

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*

essentially destroying the space as one civic square. Steel hoops, concrete benches, cycle racks, bollards and sign boards create barriers and clutter which block easy passage around the square. We were concerned that it will create a chaotic visual mess that will detract from the splendid view of the castle.

The 'platform', (which was not on the drawings seen last January) is also a barrier to free passage across the square. Claimed to create a more 'flexible' space, in reality it is the opposite. This 'platform' also has two long edges with oversized, dangerous steps.

The 'misting features' consist of four large steel hoops which straddle the route through the square. The hoops will drift 'mist', (droplets of water) on to the heads of everyone passing through. The risk of

Legionnaires' disease concerned us, so we contacted the HSE for its advice. The HSE felt unable to comment as it had not yet been built. They had however, been told that the mist would operate 24/7 to avoid the risk of stagnant water.

Despite the fact that Dover's proposed Local Plan Strategic Policy 1 Planning for Climate Change states that "maximizing water efficiency" is a priority, a new water main has been installed to meet the 'misting' demand. DDC had previously told us that the system will pump through 420 litres of fresh water every hour. Running 24/7, we think that equates to around a million litres of fresh water being poured straight down the drain every three months!

This is an ongoing project and we can only wait to see how it turns out.

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## National Open Garden Scheme

**Deborah Gasking**

At last . . . all done and dusted. And back to enjoying my garden. Hadn't reckoned on the sustained effort over months of graft and, at times, actually hating it. But, relief, I'm again immersed in the pleasure of it all.

A quick summary of attendees:

Over 160 visitors coming from all over, not solely to visit Dover's four gardens, but some did make that trip like the two from Medway and my friend from Derby (to my surprise).

The others, starting with the furthest travelled :

Australia, Sweden, Belgium, Southampton, Sittingbourne, Faversham, Margate, Broadstairs, Elham, Womenswold, Hythe,

Folkestone, Deal, Lydden, and, of course, Dover

I kept a comments book – all complimentary even though I wasn't leaning over them. And not one person wrote negatively about the steep garden. And everyone, bar one lady with very dodgy knees, made it to the top to enjoy the views.

Our gardens made over £1400, all going towards healthcare charities. Further still, I think it flagged up Dover – many of out-of-town visitors couldn't believe how beautiful our area is.

Would I do it again? Yes, but not a whole weekend, one afternoon at a time will be plenty.