

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

We continue to be busy with various meetings, projects, and community activities with planning and enforcement issues being discussed the most.

Although never straight forward we do our best to help the residents that contact us, to try and resolve issues especially with enforcement which is extremely frustrating and take a long time to resolve.

When asked we will represent the ward at DDC planning meetings and make the case for or against planning recommendations recently we were delighted that the planning committee overturned the decision to grant planning permission on Gobery Hill, Wingham.

The new Garden Waste scheme is now a year old with the introduction of wheelie bins instead of the green sacks, despite a few problems in the early stages the scheme has proved successful and collection crews support the bins from a safety and productivity viewpoint.

Each household were delivered one wheeled bin with 9,770 subscribers an increase on the bag system and for those no longer able to receive the service 100 composters were supplied.

We still ask for everyone in the district to go on the scheme unfortunately there is still not a vehicle suitable to fit down the narrow lanes, funding is the main problem.

We are pleased to see that following a scheme with stickers on rubbish bins to encourage residents to recycle food waste, more than 11% more food waste has been recycled in the 15 weeks since households received the stickers.

Great British Spring Clean - a huge thank you to all those who got involved, it was wonderful to see communities coming together and working to bring a fantastic improvement to our local area and villages.

DDC fortnight, were joined by 434 fantastic volunteers who joined them to collect over 300bags of litter across the district

Also a big thank you goes to the regular litter pickers too; you do an amazing job in our local community all year round.

DDC recently agreed their budget for 2025/26 with an increase in Council Tax of £6.39 (2.98%) per annum (12p per week) for a Band D property maintaining the lowest council tax in East Kent with no major reductions in services.

The Local Plan was formally adopted, the decision by Councillors was a milestone for the district, with the Local Plan now in place to set the development strategy for the growth of the district and provide the planning policy framework to guide future development.

Last year the Community Grants Scheme took a different approach for applying with the Cost of Living being the criteria.

Although this proved difficult for some clubs and organisations, we were pleased to see that out of the £53,783.56 awarded 40 projects were successful including 3 in Littlestour & Ashstone ward with Ash Bowls Club receiving £2,125.00, 8th Scout Group, Wingham receiving £637.50 and Staple Church receiving £350.00.

However, we are delighted to announce that this year arrangements have been made for the summer round to go back to the original scheme therefore all clubs and organisations should hopefully find it much easier to apply but not Parish Council's.

We were pleased to see the Community Roots Van in the ward over the year visiting Ash, Preston, Staple and Wingham.

A reminder that the van is available to come to your village events, this is the DDC office on wheels and offers help for those who might be struggling with various issues such as education, jobs and skills.

Also Cost of living, pensioners, & inclusion along with homelessness & veterans and leisure, well-being, family and events

The community team were also in Sandwich in December with the very popular 'Meet the Reindeers' which was enjoyed by the children and adults that attended.

Major Projects that are continuing are the Level Up programme for the Dover Beacon, Bench Street, Dover the project is currently on programme for completion in May 2026.

Tides Leisure Centre is currently closed although the sports hall and indoor tennis centre remain open as Your Leisure approved an interim operator while the work progresses on the exciting £20 million Deal Leisure Centre which will include a 6-lane pool with inflatable fun for the children and a toddler splash pool.

Maison Dieu in Dover, work has completed on the refurbishment project with Coniston, the contractors have handed the building over to DDC ahead of the May opening.

With the repair of the roof and flintstone walls completed, the exterior scaffolding has been removed at long last and the clock reinstated after repair and conservation.

The recreation of William Burges's 1883 decoration scheme in the Connaught Hall and Major's Parlour and other rooms is absolutely stunning.

The new main entrance with its glass doors into the new recreation area is impressive, which also gives a clear view into the Connaught Hall, the new lift also gives much better access into both the Stone Hall and Connaught Hall for those who cannot manage the stairs.

The walls of the Stone Hall have been repainted, the incredible stained-glass windows cleaned, along with the many paintings and armour.

One of the big changes in the use of the building will be free public access six days of the week when there are no commercial bookings.

This was all made possible with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the grant of £10 million required match funding from DDC, Dover Town Council and Dover Society.

Kearsney Abbey Parks have been awarded the Green Flag award again, this is an international quality mark for parks and green spaces and is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the team caring for the parks, which is enjoyed by residents and visitors on a daily basis.

Helping to help you to help Little Stour and Ashstone reporting issues and faults :

KCC Highway Faults for issues such as lamp posts, drainage, potholes, pavement's contact
www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem

Bins and Street Cleaning - please report waste issues such as dirty streets, excessive litter or rubbish being left.

Please report this via our website www.dover.gov.uk/waste

Fly tipping : there is a new system available to report fly tipping issues. Please register for an account via www.dovergov.uk/flytipping the new reporting portal allows you to report and check the progress.

Martin and Trevor would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support, we may not get everything right, but we do our best to try too