

Post

Your Views, Suite 1, Third floor, Mill Lane House, Mill Lane, Margate CT9 1JU

E-mail

newsdesk.times@KRNmedia.co.uk

Fax

01843 578170

your views



Online petition to highlight problem

EVERY university graduate in Canterbury who was conferred with their degree at least three years ago and who is the first person in their family to go to university and consequently, does not have a network of contacts to help them establish and develop their career aspiration, has increasingly been put at a significant disadvantage compared to those who graduated before 1968.

The city is home to three major university campuses: Canterbury Christ Church University; University for the Creative Arts; and University of Kent. Each university has other campuses not in Canterbury. University careers services provided support for graduates for three years.

In 1971, only approximately eight per cent of the student population went to university.

In the academic year 2011-2012, the total percentage of first-time students aged 17 to 30 going into higher education was 49 per cent, which was three per cent higher than the year before.

The United Kingdom government has reneged on the 1971 assurance given in writing to the United Nations International Labour Organisation, that the spirit of Employment Service Convention 1948/88 would continue to be fully upheld following the Government's denouncement of the Convention's requirement to maintain a free public employment service and which included specialist employment services.

Ministers know that Jobcentre Plus has no higher level capability for graduates, postgraduates and especially academic researchers who are endeavouring to prepare a specialist five-page academic curriculum vitae which includes specific emphasis on poster, oral and workshop presentations.

When the current Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith was unemployed after leaving the Scots Guards in 1981, there was still a Professional and Executive Register capable of fast-tracking him back into specialist employment. As a former Armed Forces officer, he would have been able to afford to pay for specialist services to fast-track him back into employment, unlike most graduate, postgraduate, executive, technician or other specialist employment services customers now who are poorer public-good job-seekers prepared and wanting to work in what are called vocations.

In 1957, the Employment Service abolished its three separate professional appointments offices and created the Professional and Executive Register. At that time, only one in ten people were in occupations regarded as being in the top half of the employment register, compared to almost 50 per cent now graduating from university and continuing to rise overall.

In 1962, the Employment Service abolished the Technical and Scientific Register and the nursing appointments office

Reader picture

IT MAY be winter but that didn't stop this family enjoying a picnic on the beach at Hampton last weekend.

The scene was snapped by keen photographer Michael McLaughlin.

It looks like they're having a nice time, but we might keep our deckchairs in storage until it gets a bit warmer...

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was closed. Forty percent of student loans are now expected to not be repaid, due to graduates not having annual incomes above the repayment threshold. The effects of inadequate disposable income, such as to take out a mortgage, are variables still to be fully evaluated using the Treasury's financial models.

The state-funded employment service ought to be the first desired destination for genuine high-quality career advancement for all. That includes postgraduates who want to continue to progress to Doctorate Level Eight.

Further details can be read at http://www.tcep.talktalk.net/citizenship/petition2.html

I have launched an electronic petition on the Government website to highlight and begin resolving how STEM subject and other graduates, together with professionally qualified and experienced people, came to be increasingly disadvantaged in the labour market for over forty years since 1971: http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/56707

After all, it is not as if there is a shortage of experienced system analysts in the Department of Work and Pensions who are capable of designing a competent, cost-effective and workable web-based universal credit computer system, is it?

Richard West (founder), The Chaucer Education Project, Canterbury

Not everything city council does is bad

IT IS a pity that everything about council-related policy in the papers/letters seems to be so black and white; whether it be the council (in effect "we have done everything right") or some protesters who list a string of decisions as all wrong and equally wrong.

Decisions like trying to sell off a chunk of the Herne Bay Downs to a developer for beach huts, the approach to Kingsmead Field and the secret, claimed irreversible and not-for-consultation decision to slash museum hours clearly belong at the dark end of the spectrum.

But the proposal on beach hut charges for example, routinely put in the list of black marks, is unquestionably unavoidable for the council given the legal ruling that market

rents must be charged. Do protesters suggest the council ignore the law? Have they forgotten that some of them have in the recent past threatened the council with legal action on other hut matters under the Human Rights Act on the basis that the council has not been acting legally?

Similarly poorly made are the condemnations of the experimental St Dunstan's scheme. It needs to be remembered that many people were for it, as well as against, and that a major reason for the scheme was because pollution levels were approaching dangerous levels in that major street, used by many pedestrians. The council may or may not have got it wrong with the details of the scheme but the motivation was wholly laudable and was not without significant public support from the wider electorate.

Could 2014 please be marked by more considered critiques of council action and policies?

Graham Cox, By e-mail

Beach huts should not be subsidised

THE increase in council charges for beach huts is undoubtedly high and something to question.

But I'd like to question the campaigners who use the "too tough on pensioners" argument.

Now, I'm motivated by social justice and caring for the most vulnerable in our society. So, I'd question if beach huts are really in a group of essentials for pensioners that I would put winter fuel payments within?

It's obvious that most pensioners that own a beach hut are wealthy individuals or at least not living on the breadline, and to subsidise them by not asking for a full payment of fees would not be a good use of public money.

However, some beach huts have been in families a long time before the ridiculous inflation in their prices over the past 15 years. So some lower income families may well own beach huts.

Therefore, I would have more sympathy on this campaign, if the associations asked for a reduction in the fees for pensioners on the proviso that they were kept in the family. And that they advocated for their members to pay

back the subsidy, plus interest, at the point of any future sale of their beach hut.

This allowing for these funds to be then directed to services for the most vulnerable people in Whitstable.

Jonathan Dearth, Whitstable

More interested in cash than residents

ANY company with a £7.5 million turnover that could make a £2.5m profit could be accused of profiteering. If that company was the sole source of its product, then this could be construed as racketeering.

Yet this is exactly what is happening to the residents in the Canterbury area when it comes to parking! The council dictates the parking restrictions and where and how long we can park and aismaking an annual £2.5m profit, which in real world terms, could probably be even more, since they can write their own "cost".

Altering the Gorrell Tank car park to short stay is more about having an excuse to raise the price by 50 per cent than meeting the wishes of residents.

If councillors think they are right to take this course of action, stand up and be counted and give us your names.

At least then come next election day, we will know what we are voting for!

Terry Hudson, By e-mail

The Plough Broomfield

New Years



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Tweets of the week

- @fankled: For superb coffee, no venti fuff nor syrup ponciness, it has to be @willowsoffee in Canterbury
@martin\_chrisj: @KentHighways just been up & down A28 between Canterbury & Ashford. It's a mess, loads of potholes. What's the plan to fix them & when?
@JWFJSNelling: Canterbury traffic is a joke. Literally quicker to walk! #rushhour



You say on Facebook

On the council debate after campaigners called for the executive to resign:

- Barry Field: Gilbey earns £33.3k a year. Resign? I don't think so
Steve Hudson: Not surprised really, they have been roughing rough shod over the residents for years. NOT interested in what we have to say. Just interested in looking after themselves. They will be in for a rude awakening come the elections. They should have done the right thing last night: accepted they are wrong and all resigned.

On plans by firefighters to target bad parking around schools:

- Elena McEwan: This is a great idea! It amazes me how many people regularly park in a way that puts both our children and their own at risk outside schools.
Not to mention their parking makes others run late due to the congestion that is caused by them and that could be a life if our emergency services can't get through.
Sarah Humber-Kelly: Surely giving the dates of when they are pitching up defeats

the objective of the exercise as for that day everyone will park sensibly! They should just turn up and cause chaos so people are more wary about how they park.

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