

Dover District Climate and Nature Forum

Meeting: 25 February 2026

Attendees:

Dover District Council	Cllr Michael Nee	Portfolio Holder for Climate and Environment
Dover District Council	Ashley Taylor	Planning Policy and Projects Manager
Dover District Council	Joanne Watson	Senior Planning Technical Officer
Dover District Council	James Traynor	Climate Change Officer
Aylesham Parish Council	Jon Flaig	Councillor
Sandwich Town Council	Cllr Simon Mallett	Councillor
Walmer Town Council	Cllr Sarah Waite-Gleave	Councillor
Future Foundry	Lisa Oulton	Director
Dover Town Council	Allison Burton	Clerk
Dover TC & DC	Pam Brivio	Councillor
East Kent Climate Action	Sonja Watsham	

Agenda

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Ashley Taylor, DDC, Cllr Beer, Nadine Miller, Deal Town Council; Cllr Paul Carter, Sandwich Town Council, Kate Robinson, Aylesham Parish Council; Cllr Fleck, Aylesham Parish Council and Cllr Chris Vinson, DDC, Shadow Holder for Climate & Environment.

2. Welcome

Cllr Michael Nee welcomed everyone to the meeting, and all introduced themselves.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting / Actions

Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held in October will be sought at the next meeting.

Previous meeting actions:

- **DDC to look at large projects – to work with Kent Community Energy**

KCE are reviewing opportunities at two sites, Maison Dieu, Dover and Deal Tennis Centre – further updates at the next meeting

- **DDC to contact Southern Water for water saving schemes**

[How Can You And Your Community Get Involved?](#)

[Pathfinder Projects - Southern Water](#)

[Water Butts Enhanced Rain Water Storage Scheme terms and conditions | Get in touch | Severn Trent Water](#)

No schemes available in Kent at the moment, Jame to follow-up.

- **Car Sharing options**

Zip Car close UK operations [Zipcar, world's biggest car-sharing company, to close UK operation | Automotive industry | The Guardian](#)

Exploring COMoUK membership [Membership](#)

Zip Cars no longer operate in the UK.

James now looking at funding from KCC scheme.

[Kent set for 10,000 new on street electric vehicle chargers - News & Features - Kent County Council](#)

- **Climate Change**

Cllr Nee asked James for his view on climate change, “milder winters / wet / warming up in summer. We should all be using water butts in preparation for dry summers”.

4. Kent Sustainable Communities Network

A request received from KCC for this group to join [Kent Sustainable Communities Network | Let's Talk Kent](#). Deal Town Council have already joined and Walmer Town Council would like to.

It would be good to either join or if other members attend and feed back information to this group. Cllr Nee said that this would be a great way for parish level and communities to have a voice and views across with future shift in unity size.

ACTION - All: Decide if you would like representation from this group or feed back information from those already attending.

5. Sustainable Gardens – Dover Town Council

Allison Burton, Dover Town Council gave a presentation with their proposed plans for developing gardens at Riverside Gardens in Dover, following feedback from local residents that “Green and Open Spaces” are important to them. Dover Town Council will be working alongside representatives from nearby establishments including Biggin hall users, Bowling Club, Citizens Advice Bureau, Riverside Centre, Future Foundry to ensure the right balance of planting and specific areas will meet a wide variety of needs.

Cllr Nee asked about the River Dour following floods, would there have been anything upstream that would have contributed to this further downstream in town? James responded that over the years gardens have been built with brick walls thus this could be affecting the river banks.

ACTION – James: to discuss with Planning department about future flooding mitigation.

ACTION - James / DTC: Contact Chris Townsend, Head of Investments, Growth and Tourism, DDC re Land, Riverside Gardens.

6. Dover in Bloom – Future Foundry

Lisa Oulton, Director of Future Foundry gave a presentation on how gold was won in Dover in Bloom competition in the Large Coastal Town and Biodiversity categories.

Working alongside 49 partners, community groups and the youth of Dover this great achievement was accomplished and also an entry into Britain in Bloom. Now working towards entry for 2026, they would like to improve the area from the bus station to EK college, creating a woodland walk and tidying up/developing the areas around.

7. Warms Homes Local Update Year 1 – Dover District Council

James gave an update:

- Original target of 28 properties for year one across Dartford and Dover
- Additional funding enabled 15 extra homes to be completed
- Year two funding currently enables 53 properties
- Year three funding enables 52 properties

8. Dover Pride in Place – Dover District Council

Dover District Council re looking for a passionate and enthusiastic Chair and Board Members to lead Dover's new '**Pride in Place**' programme which will bring up to **£20 million** of investment to St Radigunds and Buckland wards over the next 10 years. The board will bring residents, local businesses and community leaders together to:

- Identify the projects that matter most to local people
- Create a plan for delivery

We are looking for:

- A Chair who is a strong and positive leader (the Chair is a voluntary role and cannot be an elected representative)
- A Board of people who:
- Care deeply about the area and know the local community
- Want to make sure the money makes a real difference for our residents

How to apply
Job specifications and 'how to apply' instructions are available on our jobs page:

[Apply to be the Chair »](#)

[Apply to be a Board Member »](#)

Deadline for applications:

Chair: 12pm, Thursday 5 March 2026

Board: 12pm, Friday 13 March

ACTION - All: Would anyone be interested / forward this information

9. Members updates: -

East Kent Climate Action (EKCA)

- Enjoying going into the community using the Thermal heat loss cameras. Visited 25 households to date.
- Showing films and display in library , supporting 'Save Minster Marshes – No converter Station'

Transition Dover

- A box of energy efficient items will be available at this evenings Repair Café.
- Marked Transition Dover's 10th birthday in November with a number of community events: spring bulb planting in the kerbside patch we care for on Bridge Street (behind Morrisons); a film showing of 'Imprint' a film made by Transition Sweden featuring a number of grassroots environmental projects (available on You Tube if anyone wants to catch up); a litter pick in partnership with Residents Wildlife Group Whitfield (starting from either end of Green Lane); and a 10th birthday celebration alongside the Dover Repair Café.
- In January, they held a month-long online activity, sharing daily tips (on Transition Dover Facebook page) on ways to save or protect our water, which had some good engagement.
- Recently held their AGM, where suggestions from attendees were gathered for the #ShowTheLove initiative by The Climate Coalition (where people describe local natural spaces/species they love and want to protect, and send these to their MP).
- Dover Repair Café continues to thrive. Dates for 2026: Wed 25th Feb, Wed 25th March and then last wed of each month. Details on our Facebook page. New volunteers always welcome, whether as fixers or general helpers.

Deal Town Council

- [Seeds for Spring 2026](#) is now open for Deal residents to register and collect a free pack of native flowers to fuel our pollinators.
- The new Deal Castle bathing water classification to 'good' but are aware of and working on more that can be done.
- Climate Action Day - More than 170 people visited Deal Town Council's second Climate Action Day on Saturday 15th November 2025 which coincided with COP 30 (Conference of the Parties - UN Climate Change Conference). The event took place at Deal Town Hall and focused on the town's proximity and relationship with the sea and led with our recently adopted Ocean and Coastal Recovery Strategy and Declaration. The Climate Action Day was a gathering of local groups engaged in different types of climate action, sharing what they do and how people could get involved. Southern Water representatives were also in attendance. Deal Town Council's Climate Action Day received a lot of positive feedback from participating local groups and visitors to the event.

Walmer TC

- Thanks to DDC for the box of energy saving fixes for residents. It has been useful in a cold January!
- Thank you to DDC for arranging the Community Resilience Workshop on 18 February for Parish and Town Councils. Very useful.
- To note : meeting Thurs 27 Nov took place : Cllrs of Walmer TC and Deal TC were invited to hear the national policy officer of Pesticide Action Network UK on how to protect health of humans and wildlife, from poisonous pesticides. Advice on Process of going pesticide free.

- Costs : in short term some cost of equipment, but in medium to longer term costs fall as areas being managed in a more holistic way. Not an either /or, it is not messy weeds or poisonous pesticides. Public support where change made, even if compliments for councils a rare concept. Pesticides made from fossil fuels – so banning / reducing helps councils meet climate emergency action plans and nature recovery strategies.
- Benefits : improved soil health, ground water, wildlife - insects, fungi, bees, wasps, fresh water, urban public green spaces, (statutory obligation removing detritus) early season hand weeding can prevent ‘weeds’ becoming big, noticeable and self-seeding later in year.
- No simple replacement for pesticide / glyphosate. Team needs to learn the multi-disciplinary approach with clear shared objective with good repeated positive communication
- Include communication with public (written notices, celebratory), what they can expect to see, what the objectives are. Allowing meadow land ‘no-mow May, into June, into July. Fix infrastructure (mistaken belief weeds damage infra-structure – actually worn-out infrastructure (walls / pavements) create niches for weeds) -
 - • Use membrane on paths – mulching
 - • cover planting – natives and perennials, hoeing /raking / hand weeding , community involvement > community cohesion. Spotting of good pavement plants <https://www.pan-uk.org/pavement-plants/> chalking pavements to show appreciation, also possible guided walks
- Hot water / hot foam , veg oil added to hold heat longer –
- Electric weed control – for invasive species. A new push along version.
- Brushing – very useful. Removing organic matter in Feb / March.
- Invasive species control . legal requirements / human health e.g. Japanese knotweed a minimal use of pesticide, not an excuse for not banning pesticides elsewhere.
- Example of Strasbourg went pesticide free in 2008. Diverse needs : lots of public outreach, not poisoning water, children. Changed planting regimes (not annual bedding plants that are bad for pollinators). Zero pesticide policy is part of UNESCO city Strasbourg. <https://interlace-hub.com/strasbourg-grows-community-based-agreement-strasbourg>
- Pan-UK offers free advice, time to support councils and communities, and PAN-UK officer available to help with our local initiatives for free. On 15th January 2026 PAN-UK published this worrying report. <https://www.pan-uk.org/playgrounds/>
- Many thanks for the example of work of Deal TC since resolution of their F&GP Jan 2025 to make its allotments pesticide-free ([Attachment 4 page 18 here](#)).

ACTION - James ‘designations’ of nature sites

Aylesham Parish Council

- Celebrating its Centenary with events planned throughout.
- Looking forward to having their first Allotment site (delayed at present due to dormice).

10. Dover District Council

- Energy Efficiency boxes and Thermal Cameras – there are still kits available and thermal camera to loan out. The Community van will continue to distribute where needed.
- An electric waste truck will be on trial in the district.

11. AOB

None.

Meeting ended

3.45 pm