

***PRESS RELEASE! PRESS RELEASE! PRESS RELEASE!***

## **POLITICAL SPEED DATING AT CRC**

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008

**Cambridge Regional College (CRC) has hosted an exciting political event, in which students and local councillors participated in a discussion session, “speed dating” style.**

Five local councillors participated in the event last Wednesday, with an equal number of volunteer students. Councillors rotated around each table, discussing a variety of issues for 6 minutes. When the Klaxon sounded, the councillors moved on to the next table to meet a new student.



***Deputy Mayor, Russ McPherson and student Henry Foster discuss governance issues***

The councillors who took part were: Russell McPherson, Labour Backbencher and Deputy Mayor, John Hipkin, Independent and interested in City planning, Chris Howell, Conservative looking at how council manages their finances, Colin Rosenthal, Liberal Democrat and responsible for Environmental Services and Clare Blair, Liberal Democrat and Chair of Community Service Scrutiny Committee.

Each councillor was assessed by the students on aspects such as approachability, listening skills, understanding of the issues, and clarity of answers. John Hipkin won the award and was presented with his winner's certificate at the full Cambridge Council meeting last week.

Henry Foster, a National Diploma Automotive Engineering student said, "I discussed many aspects with the councillors, particularly how the council is organised and governed. Today was very informative and provided a great insight into how the county is managed".

Josh Burford, studying National Diploma Business spent some time discussing issues such as parking, transport and congestion charges. Other topics tackled were improving the role of younger generations in the council, social problems, environmental policies and military issues.

Russell McPherson, the Deputy Mayor of Cambridge, also works at Cambridge Regional College as the Security Manager. On attending the speed dating event he commented, "All Councillors felt that this was a very good opportunity to get a 'snapshot' of the types of questions students want answers to. It also gave students the opportunity to speak to a councillor first hand, when they may never have either had the opportunity or indeed even thought about it before. The event was very well received by both sides and I would like to see the event happen at CRC again".

The event was organised in response to "Democracy Week" which CRC held in October. Students took part in special elections in an attempt to learn more about the

voting process and various representatives of political parties came along to talk to students about democratic issues. Penny Buckingham, Tutorial Manager at CRC, organised the event and said, “We were thrilled to work with the Mayor’s office, to explain the importance of local democracy. ‘Political Speed Dating’ proved a real hit with our students - a fun way to find out about Councillors as well as to promote political participation. CRC will continue to play its part in encouraging informed and active citizenship!”

**- ENDS -**

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

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