

# Planning Committee

Patrick Sherratt

Writing in January for this Newsletter I hope you had a good Christmas and all best wishes for 2015.

Did you do some reading over the festive period? If I was looking for a good read appropriate to planning issues in Dover I would choose the following classics: Galsworthy's "Forsyte Saga", Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors", Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing", Dickens "Great Expectations"

The Classical DTIZ must fall within the longest running saga and compete with Galsworthy's epic and whilst I have remained positive the frustration is understandable as the much awaited CPO decision is (at 20th January) still to be announced despite great expectations by DDC that an announcement was likely before Christmas. The delay was partly caused by a comedy of errors as DDC failed to correctly post the legal notice re the CPO hearing.

So what has been happening at DTIZ? Not all negative as the latest planning amendment indicates that a new major store is coming to Dover (rumoured that it is clothing giant Next). The store area (Unit 7A) will now have a mezzanine area increasing the floor space from 802sqm to 1512sqm. The hotel has been let although, at the 21st January, as I write this report the actual hotel group or the retailer of unit 7A has not been announced and no doubt will be in the public domain by the time this newsletter is distributed.

We continue to have a robust dialogue with DDC and as I have mentioned on previous occasions we have been critical of the site hoardings around the DTIZ site. It was



*DTIZ Hoarding*

therefore pleasing that the residential part of the development on Castle Street has commenced with some excellent new hoardings. Well done DDC.

Car Parking is a contentious issue but we have sought that the developer/DDC gives consideration to a "First 30 minute free" on the DTIZ development when completed. This is being considered within an overall DDC Parking Strategy.

Have you been along Townwall Street recently? Our success with Section 215 continues. The Bench Street area has received much justified criticism as buildings deteriorate; the area is the main link from the seafront to the Town Centre that has a high footfall of visitors who leave Dover unimpressed with this major eye-sore. As previously mentioned we sought Section 215 activity with DDC to concentrate on this eyesore and three legal notices were served last year. We are therefore delighted that the building facing Townwall Street (Castle Amusements Arcade and formerly furnishers Henry Hart) has almost completed its facelift and we look forward to the tromp-l'oeil façade on the former crypt site as well as rendering the exposed end wall of the Funky Monkey. These will greatly enhance the visitor experience as well as

making a more attractive walk for those residents on the seafront side when visiting the town.

The Western heights "Master plan" was unveiled and comment by the society has been made with particular reference to any development having quality build on this important historical site. We support the need for a Trust to oversee the heritage package that must have sustainability. The Citadel is included within the "Master plan" and if the Prison Service no longer had use for it we are concerned as to its method of disposal bearing in mind disposal of former Government assets often fail to come to the open market. We have, therefore, sought to have this important asset of the Western Heights, that is part of the "Master plan", be included on the list of "Assets of the Community value" that would in effect give the Trust first option to purchase or seek a heritage development partner should the asset become available.

On to "transport" issues. The much awaited car park at Dover Priory continues to be delayed. We are given to understand that our MP has taken this forward with the Transport Minister and Network Rail. So do I associate this as much ado about nothing as the opportunity of the HS1 service has not been developed to its maximum potential for Dover.

You may have read my articles in the local press concerning the congestion of traffic going to the port pre-Christmas. We are seeking that greater liaison between the Dover Harbour Board (DHB) and Kent Police as eight mile tail backs and blocked junctions is just not acceptable. DHB have just proudly announced record freight traffic in 2014 with over 2.4 million lorries passing through Dover and representing a 10% growth on 2013. As the UK recovers with economic growth and population increase there would



*Old Amusement Arcade*

be a further one million lorries passing through Dover in five years' time if volumes continue to increase at 9% per annum.

Therefore, we have asked our MP to seek a strategic review of road and port infrastructure through both the Ports Minister and Transport Minister. On 22nd January East Kent MP's meet the Roads Minister (John Hayes MP) calling for a Government Strategy on Cross Channel Freight Transport Resilience. We welcome this and shall keep pressure on both our MP and Local Authority to ensure that it is not just a "Ministerial Listening" but a "Ministerial Action"

By the time this letter is distributed in early March I do hope that the new Buckland Hospital is completed and operational. The Society, through Lorraine Sencicle and myself, have spent many/many hours canvassing and attending meetings of the various health authority groups as well as DDC and seeking the support of our MP to ensure "intermediate care" is available in Dover as recuperation should be nearer home. As I write this report it has just been announced that a "Five Star Care" promise for a new recovery centre at the Buckland site in Dover. This is the first time that it has been recognised that our aspirations for care beds that allow patients to recuperate in Dover could come to fruition with a 60 bed unit to be built on the land adjacent to the hospital. We fought that any land should not be sold off

by the health authority for re-development but retained for any future expansion of facilities at the Buckland site. We emphasized this in our comments in respect to the recent Land Allocations Consultation. Dover lost a hospital that would have provided A&E and beds, this would have been in the centre of Dover that would have given easy access by

transport across the District but because of political posturing was lost. At least after a long hard fight we seem more likely to secure the beds that Dover deserves and I shall continue to seek A&E facilities at Dover. I would thank Lorraine for her valuable input without which I could not have made such a robust challenge.

## Refurbishment Committee

Jeremy Cope

Upper Road pathway from Bleriot Memorial to Langdon Cliffs. To remind you - we are lobbying KCC pathways to reinstate the original path that should reduce the length of path alongside the most dangerous part of Upper Road. Latest update is that the work is too demanding for White Cliffs volunteers so the job has been added to the KCC "Asset Management" list of works. We await...

Again a reminder with litter and dog fouling. Do contact Dover District Council if you have a problem. It's the only way that standards can be improved. A bad incident of litter in Pencester Road on land not Council's responsibility caused us to write to DDC to pass on thanks to one of their street cleaners. A member spoke to the cleaner who investigated, contacted DDC and the matter was resolved in the hour. Well done all who lobbied Morrisons on the litter of their trollies across the town. The store, realising their error, put back the £1 deposit. Problem solved!

Who can be unaware of the traffic problems caused by the cross channel traffic post-Christmas? This element is being dealt with by Pat Sherratt and our planners but it feeds into the general problem of Dover's traffic problems. You may remember that Di

French has started a campaign on mitigating the effects of traffic on Maison Dieu Road residents and pedestrians. Following debate within our committees we sent off a letter to KCC Highways and widely copied on the need for a rational and wide ranging assessment of the town's traffic needs. The letter was sent off before Christmas and could not have been better timed. Our thanks to Beverley Hall who, with her expertise, wrote the letter.

Along with Derek Leach and Pat Sherratt I attended one of our regular discussions with Nadeem Aziz and Roger Walton. At these meetings we make known our concerns and what resolutions may be available. We hope to have one of the litter enforcement officers come to talk to us to explain their work, its problems and how the public might help improve matters. At Cowgate Cemetery we have problems with syringes and we have raised the matter of whether, with appropriate equipment and training, we should deal with the problem rather than wait for DDC to act. Connaught Park - the pond restoration is fine but would be lovely with lilies and fish. DDC have plans to litter pick the A2/A20 - should really be Highways responsibility but that only applies to motorways.