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accepted this challenge and formed a small team which started work in the summer of 2018. We decided to cut our teeth in a relatively small and uncomplicated area: the Dour Street Conservation Area comprising Dour Street, Park Place and Park Street.

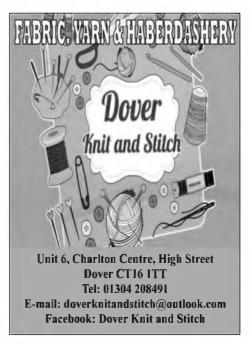
By the time you read this I expect our draft report to have been submitted and, hopefully, considered by the Conservation Officer and arrangements made for the public to be consulted before the report is submitted to the DDC Cabinet for approval.

The draft covers the historic development of the area, how the community was involved (announcement in the press and a letter to every resident inviting comments), detailed surveys (on foot) of the streets concerned, vulnerabilities and negative features and the significance of the area with its attractive, decorated, original 19th century terraces of houses, largely unchanged except for WWII bomb damaged houses replaced by two modern blocks of flats (excluded from the conservation area).

Our draft recommendations are to include within the conservation area the small open green space with its magnificent tree at the junction of Crafford Street and Dour Street as well as the police station in Park Place (excluded at present) as a fine example of a 1930s public building. We also consider that Park Place would be enhanced by replacing the present protective walls over the River Dour with railings. Finally, we recommend that an Article 4(2) direction be implemented for the whole of this conservation area to prevent any further degrading and, if possible as opportunity offers, to reinstate original shop front designs. All local authorities were given the power to

impose an Article 4(2) Direction by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. An Article 4(2) Direction, if adopted by DDC, would reinforce the Council's ability to protect the special character of the town. It would give DDC control over a variety of alterations to unlisted residences. Planning permission would be required for changes to windows, doors, roof materials, and chimney stacks, and the construction of external porches, the provision and removal of walls and fences and the provision of hard standings. These controls do not relate to the whole building, but only to those elevations which front a highway, waterway, or public open space, and which, therefore, affect the public face of the building.

Our work on the Dour Street area is finished. Only another six conservation areas left to do!



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