

———— Second Speaker ————

Dover Big Local Update

A Talk by Ross Miller Chairman Dover Big Local

Reported by Terry Sutton

Called upon at short notice to give a talk, Ross Miller was the second speaker at our well-attended January meeting at St Mary's parish centre.

London Road resident Ross, a freelance financial services project manager, is chairman of Dover Big Local, the volunteer group charged with distributing over ten years £1,000,000 of National Lottery money designed to make the heart of the town a better place in which to live, work and play. He explained how and why Dover had been allotted the money, leading to the setting up of Dover Big Local which needed the support of the whole Dover community to ensure expenditure went to the right places.

Ross detailed how, in the first two years of the ten year time frame, Big Local was aiming to see £650,000 spent on a range of projects of which about fifty per cent would be provided by Big Local, the rest coming from match funding.

Projects under discussion including the purchase of Buckland Mill Lake, fed by the river Dour that is partly bordered by upper London Road and the former mill. (Other sources have been told the asking price is around £30,000). One idea, he said, was to set up an aquaponic project in the lake involving fish and edible vegetation. Another important aim was to boost tourism in order to attract to the area many more of the millions of passengers who each year pass through the port. Match funding from Porchlight, he said, had been



Dover Big Local Area

agreed to increase awareness in sport while Big Local last year provided £25,000 to help fund the successful Dover Music Festival. Not all was used so the remainder was available to help in this year's venture.

Another project under discussion was to set up a Kent Savers credit union branch so that Dovorian in need of help would not have to resort to doorstep lenders.

Yet another project, involving talks with Dover Harbour Board, was with a small grants scheme to encourage young entrepreneurs set up businesses, ranging (he suggested) from jam making to artistic painting. One possibility was the use of one of the cruise liner terminals at the western docks. Financial help was also being proposed for art and culture in the town.

Mr Miller concluded his interesting wide-ranging talk by saying "We must all work together" to make a success of this ten-year project.

**Mr Miller took the place of head of Dover police Chief Inspector Stephen Barlow who had to postpone his advertised talk on "Policing Dover."*