

Environment Committee

Janet Dagys

The Environment Committee (formerly known as the Refurbishment Committee) continues to meet at the Dover smART premises next to the Yacht Club on the second Monday of each month, except for a break in August. We continue to focus on the appearance of the town, cleanliness, litter, rights of way and tourism, taking action when and where we can be effective and can make a positive difference. The Dover Society includes many rural areas around the town and we would welcome new members from these areas to have their voices heard on these topics.

Ongoing areas of interest have been the Market Square development, the Underpass & Cannon Street, the campaign to save the Discovery Centre Theatre, signage in the town centre, conservation & the state of uninhabited buildings and the Dover Priory Station Green Corridor.

The Priory Station Green Corridor has been led by member Deborah Gasking and to date, vegetation has been cut back by the steps and the listed WW2 building (by Dover District Council), a wildflower



Dover Priory Garden

garden has been established at the station close to the bicycle racks (a partnership of Dover District Council, Dover Wombles and the students of Dover Technical College) and wooden planters for station platforms have been built by the students of Dover Technical College.

We continue to liaise with our colleague and Dover Town Council 'Walkers are Welcome' promoter Pam Brivio, on walks in the town, Chris Townend (Growth & Development, Dover District Council), Diederik Smet (Destination Dover Manager) local Kent Police and other local town, district and KCC councillors.

Member and former Chair of the Environment committee, Jenny Olpin, met with Chief Inspector Dan Carter and Inspector Paul Barrell (Community Safety) of Kent Police on April 21st, 2022.

In this meeting, Kent Police said that current crime indicates that 35% of victims relate to domestic issues. Dover continues to have the highest number of solved crimes but there is an increase in retail crime which, with the cost-of-living crisis, is likely to increase. Burglary is fairly unusual but there are a few and they are usually drug related.

The Dover Police Station Officers continue to focus on Pencester Gardens but also Whitfield as there are currently issues arising in schools which have resulted in the re-introduction of a dedicated Education Officer. This engagement can result in the application of section.34 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act to disperse children. On a positive note, the Police Cadets are still very active visiting the District Primary Schools.

The issue of HGVs was discussed at length following the chaotic situation that arose over the Easter period and again over the May/June half-term week. The question was asked as to why the lorries are able to access the town. There is an application for the re-institution of powers that enable Kent Highways/Highways England to invoke extraordinary powers to control the access roads. It was pointed out that these are desperately needed by the town of Dover.

On general policing pressures the Chief

Inspector confirmed that they were not engaged with any migrant issues but that there has recently been increased concerns about fatalities on the White Cliffs. There is an initiative to engage a similar system to the Pastors who patrol Beachy Head in East Sussex.

The Society was asked if members would support a Kent Police initiative, 'Community Voice'. Information for any members wishing to join this will be emailed in due course.

Dover's Market Square Improvement Works

Charles Lynch

Dover was awarded a grant via the Coastal Communities Fund to help regeneration in late 2020. In January 2021 DDC's web site presented the new vision for the Market Square. We were told there would be no Planning process because the scheme was going to be 'delivered' under Permitted Development. It was explained that the Town Team had come up with the design and applied to the government for the grant. DDC adopted the design and employed KCC Highways (in January 2021) to implement the scheme because it lacked the resources. It was considered to be 'Permitted Development' because KCC has powers to do what it wants in a highway.

This is Dover's only civic square and it was felt that most of what was proposed should have come under Planning. 'Misting' features on a footpath are hardly essential works in a highway. Apart from the lack of

consultation, we (the Dover Society) had many concerns about the details of proposals but all we could do was to send an email. Months later, there was a reply but we were told it was too late for the council to follow our suggestions.

The essence of the concerns related to the 'desired line' route which leads people diagonally through the square. The triangles of left-over space on either side were small and awkwardly shaped,



Market Square Revamp