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**N E W S R E L E A S E**

**Launch of Vinson Centre for Economics and Entrepreneurship**

The University of Buckingham today (Wednesday) unveiled the new £8 million Vinson Building, which will house a Centre for Economics and Entrepreneurship.

The Vinson Building and its work has been made possible thanks to a generous donation from entrepreneur Lord Vinson, who is Life Vice President of the Institute of Economic Affairs. The [Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) has granted £3m to enable the completion of the building. Buckingham's German Alumna and BMW heiress, Susanne Klatten has made a donation to support the development of the Buckingham Enterprise and Innovation Unit (BEIU).

As well as an economics library, bookshop, coffee bar and study spaces, the Vinson Building will house the University's largest lecture theatre, which will host conferences and events for the community. It will provide the campus with a focal point for the first time. Independent MP The Rt Hon Frank Field officially opened the building with Lord Vinson in a ceremony attended by 400 guests.

Students on Buckingham's Economics courses, which have a unique broad-based approach, will use the building, as will Undergraduates on the university's pioneering Business Enterprise (BBE) course, the first in the world in which students "pitch" for up to £5,000 to set up their own companies, as part of their degree. The students will be able to work on their businesses in a new Enterprise Hub and can meet with entrepreneurs and business leaders. Members of [Buckinghamshire Business First](https://bbf.uk.com/) will also be able to use the Hub.

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The centre will offer another location to the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), based in London, for conducting research. Lord Vinson's association with the University came about as a result of his links with the IEA, where he was for some years, Chairman of Trustees. Coincidentally, Arthur Seldon, Sir Anthony's father, was a joint founder of the IEA and instrumental in the creation of the University.

The Rt Hon Frank Field said: "We fail as a country to cherish those with the gift of entrepreneurialism. And we all too often fail as a country – lamentably – to act on the outcome of those entrepreneurial skills. The product of that is too often left to other countries to harvest.

"Today here, with the opening of the Vinson Building, I hope history will judge that a decisive strike back is being made to our so harmful anti-entrepreneurial culture. In Birkenhead, when great ships are launched the cry goes up to bless all those who sail in the said vessel. Likewise, may the same blessing apply to all those who study within the walls of the Vinson Building. May they acquire and nurture the gift of entrepreneurialism and act as wisely with the wealth they have created as has the benefactor of this great building.”

Lord Vinson added: "Overwhelmingly the facts pointed to Buckingham as the place to choose if you want to advance entrepreneurialism - manifested, not least, by being the first university to offer two-year courses and its uniquely sound thinking on liberal economics. Both Buckingham and I have been closely associated with the IEA and I and my Trustees wanted to cement the relationship. As an entrepreneur I have been exceptionally fortunate in life and I also wanted to foster the qualities that create new businesses, because they are the foundation of the prosperity of any nation.”

Sir Anthony Seldon commented: "Our country's economy, post Brexit, needs entrepreneurship like never before. Our centre is geared precisely to develop the successful entrepreneurs of the future. We will be turning out graduates who are educated in a wide range of disciplines and who have a "can do" attitude. My father,

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Arthur Seldon, who spent his career at the Institute for Economic Affairs and who helped inspire the founding of the University 43 years ago, would I believe be immensely proud of the way in which Lord Vinson, the IEA, our local LEP and Buckingham have joined forces to help shape a better future."

BTVLEP chairman Andrew Smith, said: "The opening of the centre marks an important stage in the development of the University of Buckingham to become one of the world's best innovative and independent small universities.

"We are delighted to be investing £3m of our local growth funds on this project to create an exciting centre where business and education can interact and build on the University's internationally-recognised reputation of pioneering the techniques of entrepreneurship learning."

Buckinghamshire is the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain where, for well over a decade, more businesses have started here than anywhere else in the UK. This is borne of the heartbeat of enterprise, which is manifest in a propensity to act; and a

propensity to successfully exploit new ideas. It is no accident that we are the Birthplace of the Paralympics at Stoke Mandeville, the creative film engine for James Bond and Star Wars at Pinewood Studios, and the joint home of the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit. 

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**Note to editors**

The [**Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership**](http://buckstvlep.co.uk/) (BTVLEP) is a business-led ‘partnership of equals’ between local government and the private sector, building the conditions for sustainable economic growth in the County.

[**Buckinghamshire Business First**](http://www.bbf.uk.com/) (BBF), is the Growth Hub for Buckinghamshire and is backed by Buckinghamshire based entrepreneurs, thousands of SMEs and Local Authorities.  BBF provides the link between public policy and the business community in Buckinghamshire and works with partners to create a dynamic business environment in the Entrepreneurial Heart of Britain.

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