

A New Year Message from the Chairman

Dear Members

Happy New Year! As members I would like to share with you the work and current overall position of The Dover Society.

As we move into 2026, we continue with the ethos and commitment to make every effort to promote a high standard of planning and architecture. We do this by responding to planning applications and in regular meetings with Dover District and Dover Town Councils. During the coming months, our Planning Team will be subject to change due to the well-deserved retirement of our planning lead. With this in mind I urge any member/members who have a passion in addressing and reviewing planning applications and issues, on behalf of The Society and its objectives, to contact me.

The Society has a strong voice and as we move into local government reorganisation our partnership role in local planning is even more crucial, despite the vagaries of planning laws, policy and guidance. (Please see November 2025 Newsletter for a 'flavour' of our engagement with planning).

A critical function, as with any officership in an organisation such as ours, is the Treasurer role. In April we will need to have in place a new treasurer as our current member, Jane Jones, 'steps back'. Our accounts are not complicated, and we are fortunate to have guidance and advice from accountancy experts. If, as a member, you would like to consider this role then please do not hesitate to contact me. I do know that there are people out there that love figures..... are you one of them?

Since Covid, The Society has struggled to organise its social events. However, the winter meetings, with an eclectic range of speakers, is very well supported by members and non-members. Attendees also enjoy the opportunity to catch up with fellow members, meet and speak to those on the various teams and to enjoy a glass, should they choose. In April, for the AGM, we are looking to trial the meeting at the Silver Screen across in the Market Square, so watch this space. As members please do not hesitate to let us know of any speakers that would be of interest to The Society and, if possible, their contact details.

Unfortunately, Mr & Mrs Stone, are retired and unable to organise the popular trips they once did. We are aware that some members, friends and family, are missing these offers. Might there be amongst you a member/s who would enjoy putting together one or two trips/outings a year? There are, I am sure, latent travel agency skills lurking out there amongst the membership!

The Heritage Open Days (HODs) have proved an enormous success thanks to the hard work and commitment of our executive member Paul Wells. We are reviewing these with our DDC and Maison Dieu partners in preparation for the 2026 HODs in September. We will be requesting members' assistance 'on the ground' this year albeit in a venue, supporting a walk or one of the lectures in the Silver Screen. We are likely to only be able to repeat the success of 2025 if we have the support of the membership so if you would like to be involved during that week then please contact me and 'sign up'.

Apart from the officers, The Dover Society Executive, Environment and Planning Teams are kept busy with other roles that include plaques (some of which we are planning to refresh this year), environmental engagement with planting and aesthetic issues, membership and promotion, newsletter, social events and civic engagement. If any of these roles interest you then please do not hesitate to 'step forward', I would very much welcome your contribution.

As you are reading this you are in no doubt that The Dover Society teams are in transition. There will always be changes I know but we need and welcome new thinking and energy as it keeps The Society relevant, up to date and refreshed, whilst continuing with the 2026 version of its ethos and objectives that are enshrined

in its constitution. You, the membership, are The Society and it is crucial to its survival that it reflects today's Dover Society and embraces the ever-changing demands of a civic voice in the 21st century. This is a major challenge for us, and I need your voice, energy and skills.

If you want to know more about any of the roles in The Society, email Carol or me or come along to our monthly meeting in St Mary's Hall at 7.30. Once again, my very best wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2026.

Jenny Olpin - Chairman

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