

# NOVEMBER MEETING

— First Speaker —

## Policing Dover

A talk by Chief Inspector Stephen Barlow

Reported by Alan Lee

Chief Inspector Stephen Barlow, the District Commander Dover District, opened his talk with details of his career before and since arriving in the town. He stated that his aim was to protect and serve the people of Dover.



CI Stephen Barlow

The area under his control covers 123 square miles and has 20 miles of coastline. It contains 48,800 households and a population of 111,800 people.

With 20 miles of coastline smuggling always has been, and still is, a problem, but the style is ever changing. In previous years it was small boats and gangs landing illicit goods. Then there was a period when cigarettes and alcohol were the main items. Now the major problem is people smuggling.

Today's policing is now linked more closely with social deprivation in most of the district. Stephen stressed that it was a minority, in small areas, that caused most of the trouble.

For the purpose of statistics the wards are broken down into 67 smaller areas. Locally 11 of these are among the bottom 20% of the most deprived areas in the country.

The district receives an average of 90 calls per day. Of these 12 or 13 are likely to be

emergency calls (a crime in progress or someone in danger of injury). The majority of the reported incidents every year are at the lower level. For example the reporting of missing persons is almost a daily occurrence, about half of these are young people in care. Many are people with suicidal tendencies or who suffer from dementia (they are very vulnerable if they go missing). The police work closely with the small Dover District Community Team, Social Services and other social welfare groups.

The financial challenges facing the police are becoming more acute with their much tighter budget. Manpower accounts for 80% of the running costs of the Kent force. Stephen stated that the cost of the money raised via the council rates for the police service averaged £2-77 per week per household.

Owing to these financial restraints it had been planned to merge some of the higher level jobs of the Dover and Shepway forces. Since the talk this has now been put on hold with the announcement of some extra government funding.

After a question and answer session the chairman thanked Chief Inspector Barlow for giving the members an insight into the way the local force operates.