

River Dour Partnership

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The Partnership held its recent meeting in January when the Committee members reported back to the Group. Our basic project is to draw together a plan for the whole river "Port to Source" with the aim to set out the work needed to make the best of the river. The start is to contact and seek the cooperation of groups and individuals with interests along the river and find out what they feel is important. Inevitably agreed projects will require funding, often quite substantial, which will require a great deal of work if bids are to be successful.

An example of a project is restoration of the ornamental railings (dating from around 1900) at the junction of Barton Path and Beaconsfield Avenue. The railings are the responsibility of KCC but with the current funding limitations KCC will only carry out the basic work required to provide safety – but the railings and brickwork require restoration if we are to retain and provide an attractive feature. It was hoped that Dover Town Council would take the lead including provision of the major part of the cost. However councillors decided otherwise leaving the Partnership to seek funding elsewhere.

A success. We are to be funded for our River Tales project thanks to Heritage Lottery Fund. Backing is almost £10,000 with the aim that in partnership with Dover Tales Group we will put on theatrical performances to publicise the river with associated workshops and videos, training for volunteers and the necessary equipment. Sounds very exciting but above all will, we hope, make many more people aware of just how special our river is.

We are also working on the Dour River Trail - a walk we want to see as part of "Walkers are Welcome" programme. It will be something for our website currently being prepared.

We have received financial grants to investigate the potential of river improvements at Lorne Road Mill Pond, thanks to Dover Big Local and Environment Agency. South East Rivers Trust (SERT) is also working on environmental improvements on the lower Dour with the help of a grant from Up on the Downs. The Environmental Agency has given us a couple of fish passes for use at Lorne Road Mill Pond and at the weir besides Halfords – another SERT task.

We are pushing to try and get catchment sensitive farming (making sure farming run offs do not pollute the river) so that it applies to Dour. Despite getting the offer of grants we have had to give up on "No fishing signs" due to a lack of support from riparian owners.

Again White Cliffs Countryside Partnership very successfully organises the clean-up volunteers – a vital task to minimise the litter in and besides the river. They are also the guardian for the time being of the fish passes.

I would like to thank in particular committee members Martina White, Deborah Gasking, Anita Luckett, Ray Newsam and Secretary Sue Bradford for all of their work. We must also be grateful for the support and inputs of Chris Gardner of SERT and Barrie Neaves of the Environmental Agency.