

6 housing. It seemed an excellent way to deal with, in a very constructive way, what has become something of a derelict site. There was provision to retain the extensive tree cover, safeguarding the view from the town. However, a new planning application had been made to build an additional 18 flats in three blocks. John Gerrard prepared a photo-montage which demonstrated how intrusive this additional development would be. The flats appeared a poor fit within the adjacent area and did not harmonise with the neighbouring Vic-

toria Park. the photo-montage was sent as supporting material for the objection.

The Society opposed the planning application for a business park development at Farthingloe on the site of "Stalag Maxton", more properly known as the Channel Tunnel workers village. We should not forget that it is within an area officially designated as an area of outstanding beauty. Other business parks make this an unnecessary development and the committee are firmly of the view that it should revert to countryside.

DOVER SOCIETY AND DOVER TOWN COUNCIL

— JACK WOOLFORD —

THERE WAS A WELCOME NOVELTY at our Members' Meeting on October 20. Inspired by Dover Town Council's example at the Mayor-Making, we invited all the Secondary Schools in Dover to send their Head Boys and Girls and their Deputies. Only St. Edmund's Roman Catholic School responded but the contributions of Thomas Connolly and Jonathan Verrill to the Discussion Groups, notably (but not exclusively) on the adequacy of youth facilities in Dover, were splendid. They were informed, articulate, and a credit to their school. We look forward to a larger response from other schools next year.

A second surprise was the Chairman's production of the mayor's application for membership of the Society. This was received with appropriate applause.

The Dover Society campaigned for a Parish (Town) Council in the recent reorganisation of local government and has established friendly relations by attendance at Council committee meetings on common concerns. Permission to speak and to make suggestions on matters such as twinning with Calais, signposting, and the promotion of tourism is very much appreciated. The invitation to "them" to speak to "us" naturally followed.

THE ROLE OF THE DOVER TOWN COUNCIL

ROBERT BAILEY, TOWN CLERK

Robert Bailey, Man of Kent and former Senior Civil Servant, now Town Clerk, emphasised his non-political role in advising on policies but his responsibility to implement them. For this, good relations with mayor, councillors, townspeople and local societies were essential.

Dover as a community had suffered for 20 years from the absence of effective local representation after the abolition of the Borough Council in 1974, and it was this gap that the (single) Parish (Town) Council, separate and autonomous, now fulfilled.

The Town Council had taken over and improved allotments and could act to promote the arts, footway lighting, the clearance of litter, car and cycle parking and tourism, etc. It must be consulted by Dover District Council on planning applications and may make grants to voluntary organisations. These had already included play schools, the Music Centre, the Bronze Age Boat Trust, the Boccia Club, the Dover Festival and the Regatta.

The Town Council was funded by a precept, currently £16.09, collected from local Council tax payers, which currently amounted to £190,000.

Matters of involvement included licensing, street furniture, trading consents, and appointments of school governors. Representations had been made on Channel Tunnel closures, French lorry drivers' strikes, Buckland Hospital, Coombe Valley access, bootlegging and asylum-seekers, etc.

It maintained historic ceremonials, notably those of the Cinque Ports, and planned to add twinning links to Zeebrugge in addition to those with Calais and Split. It had revived the Dover Day and Ball.

Links with Dover District Council, Town Centre Management, the Chamber of Commerce, the Police, the Citizen's Advice Bureau – and the Dover Society – were close and co-operative.

Prospective developments included decoration of the Aycliffe roundabout ("Welcome to Dover") on the A20, a rollerblading area, and a ten-pin bowling alley.

The Council Offices in Castle Street, as a focus for activities including meeting rooms and window displays, were an asset.

If new Regional Assemblies and the abolition of County Councils, as forecast by the Member for Dover, materialised, the role of the Dover Town Council might greatly expand.

THE TOWN MAYOR'S VISION

COUNCILLOR PAUL SHELDRAKE

The present government's commitment to Regional Assemblies and unitary authorities everywhere meant that Kent County Council would be replaced by a layer of government probably covering an area (excluding London) from Milton Keynes to Dover, and that Dover District Council would be replaced by an authority encompassing Canterbury, Thanet and Dover. Government commitment also to the devolution of power to as local a level as possible must mean Dover Town Council taking on greater responsibilities. He would expect it to deal with all but the largest planning applications.

Consequently Dover Town Council already used its powers in a more imaginative and responsible way than many

others, protecting our town's history and heritage but not stopping its progress or stifling its future. Like the Dover Society the Council believed that a good environment was a good investment. Only by listening to local people could many problems be solved.

Hence money had been put into the improvement of Bench Street's appearance, into events which should bring people to the town, to the Music Centre, the YMCA, the Dover Youth Theatre Project, etc. Lobbying for improved access to our main industrial estate and in connection with the influx of refugees and bootleggers had taken place. It was hoped to remedy the shortage of leisure facilities with a dedicated rollerblading area and a ten-pin bowling alley. Provision for the