

# **FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**July 13, 2023**

### **Event highlights free help available to innovative Fenland businesses**

Around a dozen Fenland business leaders attended an event to learn about the help available to firms capable of growing the district's economy through innovation.

And other firms are invited to find out more about the support on offer, which includes grants and free specialist support to explore and test new product ideas, find technical expertise and get advice on regulation and patents.

Fenland District Council's economic growth team Fenland for Business joined forces with Innovate UK EDGE to host the event in Chatteris and promote the support available to businesses across the district.

Cllr Ian Benney, portfolio holder for economic growth and skills, said: "We have amazing entrepreneurs and innovators in Fenland and want to free them to do what they do best to help our district to prosper.

"We'd urge any business with ambition to grow and innovative projects they want to develop to get in touch. Tell us the barriers you face, the things you don't have the necessary time, money or expertise for and we'll let you know who can help and how."

Speakers at the event in Chatteris included Julie Pauley, of Innovate UK EDGE, a publicly-funded service available to high potential small to medium sized innovation-driven companies. And James Grayston, project manager RTO Catapult Grant, which offers £15,000 grants to support research and development projects for businesses working with Innovate UK EDGE.

Leaders of two Fenland businesses that have benefited from the support and input of Innovate UK EDGE also told of their experiences. They were Alexander Craig, of Qualitetch, and Belinda Smith, of Agrimech. Both urged other business leaders to take advantage of the fully-funded support available which had helped each of them to overcome and identify challenges to the growth of their firms.

Following the event David Hampton, manufacturing and operations director at Wisbech firm StocksAG, said: 'I found it to be very informative as we had no idea of the help and support that was out there to help support our journey. A number of the topics discussed were exactly the things we are underway with here at StocksAG.'

Julie Pauley, of Innovate UK EDGE, said: "Fenland has a wealth of innovative businesses that have the potential to work with us and it was great to partner with Fenland District Council to meet a number of them at this event."

The event was held at one of Fenland District Council's business hubs South Fens Business Centre which provides flexible office space and conference facilities.

Fenland for Business works with several partners to support the health and growth of Fenland businesses. It invites contact from all business leaders to discuss opportunities for funding and support.

Contact Fenland for Business at [business@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:business@fenland.gov.uk) or see: [www.fenlandforbusiness.co.uk](http://www.fenlandforbusiness.co.uk)

Contact Innovate UK EDGE East of England at [Enquirieseast@innovateuk.ukri.org](mailto:Enquirieseast@innovateuk.ukri.org)

## **ENDS**

### **Photos**

Speakers at the Fenland for Business and Innovate UK Edge event in Chatteris. Back, from left, James Grayston, RTO Catapult Grant; Alexander Craig, Qualitetch. Front – Ann Wardle, Fenland for Business; Julie Pauley, Innovate UK EDGE; Belinda Smith, Agrimech.

Business leaders hear about the grants and support available for innovation, research and development in Fenland at a Fenland for Business and Innovate UK Edge event in Chatteris.