

# CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

## To be Presented at The Dover Society Annual General Meeting 2024

**Jenny Olpin - Chairman**

The Dover Society is continuing to engage with a range of issues and agencies to meet our objectives. Do please revisit these objectives which are listed inside the front cover in our Newsletter. Our Vice Chair Graham Margery, President Derek Leach and I have frequent meetings with Dover District Council (DDC) officers which enable us to keep informed as to local developments and to discuss current initiatives. In addition to this engagement, we have been busy promoting the Society at the Dover Regatta and Urban Fete and have this year purchased a gazebo to protect us in both the rain and sunshine!

The Society has over many years been working to conserve and protect the environment at Cowgate cemetery. However, this is now proving a challenge as our volunteers are depleting in number. We are pleased that support is now being given by DDC with the grass-cutting maintenance. If you have an interest in helping our much-reduced team at Cowgate cemetery, then please do contact us. Fresh air and good company are assured.

We have been pleased to install two blue plaques during this year. In Temple Ewell we erected a plaque to commemorate the life of Laura Bomford, an artist (Paris Salon), the first female Kent County Councillor, Justice of the Peace, and a leader of the Dover Suffragette movement. Secondly, we installed a plaque on the St Paul's Church Priest's House, commemorating The Lord Lewin, Admiral of the Fleet, who was born in Dover in 1920. Our Executive Committee will be discussing our next allocation of a blue plaque over the coming year, ready for installation in 2025.

The Environment Committee now has a hybrid approach to meetings, including a WhatsApp group. They are busy mapping 'trees of interest' and also particularly focussing on the extremely neglected lampposts at the eastern end of the sea front. I am extremely grateful to our member Micheal Jukes for his continuing hard work in gaining some resolution with these much-neglected lights. This team have, amongst many other things, persisted in challenging the provision and quality of toilets in our town. We have been pleased with the upgrading of those at Stembrook but continue to seek an increase in availability.

The Society Planning Committee meet monthly at The Beacon and have been engaged with the plans for the Fastrack bus route. Earlier in the year they were involved with the issue of air raid shelters, which highlighted the lack of recording of such locations. The council's Local Plan remains a current focus for the team, and they continue to represent us with planning for the Beacon Development at Bench Street. Our planning team have developed a strong relationship with the Dover District Council planning department and have regular meetings and email contact that results in constructive dialogue that is welcomed by all participants. The Dover Society also has a strong relationship with the Dover Town Council Planning Group.

To commemorate the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II the Society are commissioning a Queen Elizabeth Maple tree in Pencester Gardens. This is a work in progress, and we are hoping for its completion this year.

The Society also continues to take every opportunity possible to raise the problems with lorries being held at Aycliffe during Port delays. It is not only the noise and inconvenience that is very apparent, but the potential health issues.

We have been pleased to support our member Peter Sherrard in seeking support for obtaining possible city status for Dover. The opportunity to apply for this requires a national occasion and currently this is not available. However, Peter's hard work is in place for when that opportunity arises and is now held with The Society.

Our regular meetings continue with Kent Police, who are now well embedded back in the Ladywell station. Our discussion covers a range of issues, so just a reminder that if there is anything you wish us to raise with the Chief Inspector then do let us know but please remember that parking is the responsibility of Dover District Council, not the police.

Socially, we had a very successful summer trip to Windsor and the Thames. Our quiz night, in February, and our monthly winter open meetings attract both new and old members, as well as non-members. We offer a range of interesting speakers with topics that have

included The Duke of York's Royal Military School, The Royal National Lifeboat Institution and Dover's Sky at Night. Over 80 members enjoyed our Christmas lunch, once again held at the Marina Hotel.

The future of The Dover Society is assured as we recruit not only new members but also new members for our Planning and Environment Committees. We are committed to promoting and protecting the wellbeing, development, heritage, safety and natural environment of Dover in partnership with our local authorities and charities.

We have been saddened by the loss of Terry Sutton. We will very much miss his contribution to our executive meetings where he would regularly share his experience and knowledge, correcting us when necessary and allowing no room for 'small talk'!

Finally, my sincere thanks to my fellow officers and to all those who help with the social events, trips, campaigning, projects, recruitment, Newsletter and website, and represent us at the many meetings throughout the town. The Dover Society has a respected 'voice' in Dover so do come and join us as we collectively work towards making our home a 'very nice place to live'!

## **AGM**

### **A reminder to all members**

The Annual General Meeting this year will be held in St Mary's Parish Centre, Dover at 7.30pm on Monday 15th April 2024.

All resolutions for discussion and nominations for officers and committee members must be received by Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2024. They should be supported by a proposer and seconder and nominations must include the written consent of the potential candidate, then submitted in writing to,

The Secretary: Carol Duffield, 46 Friars Way, Dover. CT16 2DW

Tel: 07855 045650. Email: [cddoversociety@gmail.com](mailto:cddoversociety@gmail.com)

*As this is the last of the winter meetings until October and the most important meeting of the year all members are urged to attend.*