

APRIL MEETING

Big Local

A talk by Carl Adams reported by Alan Lee

Carl opened with an overview on the structure and history of the Big Local and what it aims to achieve.

This is the first time that the National Lottery has awarded money for unspecified projects. Across England 150 areas have been identified with each to receive £1 million spread over the next 10 years. The projects will be decided by the local community which will be led by the residents in the area.

Carl answered questions as he proceeded with the talk. Key features were discussed and it emerged that Big Local must be resident led and of benefit to the community in the area. The money cannot be spent on statutory services that are the responsibility of Government, Kent Council, Dover District Council, Dover Town Council the Highways Agency or any other statutory body. Other streams of funding can still be accessed. With match funding, fund raising, sponsorship and extra grants the aim at the very least is to double the amount of money available. Hopefully it will be much more.

The idea is that this scheme will help bring various projects together to benefit the whole community and make a much improved environment for all in the area.

The Big Local's four stated outcomes

1. Communities will be better able to identify local needs and take action in response to them.
2. People will have increased skills and confidence so that they can continue to identify and respond to local needs in the future.
3. The community will make a difference to the needs it prioritises.
4. People will feel that this area is an even better place to live.

The programme should have a local feel and create actions that concentrate on local needs. The £1 million can be used for a diverse range of things such as projects, grants, social investment and specialist services. In short it can be almost anything as long as it is of benefit to the area.

A major point was the need to involve all local residents. Their input is seen as crucial. They must decide what they like and dislike about the area and what they would change. They should record what exists at present and how it can be built on. Most importantly they must decide their vision of the future of the area.

There are just under 7,000 people living within the area and it is envisaged they must agree on a committee of about 8 or 9 residents. They would help run the scheme but would be accountable to all who live in the area. There would then be a further 7 or 8 non residents,

business people and experienced people to complete the committee. At all times there must be at least a 51% majority of residents from the area. Over the life span of the Big Local individual committee members will change and adapt to the ongoing needs of the area.

Partnerships between residents and businesses will be formed. Some for just a single project, others for multiple projects some for a short time and others for a long period.

At all times it must be kept in mind that the aim is to improve and enrich the Big Local area and the people who live there.

Carl has initially been assigned to our area for 18 months. It will then be up to the residents to decide if

he has done a good job; if so, then reappoint him. If not, they can appoint anyone of the other Big Local representatives.



Map Big Local Area

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Sheila R. Cope Membership Secretary

John and Ann Owen have left Dover to live nearer their daughters. As committee member responsible for projects John organised many events which benefited the community, such as litter clearances, usually involving local youth groups, the cadets for example. Both John and Ann helped with "stuffing" Newsletters and with distributing them too. They deserve our grateful thanks.

It is disappointing that we have not reached our aim of attaining 500 members in this, the Society's 25th anniversary year. We run to stand still and each year recruit about the same number as we lose, having maintained an average of 450 for the last nine years.

We need as many members as possible to maintain our influence and to provide a pool of younger members to take over the reins in the future. Nevertheless over 95% have paid their subs and thanks to them, as always.

The good news is that we have recruited a considerable number of welcome new members since Christmas. They are:- Mrs V Le Vaillant, Mr K Simmons, Mr D & Mrs A Courtney, Mrs J Kennedy, Mr R Sales, Mr J & Mrs M Kemp, Mr P Sparshott, Mr K & Mrs S Verity, Mr T Friend, Mr C Meredith, Mrs J Turner, Mrs S & Mr K Farrell, Mrs M Nicholls, Mr C Burke, Ms J Edwards and Mr J Lockyer.