

Jobs are top of Question Time-style debate topics

Ukip's Farage: European Union is to blame for low wage economy

By Tom Barnes
thomas.barnes@KRNmedia.co.uk

JOB creation was the hot topic when candidates contesting the South Thanet constituency at May's General Election locked horns in a lively debate at the Baypoint Club in Sandwich.

Craig Mackinlay, Conservative, Nigel Farage, Ukip, Russ Timpson, Liberal Democrats and Will Scobie, Labour, were quizzed by members of the Thanet Chamber of Commerce early on Friday morning.

Chaired by Chamber of Commerce chief executive David Foley, the Question Time-style debate touched upon the future of the fishing industry, the Manston airport site and employment opportunities on the isle.

Benefits

Some business owners expressed concerns that potential workers, particularly young people, appear to be better off on benefits than in employment.

Mr Farage said: "I get very upset when at this idea that all British youth are lazy and feckless. An awful lot of young people get caught in the benefits trap - let's encourage people to get out of this trap."

"We have become the low wage capital of Europe and we will go on exactly as we are if we remain members of the European Union."

Mr Scobie said: "The problem here is lack of chances, lack of ambition and lack of get up and go. What we are seeing is people being left on the scrap heap. They are not being given the

Also in the running

Several South Thanet candidates did not take part in the Baypoint Club debate, including:

- Ian Driver, Green Party
- Nigel Askew, Reality Party
- Ruth Brackstone Bailey, Manston Airport Independent Party
- Zebadiah Boaler, Al-Zebabist Nation of Ooog
- Tim Garbutt, Independent

chances and they are not being given the industry experience. Benefits should be a hand up, not a hand out."

All four candidates encouraged the payment of a living wage, with Mr Mackinlay suggesting the best way to achieve this was with a strong economy nationally.

He said: "The best way of making sure we have a living wage is by having a dynamic economy and, like it or not, that dynamic economy is what we [the Conservatives] have been delivering over the last four and a half years."

Candidates were quizzed on the future of the fishing industry within the constituency, which currently employs around 100 people.

Mr Timpson said: "Thanet's future has to include fishing and I think there has been a lack of focus on this."

"I think there has been a lack of effort to support the fishing industry in Ramsgate. It is absolutely integral."



PANEL: Will Scobie, Nigel Farage, David Foley, Russ Timpson and Craig Mackinlay

pic: Rosie Anton

IN BRIEF

Northdown Road crossing

A NEW pedestrian crossing could be installed at Northdown Road, Cliftonville.

There will be improved lighting and road surfaces, following concerns over people crossing the busy road to access Aldi supermarket.

Kent County Councillor and Labour's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Thanet South Will Scobie said: "It's a very popular place for people to cross.

"But it can often be dangerous if cars are speeding down Northdown Road. I am using the rest of my members' budget allocated for road improvements to enable this project to go ahead."

The project is under consultation until January 2.

Wish list

ROTARY Club of Margate will be bringing Father Christmas and his helpers to the town's streets.

And he is calling for youngsters to visit him for free to deliver their wish lists.

There will be a voluntary collection to help Rotary fund about 50 Christmas dinners delivered by members to the elderly and lonely on Christmas Day.

The visits will run from December 8th to 18th and from 5.30pm to 8pm.

If you would like more details, log on to the web site www.rotary1120.org/margate Or telephone 07984 040333 for details.

CATCH UP

■ Did you miss the candidates' first debate? Find it online at

thanetgazette.co.uk

Get back on track

Aged 24+?

Students aged 24 or over and studying a Level 3 qualification or higher can now access 24+ Advanced Learning Loans to help