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Press Release

GOVERNMENT MINISTER FACES HIS OWN QUESTION TIME AT CAMBRIDGE REGIONAL COLLEGE

Local MP Jim Paice put himself in the hot seat today when he visited Cambridge Regional College to talk to students about politics.

The Tory MP for South East Cambridgeshire found himself facing his own version of Question Time with quickfire questions from childcare students.



MP Jim Paice, centre, with CHEY students

The new Minister of State for Agriculture and Food was happy to answer all their queries, ranging from ‘What’s it like to be in Government?’ to ‘Why do we import onions?’

He told them about the excitement of election night, the days waiting to see who would lead the country and his own ministerial appointment – a post he had previously shadowed.

The visit was organised by CRC lecturer Suzanne Clarke, who wanted to introduce her students to real-life politics to help them feel involved in the political process.

“I wanted them to see that politics is important and it does involve them,” she said. “I wrote to Jim Paice about the lack of opportunities some young people had to engage and understand politics prior to voting at the age of 18 and asked him to come and talk to us.

“The students were very excited about the visit and prepared lots of questions in advance. They asked him about all sorts of things, and he was very happy to answer them all – it was an excellent visit and we’re very grateful to Jim for coming to see us.”

Before the visit, the students ran their own mini election campaigns as part of their course in English function skills, competing to win the fictitious town of Kingsedge. The campaigns involved designing written material, logos, campaign messages and preparing video, with the ‘Professionals’ taking the seat.

The politician said the question and answer session had gone very well – and the questions were “a lot less predictable” than those on Question Time.

“I’m always happy to do this if it helps to improve interest in our political system,” he said.

And the answer to that question on importing onions? Because our local ones aren’t yet ready for picking, and we like our onions available all year round.

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MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

For more information, please contact Lynn O'Shea, PR & Events Co-ordinator, on 01223 418773 or email loshea@camre.ac.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

Cambridge Regional College is the second largest provider of full-time education for 16 to 19 year-olds in the eastern region. The College has around 3,500 full-time and 6,000 part-time students. Students come in from a 40-mile radius, covering Cambridge and its surrounding villages, eastern Bedfordshire, northern Essex and western Suffolk.

Over 80 per cent of full-time students are aged 16 to 18 years old and come to the College after secondary school; the rest are mature students, studying on a range of Access to Higher Education and vocational programmes. The College offers the largest and most comprehensive range of vocational courses in Cambridgeshire, and has one of the largest Train to Gain contracts in the Eastern Region.