

8 quality and waste. The twin tracks of demand management and resource development had to be balanced and because developing new resources was very difficult, the priority had to be demand management because there was not any more water. This meant metering and tariffs, 10,000 meters had been installed since April 2001. In 2000, OFWAT had reduced prices by 15% which may have given a wrong signal. Restrictions, though disliked by suppliers, were available. The Bewl reservoir was an environmental improvement but took 25 years to achieve. Leakage control was the highest in the world and public tolerance of hose-pipe bans was very low. People bathed rather than showered or showered for hours, bought multi-bathroomed houses and made the 'instant' water-hungry gardens popularised on TV. The government lacked a policy on water. Ashford's housing projections were frightening.

Richard Alderton, Strategic Planner for Ashford Borough Council, said that although the government was consulting very widely with a host of authorities and interests, there was no planned figure for Ashford's 'sustainable' growth or its location, but with Milton Keynes, Stansted and Thameside, it was one of the hot spots

to accommodate the envisaged growth of the South East Region. Water, as well as land, was crucial but the government spoke with forked tongue. Reduction of the cost of water was a recent example. Ashford Borough Council would like to be in control and had commissioned many environmental, economic and social studies to be completed by Xmas 2001. Then the Ashford population must be asked what they would like, bearing in mind the changes of the last twenty years. There would inevitably be a great increase of waste water. Designated AsONB, and SSSIs, etc, were untouchable. The flood plain defences had worked extraordinarily well against the recent storms, and the resultant lakeside walks offered an alternative footpath to pedestrians. However, weather appeared to be getting worse. We must therefore use less water and use run-offs more sensibly.

Other speakers for Mid Kent Water and the Kent Wildlife Trust concurred. The agreed scenario was of increasing consumption, increasingly uncertain supplies and the necessity for strict control of consumption. There was no national policy and to have permitted the recent reduction of the cost of water was criminally irresponsible.

The October Meeting

reported by Tessa George

At the first indoor meeting of the Autumn, on October 15th, we had three speakers. For the first part of the evening, James Summerfield and the Town Mayor, Diane Smallwood, collaborated with talks on the subject of 'Town and Gown'. After the interval, the tenth Earl of Guilford gave a talk about his family and his estate, Waldershare Park.

'TOWN & GOWN' THE ROLE OF DOVER TOWN COUNCIL BY JAMES SUMMERFIELD

As Deputy Town Clerk, James Summerfield supports and deputises for the Town Clerk, Robert Bailey, who, as the

Proper Officer (a legal term) of the Council, is under a statutory duty to ensure that all the Town Council's functions are properly performed in accordance with the relevant law. He is required, for example, to give appropriate notice of Town Council meetings and of

vacancies on the Town Council and so forth. As a member of the Town Council's administration his role is non-political. He is expected to assist the Town Clerk and councillors in advising the council on, and helping in the formation of, the Town Council's overall policies and to provide all the information necessary to enable the Town Council to make effective decisions.

Prior to the formation of the Town Council, governing bodies were Dover Borough Council in 1974 and the Charter Trustees. Many people held, and still hold, the view that the lack of truly local government in the town for more than 20 years has had a considerable effect on the development of Dover and possibly also on the attitudes of some people in Dover towards their town. The former Charter Trustees and many local organisations, including the Dover Society, lobbied strongly for the reinstatement of local government in the town and the turning point in this campaign was the review of the structure of local government in Kent carried out by the Local Government Commission for England in 1993. As a result, the Town Council came into being in early 1996, when the town was granted parish status. The Commission recognised the strength of local feeling and recommended that Dover (along with Deal, Walmer and Great Mongeham) be granted parish status. The Dover Society played an important part in ensuring that the recommendation was for a single parish of Dover, rather than the town being split into several parishes.

So what exactly is the Dover Town Council? It is an entirely separate, autonomous unit of local government with two main roles; community representation and local administration. Dover Town Council has 16 elected members, two for each of the eight wards of Barton, Buckland, Castle, Maxton & Elms Vale, Priory, St. Radigund's, Tower Hamlets and Town & Pier. River and Whitfield have their own parishes.

Representing 28,000, with an electorate of more than 21,000, the Council meets approximately every six weeks. It has four committees, dealing with planning, town and environments, twinning & civic functions and finance and general purposes. The presence of members of the Dover Society has been both consistent and encouraging. 9

The Town Council is required to hold an annual town meeting which is a forum where all the electors of Dover can, once a year, make their views known directly to the town councillors and to propose initiatives. This year's meeting in April could not, unfortunately, go ahead as it needs the attendance of at least two electors of Dover and the required two did not turn up.

Three full-time staff support the council and the offices are located at 69 Castle Street. The Town Council has only one statutory duty placed on it and that is to provide allotments where there is a demand for them in its area.

There is a substantial body of legislation, primarily in the Local Government Act 1972, giving the council powers to carry out a wide range of functions. They are; to develop and improve knowledge of the arts, maintain footway lighting, provide litter bins and support anti-litter campaigns, provide and manage car and cycle parks, provide public entertainment, maintain public parks and appropriate facilities and has the right to be notified of relevant planning applications and to make comments which the planning authority must take into account. It can also make grants to voluntary organisations and encourage tourism. Expenditure can be granted if it will be for the benefit of some or all of the citizens of the town.

'What has the Town Council done to date?' asked our speaker. It has represented the views and interests of the town. Through its Planning Committee, it has examined and commented on every planning application affecting the town,

10 amounting to perhaps 25 applications per month, representing at least half of all applications considered by the planning authority, the Dover District Council. The Town Council is consulted on all applications for justices and public entertainment licences and for street furniture and trading consents affecting Dover. It has made appointments to the governing bodies of most primary schools in Dover. It has made representations to numerous organisations about matters affecting the town, to all the relevant agencies, including the Department of Transport, RailTrack and Kent County Council, about the effects of traffic on the town, to the East Kent Health Authority and the South East Kent Community Health Council about plans for reduced services at Buckland Hospital. It has also informed the Home Secretary about the effects on the town of the criminal activity known as 'bootlegging' and, of course, the problems of asylum seekers.

The Town Council has developed many partnerships with the other key organisations, in particular, with the Dover District Council, Dover Town Centre Management, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and finally, but certainly not least, the Dover Society.

Considerable support has been given to the Dover Regatta, which now attracts some 20,000 visitors each year to Dover's sea front, providing an enjoyable weekend of sport and spectacle for all the family. This event has become Dover's largest single event and local charities have benefited by more than £6,000.

An active and responsive Town Council requires a wide input from the community, both from individuals and from organisations. The Dover Society continues to play its part through making its views known to the council and through working with the Town Council for the benefit of Dover. The result of this co-operation has already produced a number of benefits.

THE MAYOR.

MRS DIANE SMALLWOOD

Mrs Smallwood commenced by saying that she had been the Deputy Town Mayor for the past year, working closely with the previous Mayor, Councillor Gordon Cowan, so not only had she served her apprenticeship but she was now half way through her term as Mayor of Dover, an office with a history of over 900 years.

During the five years she served as a Town Councillor she had seen the Town Council develop its role of community representation and local administration. In the early days, most of the effort went into establishing administration. This was followed by a period when the Town Council started to undertake larger scale projects such as the establishment of the annual Dover Regatta and, with the stimulus of the Millennium Year, providing Pengester Pavilion, Music 2000 and Picture Dover. Now the Town Council was poised to take another large step forward as a result of the recent land purchases that would provide significant amenity and recreational areas for the people of the town. These were the land at High Meadow and the sports ground at the Western Heights and working parties were being established to formulate plans for the best use of these facilities.

The Mayor especially wanted a ten-pin bowling centre in the town, which she hoped will be accommodated in the St. James' area. She would also like to see a casino in the town. With the new hotel on the sea front just opened and another in the pipeline, she felt that a casino would attract many visitors, especially from cruise liners.

She said that the Town Council would continue to support and pursue other projects including the Dover Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme, the regeneration of other parts of the London Road; the provision of major amenities for the community on land

between Tower Hamlets and St. Radigunds.

The Mayor was Chairman of the Twinning and Civic Functions Committee and the civic and ceremonial side of the Town Council's work would be particularly important to her during the coming year. With the agreement of the Royal Marines Association, the Town Council was arranging for the Grappling Iron from HMS Vindictive, which was involved in the Zeebrugge Raid in 1918, to be moved to a spot near the War Memorial next to the Town Hall.

The Mayor then enumerated other achievements of the Town Council in its relatively short existence. It had helped to establish a roller-blading park in Pencester Gardens, helped in the establishment of the Dover Youth Council, facilitated the establishment of community and residents' associations in the town, had combined with Dover Museum in producing Picture Dover and the Dover Patrol/Zeebrugge Raid Exhibition; promoted the development of water sports in Dover including the organisation of the Dover Regatta. It had also supported a tourism strategy for the town, an essential part of which was the publication and distribution of 50,000 copies of the official Dover Visitors Guide, produced and updated each year. The Council had commissioned Dover Music 2000, a major musical work for the town in which all sectors of the community were able to participate. They developed a programme of traditional summer Sunday afternoon band concerts in Pencester Gardens and supported the Pavilion's first open air play, the Dover Youth Theatre's 'A Midsummer Nights Dream'. Next year Dover would have the honour of the Speakership of the Cinque Ports.

The Mayor ended by reminding us that the council offices are accessible to all, as are our councillors. We were encouraged to voice our opinions and desires to them.

EARL OF GUILFORD, SPEAKING 11 **OF HIS FAMILY AND FAMILY** **SEAT AT WALDERSHARE PARK**

The Guilford family has been at Waldershare Park from the middle of the eighteenth century, when the estate came into the family by marriage. The seat of the Earl of Guilford was created in 1752, (the dropping of the d' was a clerical error which, once established, survived). The first earl, Lord North, was an eminent royal. He was the father of Lord North, the Prime Minister who had the unpleasant task of leading the British forces in the American War of Independence. Over time, some people said he was a very weak man and others said that he was one of the nicest people one could wish to meet.

The present Lord Guilford's grandfather served in the Second World War. His is a sad story. One day, before going back on active duty, he was in Sandwich with his wife and sister, walking on the beach, when he stepped onto a landmine that blew up, killing him and his sister. His wife survived and his young son, aged eight, became the ninth Earl of Guilford. Because of the vastness of the estate, the death duties were enormous, necessitating the sale of 2,000 acres of land at Sandwich Bay. The ninth earl then spent the war years at another family estate in Sussex. He returned to the estate at Waldershare in the early 50s and attempted to revive it. He decided he would not take an active part in the House of Lords but did take his seat and make a maiden speech. His support went to The Royal Society of St. George and the World School for the Deaf. In 1956 the earl married and he and his wife were active in the creation of the Dover Society.

The Waldershare estate was approximately 5,000 acres originally and generated an income of £5,000 a year. Over the years, it has reduced in size to what is now the hardcore of the estate, 1,200 acres, 600 acres being used for arable farming,

12 with an agricultural contracting firm doing the work. The parkland is all let out near the Gliding Club. There are fifteen properties on the estate, the largest of which was the Earl of Guilford's father's house. The tenth earl lives in what was the gardener's house (and which is apparently extremely attractive). As the size of the estate decreased, so did the number of staff -which is now down to four. Since the scheme for letting the properties on the estate was set up in 1987, there has been 100% occupancy, mostly by local people. The houses range in size from those with four bedrooms to a one-bedroom cottage. Old workshops have been turned into storage facilities for local firms.

Lord Guilford was educated locally. When his mother died in 1992, he was working for an insurance broker, which he felt stood him in very good stead for managing the estate. After his mother's death, his father found it hard to manage to work with renting organisations and so Lord Guilford returned from London and basically became the estate manager.

The tenth Earl of Guilford, leads a very different life than did his predecessors. He took his seat in the House of Lords in October 1999 but lost it when the House

was reorganised. Over the past ten years, he has vastly improved the estate, which even with improvements and lettings, only just breaks even. Other sources of income have had to be found. He is also an official driving instructor for Land Rover and Range Rovers and for a while taught Security Guards as drivers. In 1997 he became a photographer and, as his reputation has grown, has undertaken many assignments abroad.

One of the landmarks of the estate is the Belvedere Tower, built in the eighteenth century and designed by Lord Burlington of Chiswick House. It was built with three million bricks which were fired on site and which were subsequently painted white. It contains £6,000 worth of plumbing. Much of the lead from the roof was stolen in the 50s. There was a buy-back scheme in 1989 and Belvedere was to be restored and used as a conference centre. English Heritage was approached and was expected to contribute £750,000 but, unfortunately, the project folded and the tower remains derelict and unsafe, its future unsure.

"Waldershare Park is a popular venue for walkers who are always welcome.

"Please," said Lord Guilford, "come and walk at Waldershare."



Waldershare Park