

Town Centre Trees

- - - by Jack Woolford - - -



THEY WERE THERE, all ten of them, in the Market Square and at intervals all the way along to McDonald's. It has taken almost three years, from the initial suggestion by our Mike Bayley, who drew a map with pictures showing the proposed eight trees in situ, to the fruition by DDC's Horticultural primo, Darren Solley.

The word "vicissitude" suggests itself. We had no difficulty in persuading you, our members, to subscribe £1000 and A.J.Simmonds, jewellers to add £250, and, although it took a little longer, to secure a contribution of £1500 from Dover Town Council. We had also hoped to raise another £800 from the Dover (ex-coalfield) Regeneration budget but ran out of time because of the delays. Fortunately it was no longer needed.

The first problem was the method of planting. We naturally assumed that it would, as normal and as elsewhere, be in the ground and it took a whole year to establish that because of underground pipes and services this was impossible. The self-evident solution, to use planters instead,

following the excellent precedent set by Dover in Bloom, was nevertheless controversial and time-consuming. The next problem was siting and a late intervention by CCTV meant that only one of our original placings was acceptable. Another problem was the choice of a suitable species of tree, which started with Rowan and Hornbeam and went on via Gingko Beluba to the Liquid Amber (*styraciflua*) which are now praise-worthily in place, all ten of them. The last problem was (and is) the drought which, although it threatens DIB flower containers, appears to have been overcome. And there is, in fact, yet another problem: to plaque or not to plaque and if so, where.

Meanwhile five of our ten Town Centre trees have been vandalized. The CCTV, which dictated their siting, failed to identify the culprit(s). The District Council has guaranteed replacement, and we have money in hand if necessary, but the need for greater security is self-evident. Root guards are not enough. A pity that our original suggestion of ground-planting was refused.

Precinct Trees

Since the trees were planted in the precinct a while ago I have received a lot of correspondence concerned with the wanton vandalism which resulted in half of the trees being broken off near the base. Below is a small selection of some of the comments. Not all are printed in full.

Copy of Letter to Nigel Collor

The District Council recently (a couple of months ago) planted 10 trees in the precinct. These trees were paid for by the Dover Society (I think we put up £1500) and Dover Town Council. To date two of the trees have been destroyed, broken off near the base of the trunk.

This really is grim that we put up the trees to beautify the town centre and vandals and drunks

destroy them. Is there any chance of CCTV catching any of the culprits? I am at a loss to think what can be done!

Jeremy Cope

There are a couple of trees still remaining. I suggest we plant some shrubs with thorns i.e. gorse to protect them.

Mike McFarnell