

The work of the

PLANNING

Sub-Committee

Reported by JEREMY COPE, Chairman

The time has come for another report to the members and to assess what has been done and achieved since December's article for the magazine.

In the last report the main item was a criticism of the Council and its attitude to Farthingloe Chunnel workers' site. John Clayton, Director of Planning and Technical Services, wrote that among other things, circumstances were different when the decision was taken. Planning consent on this site has had a time limit and in the absence of development by 1999 the site must be returned to its former agricultural use. I do not fully accept his argument and we will, in any case, be closely watching the site in the hope that it will revert to farmland. Even now it has become an eyesore requiring a remedy.

The Society has supported development of the shopping complex at the Wellington Dock. The recent planning application by DHB to infill the slipway to provide parking space, albeit so that it could be retrieved at a future time, was subject to our objection. Parking sites come two a penny but 18th century slipways do not. Why not use it for yacht repainting or place a sailing craft upon it? The *Cutty Sark* attracts plenty of visitors and a similar feature at the Wellington Docks could enhance prospects for the Shopping Centre. A member has been in touch with me about the possible effect in bird wildlife and his concerns are shared by many other local bird watchers.

I was handed a photograph of a pair of gates in Worthington Street that had been recently erected. They looked ugly and

out of place and I was happy to write to the Council. The Council was unable to help in this case but I would ask that members do look at what is happening around them.

THE MINER'S STATUE: We lodged objections to plans to put the statue in the Market Square. Apart from concern that it was not suitable in proportion for the suggested site we did have a strong sense that a mining village such as Aylesham would be a more appropriate setting. It would surely mean more to Aylesham than to Dover.

The Council is keen to encourage cycling as a more environmentally friendly alternative to the car. If there were more cycling we would (probably) be more healthy. The Society supports this approach and recently the committee was addressed by Tim Ingleton of DDC. Dover must be one of the most difficult towns in this area in which to promote cycling. Much of the area is hilly. Main roads are funnelled along valleys with a one-way system that makes for fast motor traffic and perilous cycling. However the committee is determined to examine whether there is a viable network of quiet paths and roads to designate as cycle routes. Do any cyclist members have ideas that can accommodate cars and pedestrians as well?

The Society has been very keen to see St. James's Street area developed to realise its potential. That such a prominent a position looks so unkempt is a shame. Recent development ideas outlined by John Moir, even if long term, are therefore warmly welcomed. One element was demolition of the unused garage site once funds became available. Sensing a delay, sub-Committee Secretary, Sybil Standing sent off a reminder to DDC and as if by magic, demolition started within days. If only every protest we sent had such an apparent and prompt result!! Now we need trees and planters to make the best of the site until long-term use is sorted out.