

OCTOBER MEETING - Second Speaker
Dover Big Local Tourism Project
A Talk by Martina White
Reported by Alan Lee

Martina commenced with the following statement; "For thousands of years there has been movement through Dover. Dover's existence and its importance are based upon the passage across the narrow Dover Strait to France and beyond. We are at the forefront of our island's connection with the outside world. Ours has been a frontier town, a spiritual home for pioneers and pilgrims the world over, for whom our heritage - our buildings, our landscape and our people - has opened up new avenues of opportunity for centuries. Many have left their stake in the ground - their journeys punctuated by cultural milestones of enduring power and international significance and our white cliffs remain central to the image and identity of the UK as a whole. And yet, like many frontier lands, we are still yet to be fully explored."

Martina then filled in the background for the project. One aim being to encourage more people to visit the town and maybe to stop over for one or two days. But now there is a movement in Dover – Dover Big Local [DBL] who had a profile and a vision. This has been transformed into a local plan. The Plan describes what DBL aim to do and how they propose to go about it. The work is divided into focus streams – they are Economy, Sport & Leisure, Art & Culture and Environment. These are bound together and presented through Communications. The Dover Coastal Community Team Economic Plan 2017-2021 includes that the local economy should not be approached piecemeal. DBL's work must form an important part of

a wider strategy, and one that addresses the particular issues facing coastal areas. This then leads on to the questions: Do we rely on inward investment? Should we go it alone?

Some relevant facts concerning Dover:

Shopping Population Catchment Areas

- Within 20 minute drive time, Primary (37,000) Secondary (37,000) Tertiary (183,000).

Location - 13million passengers travel through the Port of Dover. HS1 links Dover Priory station to St Pancras in just over 1 hour.

Development - £85m investment in the Port of Dover already and another £120m investment in the Western Docks. 15,000 new homes planned in the next 10 years.

Tourism - 200,000 cruise passengers a year. The UK's 2nd busiest cruise terminal. Dover receives 650,000 tourists a year. Tourism spend estimated at £36m.

Demographic - St James development is anticipated to increase the shopper population by 50%. Non-grocery shopper spend is currently £91m estimated to rise to £136m by 2020. Resident catchment size 257,000 with a spend of £1.2bn.

A worry about the St James development area is that Costa, Card Factory, Greggs, Carphone Warehouse, M & S are all current High Street traders and that food outlets are national brands meaning that profits

will leave the town. **Will this development be sufficient to increase tourism and visitor numbers?**

The objectives of the DBL Tourism project are to improve the town's economy, build on what is here and grow the sector. DBL started with sound research and included a framework to implement findings. Outside money must be attracted to be spent in town, so that it stays in the town and initiatives proven elsewhere must be transferred to Dover.

The Research had to be carried out and presented so it can be adopted by everyone. This was achieved by the use of workshops, one to ones and data collection. Account was taken of existing town politics. It was decided it had to lead by someone with the skills and experience to produce a rounded yet direct report and the knowledge of Dover and Kent. Sessions were attended by a large number of representatives from a wide field of interest:

A comprehensive report commissioned from Tourism Works has been produced that covers the work undertaken and provides recommendations for the future of Dover's tourism sector. This is available to interested parties from the DBL Hub at the Charlton Centre.

The outcome was that a partnership "Destination Dover" has been formed which includes investment, financial support and a commitment and a determination to make Dover a better place to visit.

Looking to the future shows that there is still a tremendous amount of work to do. Long term governance of Destination Dover, 1 to 4 year plans to be prepared and agreed. Ideas must be expanded and more

funds must be raised, it is estimated that £100,000 will be required annually. Funding has already been secured for the first 2 1/2 years. Some ideas have emerged already and include; Come to Dover - and Stop over a While, Walk the Chalk, Coastal Trail Series (14/1/17), Tour de Douvres - Dover's Dirty Thirty's Challenge, Get Over to Dover - Tour de Manche and Try All the Trails - Bluebird - Dour - Food & Drink.

Dover Big Local is a Lottery funded project aimed at providing a means to facilitate improvements in and for the community with the purpose of making Dover a better place in which to live, work and play as well as to visit.

The report commissioned from Tourism Works identified how this could be overcome and to defined a strategy for Destination Management in Dover. Destination Dover, the result of the output from that report, is an association of statutory bodies, companies and organisations with an interest in developing tourism and the economy in Dover.

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