

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL BOARDS

Notes of Meeting

SHEPWAY LOCAL BOARD

Date: Tuesday, 4 March 2008

Venue: The Cube, Tontine Street, Folkestone CT20 1JR

Present:

Local Board Members: Susan Carey, Richard Pascoe, Roland Tolputt and Frederick Wood-Brignall (Vice-Chairman)

Apologies for absence: Chris Capon and Robert Bliss

KCC Officers: David Geoghegan (Community Liaison Manager)

A1. Welcome to the meeting - Mr Wood-Brignall, Vice Chairman

After welcoming people the Chairman said we would keep the meeting short and informal in view of the low turnout.

A2. Declarations of Interests by Members in Items on the Agenda for this Meeting.

A3. Welcome and introduction to the Centre and the Service

Members introduced themselves and apologies were given. Mr Wood-Brignall welcomed Ian Forward, Head of Adult Education, who gave an overview of the service.

The Cube is the newest Adult Education Service (AES) centre and is a partnership project with Roger De Haan's Creative Foundation. The £10m service is funded not by KCC but through the Learning Skills Council (LCS) and provides courses in 120 venues across Kent. Four years ago there were over 240 venues but the government cut funding by 25% and it no longer sees AES traditional classes as meeting its core objectives of vocational education and prioritising education provision on younger learners.

Nevertheless KAES is still one of the largest providers of AE in the country. There are plans and strategies being developed to modernise the service and make it even more successful.

Questions from Members and responses from Ian and Lois Reynolds, Curriculum Manager at the Cube.

Q. What can be done about the lack of parking at the Cube?

A. We are still negotiating for more parking spaces. There is some street parking but there is also easy access by public transport.

Q. Why is there no funding from KCC?

A. KCC did fund the service but that changed in 1988. However KAES does operate out of a number of KCC buildings.

Q. Is the beginners Bridge class moving?

A. Not yet but it will.

Q. You lost half your venues but what about the number of students? Did you lose half of them?

A. No, the number of students only dropped by 25% when we had to stop some of the classes.

Q. Why are there far less courses than there was ten years ago?

A. Because government funding has changed and we can no longer subsidise some courses.

Q. You might like to talk to Stephen Gasche from SDC about parking and do you need any support from KCC Members?

A. Yes we always need support. There may be a piece of equipment needed for the Cube for which we would need funding and we would also like some funding for our Skill Plus Centre as we want to hold events to encourage workforce development and any contributions from Members would be appreciated.

Q. Can you still run traditional courses like flower arranging?

A. Yes if costs are covered. We are also trying to be innovative like attending the Kent Wedding Fayre in Leeds Castle where we can say come to a class and do your own wedding flowers and your own dress and make your own wedding invitations etc and save money!

Q. Do you have a close relationship with the university?

A. Yes we are working together and not against each other. Our art students are welcome to go to art lectures at the Uni for free!

Q. Do you do IT classes at the Cube?

A. Yes, a small amount.

Q. Where do students come from?

A. From all over Shepway and even from Ashford.

Q. Have you thought of collaborating with CFE and providing master classes shared through the use of whiteboards etc?

A. We don't have interactive technology yet to be able to do that but it is worth considering.

Q. Do you provide gift vouchers for courses and do you market yourself on Kent TV?

A. Yes we do have gift vouchers which sell well at Christmas etc but we have not yet used Kent TV.

Lisa Barrett Smith, Community Development Manager

The Cube site used to be a church site but now it's a wonderful new creative centre.

There was recognition that learning needed to be placed back in the community. To help facilitate that and access to funding a new online service was being developed and a mapping of education needs was being done.

The voice of the learner will feed into the curriculum.

Online tests were to be made available that would assess students abilities in maths and English and then signpost them to appropriate free classes. NLDC will help fund the Skills Plus centre and some other free courses would be available for things like first aid, Health & Safety and how to set up your own business etc.

Q. Is there any European funding?

A. No and most social funds have specific criteria but it may be worth looking at again.

Tour of the Cube

Members had an informative tour of the new building.

It was hoped that Members might help fund the blinds for the Cube windows. It was also hoped that future short courses might attract a wider student base from London and all over the country as Folkestone has much to offer and the Cube was such a good, first class centre.

A4. Questions - your opportunity to ask questions about the presentations and any local issues

A5. Any Other Business notified to the Chairman prior to the meeting.

Mr Wood-Brignall wanted to recommend a grant of £2,300 for the restoration of an 18th Century chandelier but had a personal interest as a member of the Lydd parish church. The Local Board Members agreed to this recommendation.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.