

The OCTOBER MEETING

reported by Merril Lilley

The first meeting of the autumn was held on 25th October at Biggin Hall, the change of venue due to the fact that St. Mary's Parish Centre was not available on that day. The meeting was very well attended and the hall crowded to capacity. However, the meeting was, nevertheless, successful and the two talks, by Mike Dawson and Jon Iveson, generated a great deal of interest among the packed audience, with a lively discussion time after each address. The interval refreshments and raffle proceeded as usual despite the restricted space and thanks are due to the members who organised these.

PLANNING FOR DOVER

A talk by Mike Dawson, Chief Planning Officer, Dover District Council

Mr. Dawson, taking up a remark from the Chairman's introduction, said that his talk could have been entitled 'Dover, Past, Present and Future', for that is what it was about. He had worked in Planning for 30 years, coming to Dover in 1980.

He reminded his audience of what Dover was like in 1980 and went on to list the changes he had seen since then, with particular mention of the opening of the M20/A20, the work of IMPACT, the improvements to the sea front and the opening of the A256 to Sandwich. He spoke of job losses, the increase in freight traffic and decrease in tourist trade, changing traffic patterns, the impact of the Channel Tunnel and the development of Pfizers. He told, also, how changes and new legislation made the job of the planners more difficult. The planning system was expected to be faster, while the planning department was coping with a shortage of staff. The fact that there was a planning inspectorate, related to the Government but separate from it, increased the time it took to get a decision on any planning application.

Our speaker then went on to matters of concern to all of us - the future of Dover. He talked of new developments, some already taking place (Deal Barracks, Pfizers, the coal field sites) and some in the future (plans for new housing e.g. 800/1000 homes at Aylesham, with

associated facilities like shops, sports hall and workshops. In East Kent altogether 50,000 dwellings are planned).

On the subject of Phase Two of the White Cliffs Business Park, he said that access via the A2/A256 roundabout would take place. B&Q may be moving to Whitfield to a much larger site than they currently occupy and it was hoped to encourage more small businesses to relocate to the area.

In the town the major discussion point was the St. James' development, with plans recently on show at Dover Discovery Centre, designed to provide for a super store (Asda), small shops, housing and car parking.

He ended by saying that Dover District Council thought that the public should be involved in the planning process for Dover. We should ask ourselves - What next? What sort of future do we want for this town? What facilities? What population figures? Should Western Docks be developed

When he stopped to invite questions, Mr. Dawson was bombarded with a flood of queries from the floor especially on the St. James' development. Why do we need a superstore? What about increased pollution on Townwall Street? What provision will there be for young people?

Mr Dawson replied that ASDA was prepared to come and invest in the project

in the town centre which would bring increased revenue to the town. He answered queries about traffic volume, the dualling of the A2, the closing of Russell Street, car parking and the relocation of the bus garage.

The session left us with plenty to think about and, as all these issues will have been discussed by members at the November meeting brainstorming session, we hope to add to this report in the April Newsletter.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT : MIX OF USES

The proposed scheme provides a mixed use redevelopment of the site, in line with the Planning Brief and Public Consultation.

The mix of uses include:

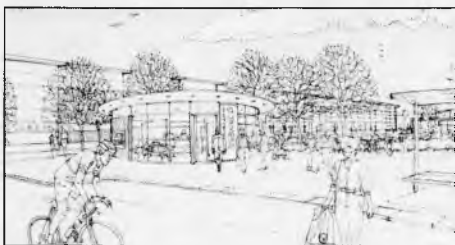
- ANCHOR SUPERSTORE
- RESTAURANT
- HOTEL
- RETAIL
- RESIDENTIAL
- VISITOR CENTRE
- PUBLIC CAR PARK



1. Anchor Superstore 2. Hotel/Restaurant 3. Residential 4. Retail 5. Visitor Centre



View along Townwall Street towards Dover Castle



View of Visitor Centre in central public space

ANCHOR SUPERSTORE

The large foodstore will be situated on Townwall Street, acting as an anchor to the entire scheme and increasing the number of visitors to the town centre. The store will incorporate a fashion department and a café restaurant. It will have self-contained discrete servicing from Townwall Street.

PUBLIC CAR PARK

The development will provide a new surface car park for 460 vehicles, including special needs parking. It will be operated as a shopper's car park serving the town centre and local retail/leisure amenities, as well as the new development.

VISITOR CENTRE

Located in the centre of the development, the Visitor Centre will be part of a new public space creating a key focus to the centre of the site, with transport node links including buses and cycles.