

NOVEMBER MEETING

First Speaker

Port of Dover Update

A talk by Doug Bannister CEO DHB

Reported by Terry Sutton

What keeps Doug Bannister, chief executive of Dover Harbour Board, awake at night? Not worrying about Brexit but what's going to happen to cross-channel traffic in the 50 years ahead.

Mr Bannister listed the possible changes that could revolutionise the operation of ferries between Dover and France where, today, a dozen ferries were operating.

The possible changes, he suggested, included climate change, cutting back on petrol and diesel fuelled vehicles (including lorries), crewless ships, tourists not taking cars on the ferries but chartering a vehicle once on the Continent, and other changes not yet evident.

Mr Bannister revealed that future major work on the reconstruction of Dover's western docks is set to be delayed until the directors of Dover Harbour Board see the impact of Brexit on the Port of Dover.

He reported stages one and two of the multi-million task of providing a cargo hub at the western docks were virtually completed and stage 3A, on the Marina Curve, was expected to be finished in six to nine months' time.

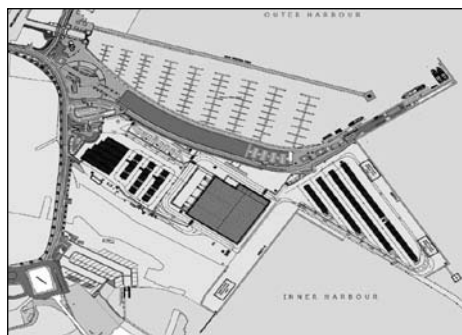
But the completion of the overall project calls for the reclamation of the Granville Dock, the Wick Channel and tidal harbour by controversially using infill from the Goodwin Sands. This is the final stage 3B of the reconstruction work.

He told a questioner at the meeting that the port "will wait for the post-Brexit environment before going ahead" with the final stage.

In his talk Mr Bannister told another questioner he was looking at the possibility of the revival of the rail link to the western docks, to carry container cargo, but pointed out there was a problem over the height of the rail tunnels.

He poured scorn on the government's Brock scheme for delayed trucks that would entail lorries "taking the scenic tour" to Manston in order to get to Dover.

He admitted the changing date of Brexit had resulted in a "drop in traffic" on the ferries at Dover and explained why it would be impossible to immediately switch ferries from Dover to other ports if there was Brexit congestion here.



Marina Curve Stage 3