

The Dover Society
Minutes of the Executive Committee, held on Thursday 7 December 2017
at St Mary's Parish Centre, Dover

Present: Derek Leach (Chairman), Jeremy Cope, Sheila Cope, Deborah Gasking, Glynn Hale, Beverley Hall, Pat Sherratt, Terry Sutton, Alan Lee, Mike Weston

The Chairman welcomed Peter Cairns to the meeting.

1. **Apologies:** Patricia Hooper-Sherratt, Alan Sencicle, Mike McFarnell, Jean Marsh, Jenny Olpin

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2017 were accepted as correct.

3. Matters Arising

BH has sent an email to DDC about the history of the passage from Priory Hill to Tower Hamlets. A response is awaited.

JC sent email to Society members regarding the proposed Commonwealth memorial.

4. Chairman's Report

DL and TS provided feedback from the PCF meeting held Tuesday 5 December. Tim Waggott (TW) reported that because no decision had been made on use of the Goodwin Sands, DHB had imported "40 to 50%" of the total sand required from the Thames Estuary at an extra cost so far of £9m. He equated this to the provision of two refrigerated cargo sheds which could have employed around 150 people. Story was also in the Dover Express. TW is not expecting a decision on the Goodwins until the new year.

The PCF will be voting for a new chairman as DL has completed four years. Only those who have served two or more years on the Forum may stand for election. In addition, elections will be held for two community representatives and self nominations are accepted. When the roles are advertised, we can send an email to Society members as some may be interested in standing.

Other matters discussed at the PCF meeting included:

- Feedback on the intensive lobbying by DHB regarding the need for an approach to Brexit that will not hinder operations nor cause traffic disruption in Dover and beyond. Activities included evidence to the Select Committee, events, receptions and visits for key MPs.
- A report on the Community Fund which has just released a further £100k. The fund has provided some 11 grants to 56 organisations totalling over **£420k** in total.
- An update by DHB on the Western Docks Revival with new brochures is now available.

5. Secretary's Report

Nothing to report.

6. Financial Report

The financial report for the last month was circulated to the committee prior to the meeting.

The monies received in this period are:

- £30.00 subscriptions and £4.00 donation
- £12.00 for the sale of three Town Hall booklets
- £41.64 for Town Hall tours, credited to the Town Hall fund
- £25.00 advertising revenue for the Newsletter
- £10 donation to The River Dour Partnership Fund

The monies paid out in this period are:

- £695 paid to Adams Printers for the November Newsletter
- £61.41 for postage of Newsletter to out of area members
- £21.10 printing costs
- £2,310.00 advance payment for the meals and reception drinks for the Christmas Lunch
- £37.16 for expenses incurred on the Honfleur trip

The bookings for the Christmas Lunch continued and by the end of November £2375.00 had been banked. Some late payments will be banked in December. The November meeting made a loss of £28.64: hall hire £65.00, speakers' meals £43.90 with the raffle taking £67.00 (net prizes). The audited accounts are still not back from the auditors despite numerous chases and they claim that they are just awaiting final sign off. Agreed JC would also chase.

7. Membership Secretary's Report

There is one new member (Mr Terry Cleaver, Whitfield) and 2 returnees. Last allocated number is 1319, total number of members 474.

8. Marketing Group Report

BH provided a verbal progress report from the last Marketing Group meeting held on Monday 4 December. The minutes will be circulated to the Executive in due course. Key points:

- Since the last Executive, we have a new member of the Society - Will Parker-Gorman - who has the necessary skills and experience to develop a website with payment and transactional functions. This means that the potential budget of £1,000 discussed at the last meeting is unlikely to be needed, although some smaller spend may be required. As agreed, any request for funding will be fully costed and submitted to the Executive for approval.
- BH is arranging a separate discussion with WP-G prior to the next Marketing Group (in early February) to review the work required, timescales, etc.
- The Group has developed a draft list of requirements for the website, including "back office" items and a draft will be provided for consideration by the Executive.
- This work has raised a number of questions about some of our current processes. Since the website and associated systems are essentially modern tools, they should not dictate the way we do business. However, in some instances small changes could bring many benefits. A separate list of possible process changes will be presented to a future Executive meeting for discussion. Any agreed changes would be implemented as part of a wider transition plan to ensure (a) as many options as possible are available and (b) progress is made at a pace that suits the Society, its members and officers.
- The Newsletter/leaflet drop for Elm Vale (even numbers) has been completed, although take up could take several months to materialise. DG provided further details, noting that she had delivered a package of information including details for Totum Trail, Bluebird Trail, Dover Heritage, and our Blue Plaques. Further/different areas for leafleting were discussed. It was also agreed that we should have membership forms at all events to make it easier to guide non members into joining without undue pressure.
- The Group discussed the need for an over-arching marketing plan to guide the new promotion activities and web development whilst ensuring the current programmes of events, trips and talks are maintained and expanded if opportunities arise.
- The Marketing Group was asked to consider whether our objectives as currently written cover The Dover Society becoming more involved in cultural/art activities (as we have been in the past) in addition to our work on planning, development, amenity and historical matters. The Group concluded that the objectives are fine, although if/when a revamp of banners and other promotional materials goes ahead minor changes to the current wording could be considered.

9. Projects

Cowgate

- Several recent cancellations due to the wet weather.

Plaques

- The Ottaway plaque is awaiting installation once scaffolding is removed.
- The wording for the Toland plaque has been amended as agreed by the Executive (revised draft circulated). Details for installation have been agreed with Exact Systems.

River Dour

The River Dour Partnership (RDP) has a new Treasurer and JC takes the minutes. DG provided feedback from the last meeting. Key points:

- There had been little feedback in terms of getting local people engaged/involved.

- The RDP does not qualify for Coastal Community Funding as job creation is a requirement.
- KCC has confirmed they are responsible for the maintenance of Barton Path railings and funding is being sought for the work to take place in 2018/19.
- DG following up with DTC regarding plans with Kent Wildlife Trust.
- No progress on Lorne Road Millpond as there is no interest in carrying out a full assessment. Will try about to work with current owner but may be best to review again with new owner if/when scrapyard is sold. No DBL or EA funds used to date.
- Pollution monitoring has revealed nothing significant.
- Water levels are the lowest ever and a wet winter is unlikely. Weeds are left uncut to try and keep water levels up and protect fish. Fish are being moved from very shallow waters.
- EA to provide funding for Kearsney de-culverting and looking at control of sluice gates.
- No proposal to open up river at the Granada site e.g a building from 1st floor and open walkway underneath. PS noted the problems with the site which is severely restricted in footprint and height by the EA due to flooding concerns. The current design has retail on the ground floor and given the limitations, the developer is unlikely to give this up for public access. He has suggested the developer's agents speak to the EA. Agreed to await a planning application before making representation to DDC.
- £30.5k EA funding is available for the design, permitting and installation of the Halfords weir fish pass. May need further funding for actual installation once quotes received for the work.
- HLF funding: Elements of the bid entitled "Our Finest Dour" are a Dour Officer, volunteer River Wardens, conversion of Buckland Bridge toilets to a visitor centre and educational activities.
- Litter bins: above bid could include waste bins and Morrisons could be asked to fund bins close to the store. Aiming for volunteer litter picking monthly.
- Work to correct river trail signage and finalise the Dour leaflet is progressing.
- Looking for ways to improve liaison with the Crabble Corn Mill trustees to tackle issues with debris and problems with the sluices.
- River Parish Council: Railings have been painted.
- Need to get more people involved and there is money available for a Facebook promotion.
- PS noted that on a recent visit the chair of Walkers are Welcome commented on the clear water and that very little litter was present.

10. Refurbishment

JC provided feedback from the Refurbishment Sub-Committee held on 22 November. Key points:

- Cambridge Terrace basement areas have been cleared of rubbish.
- Concerns regarding the future of the High St were discussed. JO aiming to write to DDC about their plans, if any. Agreed this needed to be co-ordinated with Planning Sub-Committee. PS noted that DTC are pushing for a meeting with the new leader at DDC on this topic and we will be involved. Agreed we will support DTC efforts rather than act independently at this time and any letter would be part of this approach. The Executive agreed The Society's position as follows: (i) concentrating retail in the Town Centre freeing up areas such as London Road for residential use and (ii) over-shop conversion to residential use should both be encouraged.
- Cllr Collor has said improvements agreed for High Street surface using Councillor grants and Highways funding (approx. £80k).
- Proposed that free dog poo bags would be good incentive in maintaining standards.
- Noted that scaffolding has been erected on the hold Congregational Church.
- Letter to be sent to Ros Daniels enquiring about the future for Moats Bulwark.
- Litter problems at old Boat House: DDC apparently involved following residents' complaints.
- The William Muge site is overgrown. Reported to DDC via Cllr Collor.
- KCC publish the schedule for drain maintenance on their website. Generally reactive, with reported problems being dealt with within one or two months.

- Letter to be sent to DDC regarding fly tipping on path from Roman Road to Melbourne Road.
- Walk around the Castle and Walkers are Welcome (WAW): No changes to signage yet. JO to email Pam Brivo on the matter with copy to PS as our WAW representative.
- DAD invitation received to the launch of the Chalk Up Trail.
- PS noted that litter being dropped from vehicles is a growing problem but mentioned a recent case where car tax discs were left that will go to court.
- AL and PS noted the availability of “stubbies” pouches that used to put out cigarette butts.

11. Town Hall Refurbishment and Guided Tours

No guided tours as this is the closed season. The latest advice from the Heritage Fund is that before reapplying for funding, the bid should be revised and phased into smaller parcels of work (under £5m) as less money is available each year and large projects are unlikely to succeed.

12. Social Secretary’s Report

Christmas Lunch: Total of 102 people attended the event on 3 December. Once the fee and cost of the singers’ meals are taken into account we made a small profit of £15 and the raffle took an additional £268. Given the good service and the fact that fluctuating numbers can be accommodated, agreed we book the Town Hall for 2018, aiming for first Sunday in December.

Wine & Wisdom: 3 full tables (19 people) have already booked for the February event.

Meetings: Dorothy Weston and her team have resigned from tea/coffee provision with their last event being the April 2018 AGM. Agreed to ask for other volunteers at the January meeting, possibly asking people to sign on to a rota with more people doing fewer events. The problem of the Monday night clash with the group using the small room was discussed. Agreed BH will speak to Jill Sergeant about us moving to a different Monday.

PS - PHS is currently working on three possible trips for next year, including one with an overnight stay. She has booked a visit to the Amberley Museum in Sussex. Further update in January.

13. Planning

PS gave feedback from the meeting on 29 November (minutes circulate already). Key points:

- BHB White Cliffs Ice Rink and Market: Large number of stalls this year welcomed and DL reported seeing around 60 children using the ice rink on Tuesday morning.
- Castle Avenue: MW Still awaiting reply from DDC re TPO. BH to progress possible listing of flint walls with Heritage England
- PS wrote to Tim Ingleton re Buckland Mill and Connaught Barracks. Reply seems to indicate residents at Buckland Mill also frustrated and our letter being forwarded to HCA. On Connaught Barracks. TI noted “all frustrated by lack of apparent progress”. Latest is HCA inviting submissions for Officers’ Mess site with a report at HCA January Board Meeting. Nothing regarding the main barracks site.
- DOV/17/01098 50/51 Biggin Street: DDC Cabinet Member supports and is critical of Dover Society. Our reply to this included on Planning website. PS will make three-minute presentation at DDC Planning Committee on 14 December and would appreciate some support attendance.
- DOV/17/01231 New Community Building with toilet facilities: Letter sent as agreed at Executive (Neutral). Noted this will be discussed at Dover Community Association AGM on 19 December.
- Alcohol Premises Licence application, V Lounge 7 Cannon Street: DCC Enforcement involved as they have not sought planning consent for COU to “Internet Café” or signage alteration within a Conservation Area. We have objected to the request for an alcohol licence.
- Western Heights War Memorial plans noted. When eventually comes to planning application, there must be a sustainable transport policy and this has been mentioned to DDC.
- New Lower Thames Crossing: Highways England have provided an update and proposed timeframe with statutory consultation in 2018, approvals 2019 to 2021 and open to traffic “subject to planning consent and finance arrangements” by 2027.
- Noted DDC lost Supreme Court appeal regarding Farthingloe development. Fresh planning application needed. Understood an FOi request regarding the cost of the action sent to DDC.

14. Press Secretary's Report

Still getting items into both local papers.

15. Editor's Report

November Newsletter distributed. Deadline for next Newsletter is mid January.

16. Publications

Nothing to report.

17. AOB

PS - Civic Voice has sent a lengthy response but difficult to see what value they could add as many of their suggested actions are already in hand. Agreed we would not join at this time. After discussion, the Executive agreed a different approach that would be presented to DDC, namely pushing them to provide resources for Conservation Appraisals as they have in Sandwich and offering to make a financial contribution to this work as the Society does not have the time, skills or experience to do the job (unlike the Deal Society). PS noted that DTC are keen for this work to progress and may also be able to contribute.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be on **Thursday 11 January 2018**, at 7.30 pm at St Mary's Parish Centre.