

APRIL AGM MEETING

The Dover Society AGM 2021

Reported by Terry Sutton

Our latest annual general meeting (AGM) was, of course, held under zoom conditions. Even so there were a good few members who "zoomed in". Chairman Derek Leach, who was re-elected, chaired the meeting. A new vice-chair was elected. Fulfilling this important role is Mrs Jenny Olpin of Temple Ewell who is a lecturer on social work at Christ Church University, Canterbury. She is also the chairman of governors of Temple Ewell primary school.

Jenny succeeds Mrs Beverley Hall as vice chair. Beverley retired from the post for health reasons. Thanks were expressed to Beverley for her service and her local government experience.

Martyn Webster, a long serving active member of the Society, was elected to the Society's executive. A third generation Dovorian and an old boy of Dover Grammar School, he has recently returned to his hometown (to live at Whitfield) after years away.

During the meeting, which lasted nearly two hours, the chairman gave an update on various

issues including the expected opening of the Marina Curve at the port.

One interesting issue related to the proposed statue of Dame Vera Lynn and the idea it should be placed on the White Cliffs of Dover. It was said at the meeting that The National Trust, owners of much of the clifftops, was not keen to have the statue on its land. Doubts too have been expressed about having it in the scoop of clifftop land, above Snargate Street, where the Commonwealth war monument could be situated. One member suggested a good place would be at Capel on the site of the Battle of Britain monument.

Dover District Council in conjunction with The National Trust have since renamed a Meadow 'Dame Vera Lynn Down' to mark anniversary of her death. DDC has also renamed a footpath leading to the clifftops 'Dame Vera Lynn Way'.

Editor

There were questions asked about planning decisions made by Dover District Council. There were criticisms, with one member describing some decisions as "perverse."

AGM 2021 Chairman's Report Update

Derek Leach

No doubt you have read every word in my written report which had to be written early in February to meet newsletter printing deadlines! Since then, much has happened.

But first may we have a moment's silence to

remember all those members we have lost through death in the last 2 years, named in the Membership news sections of March 2020 and 2021 newsletters. (SILENCE)

Now for my update. Can I have any

questions at the end please?

Hot off the press, the controversial planning applications by a developer for buildings on the Marina Curve at the Western Docks were not approved by the DDC Planning Committee on 22 April despite being recommended by officers. The applications were deferred due to design concerns and lack of community engagement. This is great news. Also good to hear is that the new Marina Curve pedestrian pier and the impressive Clocktower Square development, which includes reuse of items from the Prince of Wales Pier, should open at the end of May.

The Executive is very concerned about the future of the Co-Innovation Centre in the former Co-op, Stembrook premises as DDC is not renewing its 2 year lease which ends in August 2021. We have urged DDC to support this valuable community enterprise by funding the costs of moving to different empty premises.

Following the abandoned bus/cycle lane project that appeared in the town last year, we were dismayed when the so called 'parklets' appeared around the town, provided without local consultation by KCC. In our view the quality, design and materials were not appropriate for conservation areas or anywhere else for that matter. The good news is that the Castle Street parklet will be removed and the remainder will be reviewed in 12 months.

A memorial to Vera Lynn has been proposed to stand on the White Cliffs, but the NT opposes the idea; an alternative site is the Grand Shaft Barracks site on the Western Heights, as part of the proposed Commonwealth War Memorial; however, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is opposed to the war memorial and its future is in doubt.

DDC has succeeded in attracting yet another major grant. Following the recently completed Kearsney Parks Project, the Town Hall refurbishment now underway, the Market Square redevelopment about to start - comes a £3.7million grant from the government's High Street Fund towards a £4.7million project to redevelop part of Bench Street (including the old Crypt site) and for 'reimagining' the underpass - whatever that means; we are trying to find out!

That concludes my report. Any questions on the written or spoken reports?

Elections

Executive Committee - I must point out the retirement of Beverley Hall who has made such a valuable contribution to the Society in recent years. It means that we are without an indoor Social Secretary which is vital if we are to resume normal meetings, hopefully this autumn. Can you help - please contact me for more information.

Also, Patrick Sherratt is standing down as Planning Committee Chairman after some 10 years of incredible work for the Society despite ill health for the last few years; fortunately, his expertise will not be lost as he is prepared to continue on the Executive. Graham Margery, his able Deputy, is prepared to take over.

Please note that Jenny Olpin is also Refurbishment Committee Chair in addition to new Vice Chair.

I shall hand over to Jenny to handle the election of the Society Chair and then, unless there are any objections, I shall propose the existing members of the Executive be re-elected 'en bloc' followed separately by the election of a new member, Martyn Webster.