

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.

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.