



Thetford Manufacturing Excellence Club Meeting
Thursday 06th September 2007 at 15.00
Thetford Town Hall



MINUTES

1. Attendance

Richard Bridgman
Ian Rudling
Brian Greengrass
Simon Barrett
Grahame Middleton
John Bradley
Susan Glossop
Paul Mold
Tom Palmer
Phil Bowes
Roger Moore
Ron Decelis
Dave Rice
Carol Hodges
Mike Marshall
Paul Spinks
Gary Clark-Ward
Kim Nottage
Alastair Rhind
Chris Whitman
Mark Stead
Jonathan Read

Warren Services (Chair)
Comtek Ltd
SBS Ltd
Advantage Technologies
Advantage Technologies
Manufacturing Skills Academy
Thetford Town Council
PKM Solutions
Merit Plastics
Powertrain Technologies
EEIA
EEIA
Trox (UK)
Job Centre Plus (Thetford)
Parkes Products
Active Technologies
Marketing Displays
Marketing Displays
Rev Project
Rev Project
Rev Project
Rev Project

2. Apologies

Robert Kybird
Edward Chambers
Alan Copeland
Mark Preston
Stephen Basey-Fisher
Lindy Warmer
Lynne Wellbelove
David Falder
David Eldridge
Trevor Webster
Ian Maxey
Dave Dixon
John Jones
Nick Vass Bowen

Thetford Mayor
Thetford Town Council
Bridgeland Engineering
Bridgeland Engineering
Century Logistics
Breckland Council
Breckland Precision Engineering
A to Z Precision Engineering
Advantage Technologies
Baxter Healthcare
Europa Sheet Metal
Garmet
John Mayes Engineering
Thetford Growth Point Initiative



2. Welcome, Introductions and minutes from the last meeting

Richard Bridgman welcomed the group and proceeded with a round table introduction for new members.

Due to other commitments Nick Vass-Bowen sent his apologies and the Thetford growth point presentation will be added to a future agenda.

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true account.

3. The Manufacturing Skills Academy

John Bradley gave an overview of the Manufacturing Skills Academy. It was devised from the Automotive Academy, however they are now no longer sector restricted to automotive companies. The MSA offers company support from R&D through to the production and marketing processes.

'Vision' – To make UK Plc manufacturing globally competitive.

The MSA has been set up nationally with sector hubs and spoke offices that reflect the areas covered by RDA's (EEDA). Working closely with SEMTA the skills academy aims to train trainers to a national standard to ensure that all companies receive top training. They do not deliver on a local basis but offer nationally recognised training that has full funding support.

Mark Stead mentioned that Rosemary Musker and West Suffolk College are running a 14-16 young apprenticeship engineering scheme. For this to be successful the scheme needs companies to take on the apprentices and offer them on the job training. This will help to create the workforce of tomorrow and a local interest in engineering. For furthering information or to take on a young apprentice please contact Mark Stead, 01842 756598.

Concern was raised that experienced engineers are not having their skills utilised towards the end of their working life. JB informed the group that they are using experienced engineers on a part / full time basis to assist with training younger inexperienced engineers.

For an overview of the training that the MSA offers and the benefits that this has on the company and for further information please refer to the presentation or contact John Bradley direct on 07939 129026.

4. Keeping your IT Systems up to date – Simon Barnett, Advantage Technologies

Simon Barnett from Advantage Technologies gave a presentation on the importance of company IT systems and how to keep them up to date.

One of the main issues raised through the presentation was to ensure that you source the right people for the job. The person with the most qualifications may also be the person with the least amount of experience. By sourcing the right company / person that is experienced you will save time and effort by not having to go through the tedious tasks of searching the internet or shops for your requirements.

Simon continued with examples of companies that had not updated their IT software on a regular basis and the effects that this has on the company if it happens to fail.

'A correct investment in IT systems will pay off in the wider picture.'

Advantage Technologies currently has an offer on the Rev Business Community to all associated members offering a '*free no obligation health checks on your business IT systems*'.

For further information on the presentation and the offer available please contact Simon Barrett on 01842 763131.



5. Thetford Growth Point Initiative – Nick Vass Bowen, Breckland Council

Due to other commitments Nick Vass-Bowen sent his apologies and the Thetford Growth Point presentation will be added to a future agenda.

AR gave a brief update until the presentation at a future meeting.

Thetford has been tasked with creating 6000 new homes and jobs within the Growth Point Initiative. The final report will be finished at the end of September with a public consultation being held at the beginning of October.

The A11 is still moving up the agenda and is looking more promising to take place sooner rather than later.

6. Open forum / questions and answers

Mark Stead informed the group that the success of the recent ILM courses has resulted in Poultec arranging further courses to take place later this year. For further details please contact Mark Stead on 01842 756598.

A discussion took place on the company front sheet that was designed last year for each company to pass out a brief description of themselves. It was decided that these should be brought up to date and sent round each company. It was also decided that these should be uploaded on to the Rev website.

IR suggested an 'e-bay' type facility on the REV business community site for companies to offer materials / equipment / capacity for sale to the cluster. REV to explore practicalities with marketing company.

Alastair Rhind informed the group that Rev has a stand at Autosport International 2008 and MACH 2008. Arrangements are being considered to lay on travel for the day for any companies that wish to walk the show. This is subject to the amount of interest generated. For further information and to submit an interest please contact Alastair on 01842 756599.

The EEDA annual meeting is scheduled for the 18th September where they will be discussing competing in global economy. Details to be sent in the next REView newsletter.

Carol Hodges from Job Centre Plus informed the group that they will be receiving 80 Tulip redundancies next Friday. She also mentioned that the Prep Direct site in Brandon is being filled and they will be looking to take on 400 jobs by February 2008.

Richard Bridgman raised further concerns over the parking available in the industrial estates and the possibility of having a bus collect and drop off employees.

Action – AR to follow up.

7. Close and date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the club will be close to Christmas and will include the manufacturing clubs from all of Norfolk. Details to follow.