

# Refurbishment Committee

Jenny Olpin

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The Refurbishment team is pleased to be meeting in person once again. An ongoing interest has been the future of the Co-Innovation Centre and we are very pleased that it is re-opening next to Argos. Our team members have also raised their concerns as to an application for a 'late' licence for the Marina Hotel which could result in late night events that could continue into the early hours. This would cause a significant disturbance for the many residents in close proximity to the Hotel and it is hoped that overnight events are limited.

Staying with our lovely sea front, the team is following up on the 'health' of the trees planted on the Marina Curve. They are clearly struggling and at our regular meetings with the Port of Dover our representative will seek confirmation that the well-being of the trees is being monitored. We have questioned with the Port of Dover the state of the plastic roofing over the eastern end of the De Bradelei building. I am pleased to observe that the plastic cover has now been renewed, although it is unfortunate that this is not being renovated properly.

Further up the Town we have enjoyed observing the Market Square dig and the exposure of the Guildhall Foundations. Sadly, there was not the opportunity to investigate too deeply as I am sure there would have been some interesting Roman archaeology.

Deborah Gasking, of our Refurbishment Team, has been actively proposing, with Dover District Council, the installation of a 'green corridor' from the Dover Priory Station down towards the Town. The vegetation by the Station is now very

overgrown and the air raid shelter, which is a listed building, is barely visible. Deborah is also busy lobbying Dover District Council as to their schedules for the emptying of Dog Poo Bins. Members of the team have been upset by the overflowing bins especially those in close access to Schools. She has been successful with this, and we have established the sequencing of their emptying schedules. Deborah will inform Members in due course, and we will be monitoring where we can.

Ever active Deborah also organises a litter picking group called 'The Wombles'! The ever growing group has, since their inception, picked over one hundred bags of litter from the Shakespeare Beach. They welcome anyone who may wish to join them. In our remit to monitor and report litter issues, our refurbishment member Alan Senicle has reported the increase in litter on the North Downs Way between Old Charlton Road and Connaught Road and separates the cemeteries of St James and St Marys.

We are continuing to liaise with our refurbishment colleague, and Dover Town Council 'Walkers are Welcome' promoter, Pam Brivio, in developing our ideas for a Circular Walk that includes the Sea Front, up to the Castle and Langdon Cliffs. Following lobbying of Kent County Council, Deborah Gasking has also secured the protection of the Astor Avenue grass verges resulting in the installation of bollards. We also monitor and discuss litter discarded on the verges especially on the A2 and A20 routes into Dover.

Should you be inspired and interested in our role as The Dover Society Refurbishment Team then please do not hesitate to consider joining us. We meet

monthly, currently on a Monday, and usually break for the summer holidays. My contact details and those of Refurbishment Secretary, Jeremy Cope, are in the front of this Newsletter. The Dover Society includes many rural areas around the town, and it would be good to have your voice regarding the area that you live to promote the –

- High standards of planning and architecture
- Interest in the geography, history, and natural history

- Protection, development, and improvement of features of historic or public interest
- Commitment to the belief that good environment is a good investment therein.

I would especially like to thank our Dover Society member Carol Duffield for her help and support at the Urban Fete where we were seeking to recruit new members. Many thanks Carol.

# River Dour Partnership

— Deborah Gasking —

Japanese knotweed, a sheep in wolf's clothing, beautiful but deadly, has been described as having the biodiversity value of concrete! Brought to Britain from Japan as an ornamental garden plant in the mid-nineteenth century, it has become widespread in a range of habitats, particularly roadsides, riverbanks, and derelict land.

Its creeping roots spread rapidly, and stem growth is renewed each year from the stout, deeply penetrating rhizomes (creeping underground stems). Although it rarely sets seed in this country, Japanese knotweed can sprout from very small sections of rhizomes.

In spring, reddish-purple fleshy shoots emerge from crimson-pink buds at ground level and grow rapidly, producing dense tall bamboo-like canes up to 2.1m (7ft) tall.

Famed for pushing through tarmac, concrete and drains, its effect on native species is often devastating as it covers large tracts of land to the exclusion of the

native flora and associated fauna. Very few, if any, insects, or fungi can be found on the plant.

Its dense summer foliage causes heavy shading of small streams, reducing aquatic plant communities. Then, in winter, riverbanks become exposed when the knotweed dies back, increasing erosion and silting fish spawning gravels.

Control of, and damage caused by, Japanese knotweed costs Great Britain an estimated £165m every year. Under the provisions made within Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, it is an offence to cause Japanese knotweed to grow in the wild. Contaminated soil should be treated as controlled waste under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, requiring disposal at licensed landfill sites. Fines up to £5,000 or a maximum prison sentence of 2 years can be passed if contaminated soil or plant material is transferred to spread into the wild.

The plant usually takes at least three to