

Refurbishment Committee

Jenny Olpin

Our team continue to meet virtually as we drift into 2021, trying to keep pace with what is happening in our town. Not being 'out and about' looking at issues of litter, or maybe an anti-social problem, has meant that we are challenged to seek alternative methods of meeting our remit. For those who have managed to venture into town it has been very distressing to see the town so desolate and quiet. However, it has certainly been interesting to see so many of our restaurants, cafes and 'pop ups' re-inventing themselves and providing take-away food and drinks. We sincerely hope that they survive the Lockdown.

Our focus, as I mentioned previously, has been monitoring the role of the foodbanks and homeless provision, especially as people are losing employment, or are once again furloughed and the winter has taken hold. We have been pleased to see that The Pantry in the Charlton Centre has been opened for people to purchase good food at low prices. The Sunrise Café is due to open in April in the Outreach Centre (once the Seafarers Mission) for those who are on the streets and need food and sustenance. It is pleasing to see how our community is working hard for the well-being of our most vulnerable, although I am sure there is much more we may need to do as the pandemic continues.

We are all tasked with 'staying local' and our exercise, wrapped in coats, topped with woolly hats, and unfortunately, in wellington boots to help us wade through the mud, is either in our lovely local Rights of Way and bye-ways or on the really pleasant sea front or the fabulous abbey. If there are any problems apparent with the Rights of Way then do contact Kent County

Council online to report it, as they are very responsive once aware of an issue. The Refurbishment team has now been joined, in its virtual world, by Cllr Pam Brivio whom we welcome back and who will be a great asset. Her Dover *Walkers Are Welcome* 'hat' is of particular value at this time as we look to develop and amalgamate some of our local walking routes.

We are aware that despite less footfall there are still litter deposits throughout the town, although it is true to say that without the schools being open there is a visible reduction in certain areas. Refurbishment are aware of these 'hot spots' and that they need to be more pro-active in preventing these litter deposits. Any ideas are welcome!

In January we were able to virtually meet with our new Kent Police, Chief Inspector for Dover, Dan Carter. He is particularly enthusiastic about community policing and has inherited strong links with the Dover District Council Safety Unit and is keen on developing policing teams. There have been low level alcohol issues, due to the public houses being closed, but there has been an increase in domestic and child protection issues. Kent Police continue to be successful but vigilant with respect to county lines and drug issues.

Once again, I will urge you, dear members, to consider joining our Refurbishment Team. Our remit is wide but committed to the fabric and well-being of our developing, changing and diverse town of Dover. Do contact me should you want to know more and/or wish to join our current 'virtual' world.