

# ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY GIVES HIS BLESSING TO ASHFORD COLLEGE



**Despite it being the Easter half term, students and staff had a fantastic reason to come into College – getting to meet the Archbishop of Canterbury!**

The Most Reverend Justin Welby visited Ashford College on Wednesday 13 April to get an insight into life as a student. The tour saw the Church of England leader meeting the Student Union and learners from a number of different departments.

He also met some of the College's ESOL students, some of whom had come from Afghanistan following the war and were now finding their feet in their new homes.

Sharing laughs and stories, the Archbishop said he was struck by the atmosphere, enthusiasm and community spirit he saw in everyone at the College.

He said: "I'd say I'm really struck by how outward looking the College is. There's an awful lot of people doing things in the wider community which is one of the things that particularly strikes me as exciting and motivating. There's a real commitment to the community here.

"Meeting the Kent Refugee Action Network and talking to the two students who have come from such difficult places and have found a place of healing was incredible.

"The people here at Ashford College have a real passion and sense of ownership in what they are doing and achieving.

"Overall I've really been struck by the stories I've heard today and would like to thank the College for welcoming me so warmly."

He also spoke to the students and staff about his struggles with mental health, noting the importance of finding people to open up with and the need to find communities with whom the students could be themselves.

Ashford College's Principal Susan Bonett said: "The visit, and the students' preparation for it, was truly inspiring. He took the time to engage with the students he met, to hear about their stories and the journeys that led them to our College.

"The Archbishop has an ability to take stories from around the world and make them relatable to those he was speaking with, providing insight and support into topics like mental health or the international journeys made by our students.

"We'd like to thank the Archbishop and his team for giving us so much of their time to meet our students and learn about the exciting projects we have coming up in Ashford and the wider community."

# EKC GROUP INKS DEAL WITH KENT CRICKET

**EKC Group has signed a major new partnership agreement with Kent Cricket which will see it become a community partner for the club over the coming three seasons.**

The Group – which has colleges in Ashford, Broadstairs, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Sheppey – inked the new deal over a round of 'street cricket' in its Canterbury College's atrium, with Chief Executive Officer, Graham Razey, facing down cricket star Jordan Cox and Kent Cricket's Director of Partnerships Andy Griffiths. Students from the College's sports department also got in on the action, taking to bowling against the top-flight Kent batsman to seal the deal.

The partnership will see EKC Group and Kent Cricket collaborate to open up access to cricket for a new generation of young athletes, helping to ensure the sport is nurturing the fans of the future. The county's leading sports organisation will offer up an education programme, deploying its top talent into the Colleges to speak with students as part of the deal.

Kent Cricket's Director of Partnerships, Andy Griffiths, said: "We're delighted to link up with EKC Group in an exciting partnership that will look to benefit everyone in our local communities.



"It was fantastic to see so much engagement from students at Canterbury College when they had the chance to bowl at Jordan Cox and play some softball cricket in their hallways, and I'm sure that enthusiasm will shine through as we both work together in the next three seasons."

Chief Executive of EKC Group, Graham Razey, said: "Our Group hopes that this partnership will introduce even more of our students from across East Kent to the power of team sports, and cricket in particular.

"I'm hopeful that this new relationship will break down barriers for the thousands of students within our Group who will get the opportunity to engage in cricket and benefit from the many opportunities that working with this great Kent organisation will bring.

"We're excited to be aligning ourselves with an organisation that shares our Group's values, and I look forward to seeing this relationship develop as we move through the next three seasons as a Community Partner of Kent Cricket."

# LORD MAYOR UPDATED ON UPCOMING TRAINING CENTRE



**EKC Group have joined developer Quinn Estates in welcoming the Lord Mayor and Cllr Georgina Glover, representing the Sturry ward, to a build update on the new engineering and civil engineering training centre in Hersden.**

Forming part of the Hoplands Park development that was consented a few years ago, the centre is being built by Quinn Estates and gifted to the EKC Group to support its work in training the next generation of construction professionals. Hoplands Park also includes 250 new two, three & four bed homes that are being built by national housebuilder Redrow Homes.

Mark Quinn, Chairman of Quinn Estates, said at the May 13 update: "We are passionate about contributing positively to the communities in which we build. The planning committee voted unanimously in favour of this scheme a few years ago and we are delighted to now be on site and delivering on a project that will train young people for careers in the exciting construction sector."

Kurt Salter, Managing Director of EKC Group's EKC WorkHigher unit, said: "It's amazing to see this centre coming to fruition. There's a clear skills gap in the civil engineering sector in this area, and our vision is for the centre to fully fill that, ensuring that employers have the right skills to grow and flourish in the future."

"We're aiming to be the training centre of choice for local employers who need their staff to get formal qualifications, such as our Apprenticeships, as well as for the smaller certificates they need. We're really excited by the progress, and can't wait to get in here to start training the next generation of talented construction professionals."

The centre includes a building containing an office, training centre and other facilities whilst the external yard is set out as a series of stations where students can work on key skills such as drainage and brick laying.

The centre is due to be completed in September 2022 with the first students to start using the facility that month. It is anticipated that the centre will have over 300 learners, studying a variety of courses ranging from CSCS cards through to full Civil Engineering Apprenticeships.



Cllr Glover is a governor of several schools including Simon Langton Girls Grammar School and four local primary schools. She worked at KCC Education as an Accountant for 20 years and is a dedicated educationalist.

Representing the Sturry Ward, she said: "Pre-planning, Quinn Estates were very active in talking to the local community and understanding the issues in the area. To now be in a position where a hugely significant and beneficial training facility is being built is really exciting and provides the young people in the district with such a great opportunity."

Together with a new children's nursery, this represents a £1.5m investment in the local community from Quinn Estates.

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# COLLEGE CAMPUS PLANS REVEALED



**Plans for a major overhaul of a College campus have been unveiled, sparking a new chapter for one of EKC Group's latest acquisitions.**

The Group has worked with local contractors on the design of two buildings, which are set to increase capacity and improve facilities at the Spring Lane at Canterbury College site.

The scheme – drawn up with the support of local firms Lee Evans Architects and b&m – is hoped to be completed in time for the 2023/24 academic year if given the go-ahead.

If approved, the proposals will allow more learners to get involved with the popular horticulture and animal management courses, as well as accessing courses at levels ranging from Pre-16 Junior College to Higher Education.

The planning application also seeks to bring the Spring Lane campus into the 21st Century in terms of sustainability, with design elements specifically responding to EKC Group's wider sustainability drive. Careful thought has been put into the use of sustainable building materials, more natural daylight and environmental ventilation systems.

Another key feature will be the use of green roofs which would boost biodiversity while providing natural insulation in winter and assisting with cooling in the summer.

The new building plans come just a month after the Spring Lane at Canterbury College campus received top mark from an OFSTED monitoring inspection, which deemed the Group had done well to assimilate the site since taking it over in April 2020.

Demolition of existing buildings and their replacement are necessary due to the outdated and poor condition of the current structures, as judged by several surveyors. The new buildings would enable the former Hadlow College site to continue educating people of all ages – an aim specifically mentioned in Canterbury City Council's draft Local Plan.



Dan Shelley, Chief Transformation Officer of EKC Group, said of the development: "Spring Lane is in need of new facilities to enable a growing number of students interested in horticulture and animal management to develop their skills to support the wider landbased sector to thrive and grow in East Kent.

"The designs are focused on sensitively replacing existing buildings and not increasing the footprint of the campus whilst added features such as green roofs, EV charging points and plenty of cycle storage befitting the campuses green focused offer and creating a specialist landbased facility."

Jessica Berry, Assistant Principal of Canterbury College, said: "EKC Group has committed to delivering a full range of Landbased courses from its Spring Lane campus, and as part of this commitment the current temporary buildings that have been in place for over 20 years are to be replaced.

"The new teaching spaces - including the upgraded glasshouse facilities, improved estates skills workshops and animal handling facilities - will house up-to-date industry equipment and technology that will prepare students for their future careers in Horticulture, Conservation, Countryside management and Animal Care and Welfare.

[Visit our website for more information on the Spring Lane at Canterbury College campus.](#)

# ANNE'S WINS TOP KENT FOOD AWARD



**EKC Group's newly launched restaurant, Anne's, has earned a top Kent food prize.**

The restaurant, located on Shorncliffe Road, Folkestone, was awarded the Best New Food Business award at this year's Taste of Kent Awards amid tough competition. The awards are held by local food and drink champions, Produced in Kent, and aim to celebrate the best of the county's produce.

The restaurant, launched last year, was shortlisted alongside Whitstable's Nomad Pizza and Canterbury's Oink and Udder in the Kent Start-up Food and Drink Business of the Year category.

The win is a testament to the hard-working staff at Anne's, who also coach students from the Folkestone College Professional Catering department during work experience with the restaurant.

Tracy Flower, Director of EKC Commercial Services, was overjoyed by the award, saying: "It's absolutely amazing to have won this award and really underlines the huge effort our staff have put into making Anne's an outstanding local restaurant that seeks to celebrate everything that's wonderful about Kent.

"We're passionate about sourcing the amazing Kentish produce that's available, and seek to weave that philosophy through everything we do.

"We're also really proud to be helping produce the next generation of talented hospitality professionals within the



restaurant, ensuring learners from EKC Group's Folkestone College are able to develop their skillsets within a real commercial environment like ours. I'm so proud of all of the team, and am really pleased that their efforts have been celebrated tonight."

[Find out why Anne's is this year's Taste of Kent by booking on our website.](#)

# RIGHT ROYAL PARTIES COME TO EKC GROUP

Despite the bunting now being put away, memories of the regal events held across the Group for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee will last a lifetime.

All six of EKC Group's Colleges got in the royal mood to mark the occasion of Queen Elizabeth II's 70th year on the throne, with games, live music and food on offer at each campus.

Despite the official day taking place during the half term,

students and staff still got to enjoy special celebrations during term time. Afternoon teas were laid out, cake slices munched and cardboard cut-outs of Her Majesty took centre stage in a number of selfies.

Trees were planted across the Group earlier in the year as part of The Queen's Green Canopy project. Each business unit got the chance to install a native tree, and it's hoped they'll brighten up campuses for many years to come.



## ASHFORD

At **Ashford College**, a Jubilee Crown contest was held to see who could design and make the best themed headpiece. Music students collaborated on Mario and Star Wars-themed crowns, winning the community award for best team work, while the Health and Social Care department's crown celebrated their pathway, earning them the best course-themed crown award.

The judging took place during a Jubilee party and barbecue, made all the better by students' musical performances and the catering department's food.

The College also took the lead in redesigning the decals at Ashford International station's main walkway for the Jubilee and organised this involving 26 groups including local schools such as EKC Schools Trust's East Stour.





## BROADSTAIRS

**Broadstairs College** was given a splash of colour to mark the special occasion, with specially themed wall displays and a Jubilee garden installation. As well as a party before the Jubilee weekend, Supported Learning students enjoyed a 'street party' of their own, and 200 primary school pupils got to visit the campus for a celebration aided by every department in the College.

Even the primary schools under the EKC SchoolsTrust got in on the action, with students from Briary Wood and East Stour helping to brighten up Whitefriars in Canterbury.



## CANTERBURY

**Canterbury College** students were also treated to free afternoon tea, all made in-house by Catering students, joined by a life-sized cardboard cut-out of Queen Elizabeth II. The Supported Learning Department also had their own party to celebrate the Jubilee, with lots of food, activities and live music from local 60's and 70's soul band, Six Shades of Grey.





## DOVER

Meanwhile, **Dover Technical College** invited members of the community to join in their royal festivities and were delighted with the turnout. Refreshments, face painting, music and party games were the order of the day, and were enjoyed by all.

Free afternoon teas were also handed out on the Folkestone College grass, along with fun games such as Jenga, Connect Four, and pin the diamond on the crown. There was music and deck chairs laid out for students to relax. Supported

Learning students also made their own crowns and there was a 'trashion show' where students were able to use recycled materials to make an outfit to celebrate.

Student Experience Officer Claire Coulson said of the day: "Through wind and rain the students came out and enjoyed the festivities. Lawn games and the Ascot-themed 'trashion show' were a real success, and the Catering students provided a fantastic afternoon tea!"



## SHEPPEY

**Sheppey College** also made the most of the occasion, holding a barbecue for all to enjoy.

[To see pictures of all the events held to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee, click here](#)