

The work of the

PLANNING

Sub-Committee

Report by JACK WOOLFORD, Chairman

Patricia and Pat Sharrett represented the Society at the AGM and Spring Conference of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies at Chatham on Sat May 16. I summarise their enthusiastic report.

The recent collapse of the Civic Trust into liquidation due to overambitious projects with inadequate financial resources was explained. Then followed an account of the virtual explosion of support for a new national-but-grass-roots organization, from the National Trust, English Heritage, the Council for the Protection of Rural England, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and more than five hundred Amenity Societies (like the Dover Society). Other notable supporters are Cliff Rhys-Jones, the daughter of Lord Duncan Sandys (founder of the Civic Trust) and the Prince of Wales.

On "The Regeneration of Kent", Cllr Alex King, deputy leader of Kent County Council, contrasted the Kent of 25 years ago, when there was so much Industry, with that of 25 years time. He said society depended on communities where people wanted to be and we ran the risk of a lost generation if we do not create job opportunities and training now.

Robin Cooper, Director of regeneration and development for Medway, focused on new riverside houses, shops and five hotels. He said Chatham would be second only to Bluewater as a shopping centre, with big pedestrian areas and a new bus station. Also planned were an Innovation Centre, Sure Start Centres, Academy

Schools, a new E-On Power Station, NHS Healthy Living Centres and a University for the Creative Arts, 40,000 new jobs, 16,000 homes and a 50,000 increase in population ...

Claudette Forbes, KCC Director of Economic Development, gave an address: nothing we have not heard before and frankly, seemed a waste of time.

As for Dover, we noted unsurprisingly that the 4th draft of the Business Plan is indicative only and that Kent Highway Services will, on schedule, repaint the bridge in Bridge Street but if Dover Town Council wants it earlier it will have to pay! Father Sherred's Coleman Trust Commemorative Bench can front Maison Dieu House but only on the removal of an existing bench.

More seriously, we were deeply impressed by the speed of Morrison's take-over and rebuilding of the old B&Q store as contrasted with the delays to ASDA and St. James, Crescent Housing and Buckland Mill, the hospital replacement and the Bleriot celebration, etc. Also impressive, though noisy and disruptive, was the erection of the giant TV in the Market Square - not a harbinger, we must hope.

We have given supplementary support to the Woolhouses' of 105 Maison Dieu Road in their appeal to the Ombudsman against Dover District Council's consent to the erection of a house over looking the back garden of 106.