behalf of our presidents, directors, management and staff throughout East Kent, I wish you every success in 2023.

David Foley
Chief Executive
www.tekc.co.uk