

CONTENTS

Bloom partners	01
Introduction to Dover	02
Why BLOOM and why now?	03

Horticultural Achievement

Dover District Council	04
Parks and Open Spaces	04
• Kearsney Park	04
• Pencester Gardens	04
• Connaught Park	05
• Dover Cemeteries	06
• Maison Dieu Gardens	06
• Market Square	06
Dover Town Council	07
• St Edmunds Chapel	07
• People of Dover War Memorial Garden	07
• Climate Emergency 2019 and achieving Carbon Neutral Status	07
• Sustainable Grounds Maintenance and Community Plant Propagation	08
• The Mel Wrigley Hub	08
• Supporting Community Through Grant Funding	09
• Allotments - Empowering Green Living	09
English Heritage	10
• Dover Castle	10
• Constable's Tower Kitchen Garden - Friends of Dover Castle	10
National Trust - White Cliffs of Dover	11
Municipal Charities' Cowgate Garden	12
Sports Grounds	12
• Dover Rugby Club	12
• Dover Bowling Club	12
Garden Competitions and Awards	13
• Dover District Tenants Consultative Group Garden Competition	13
• The Reach Awards 24	13
• Green School Award	13
• Keep Britain Tidy Awards	13

Environmental Responsibility

Cross-Channel Geopark & Kent Downs National Landscape	14
Heritage and Ecology Conservation in Synergy	15
• Reaching Greater Heights	15
• Restoring Heritage and Nature at Western Heights	16
• Dover Castle - From Battlements to Biodiversity	16
• Red-Billed Chough: A Symbol of Ecological Restoration	17
• Rare Bat Discoveries at Dover Castle: A Testament to Heritage and Ecology	17
• Western Heights Preservation Society	18
• Fort Burgoyne: Ecological Restoration and Community Engagement	18
Interconnected Green Corridors: River, Land & Sea	19
• Dover's Green Corridors for Wildlife and Community	19
• The River Dour	19
• Our Finest Dour	19
• High Meadow Nature Reserve	20
• White Cliffs Countryside Partnership	21
• Kent Wildlife Trust – Blue Influencers & Habitat Restoration in Dover (2024–25)	22
• National Trust, White Cliffs of Dover, Langdon Cliffs	22
Climate Action and Sustainable Infrastructure	23
• Green Corridor at Short Straits: Pioneering Zero-Carbon Maritime Travel	23
• Port of Dover: Championing Marine Biodiversity and Sustainability	24
• Dover District Council	25
• Dover Town Council - Bike Hire Scheme	25

Community

Grassroots Groups	26
• Future Foundry and Biggin Hall	26
• Little Artlings	26
• Artswork	26
• Dover for Gardeners	26
• River Gardeners Association	26
• Dover & District Beekeepers Association	27
• Transition Dover - Bridge Street Wildflower Corridor	27
• The Dover Wombles	27
• St Martin's Church	27
• The Dover Society	28
• Little Urchins Hedgehog Rescue	28
• Residents Wildlife Group (Whitfield)	28
• Emmaus Dover Community Garden	28
• The Sage Network	28
• Dover Repair Cafe	28
Artistic Inspiration	29
• Chalk Stream Guardian Dress Project	29
• River Tales	29
• Winter Light Up Marine Conservation Trail	29
• Dover by Simon Bill and Dover Arts Development	29
• Dover Smart Project	29
Enormous Eco Events	30
• Dover's Winter Light Up	30
• ShivaNova's World in a Tent	30
• Dover at Night 2025 - The River Dour	30
• Dover Pride	31
• Samphire's Multicultural Festival	31
• The Port of Dover Regatta	31
• The Maison Dieu's Stone Masonry Festival	31
Education and Awareness	32
• Astor Secondary School	32
• Kent Wildlife Trust	32
• East Kent College Dover	32
• Global Action Plan	32
• Temple Ewell Primary School	33
• Dover Grammar School for Boys	33
• White Cliffs Primary School	33
• St Richard's Catholic Primary School	33
Case Studies:	34
• Case Study 1: Dover Youth Festival: People, Place, Nature, Climate	34
• Case Study 2: Future Foundry's Closing the Loop	35
Accessible Green Spaces in Dover	36
• North Downs Way National Trail - Putting Down Routes	36
• Muslim Hikers	36
• Black Girls Hike	36
• Samphire Project	36
• Dykes Who Hike	36
• Dover Pride - Glad Rags and Bin Bags	36
• Dover Youth Festival - Outdoor Activities	36
• Wet Wheels	37
• Access, Arts and Adventures	37
• Wild with Wheels	37
• White Cliffs of Dover	37
• Samphire Hoe	37
• Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens	37
• Dover Castle	37
• Dover Marina and Western Docks	37

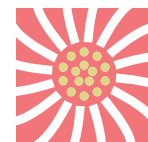
BLOOM PARTNERS



1. Future Foundry
2. Dover Town Council
3. Dover District Council
4. White Cliffs Countryside Partnership
5. Port of Dover
6. English Heritage and Dover Castle
7. Friends of Dover Castle
8. National Trust - The White Cliffs of Dover
9. Western Heights Preservation Society
10. Kent Downs National Landscape and aspiring Cross-Channel UNESCO Global Geopark
11. Kent Wildlife Trust
12. The Land Trust
13. Transition Dover
14. Dover Repair Café
15. Dover Wombles
16. The Dover Society
17. Municipal Charities of Dover
18. Little Artlings
19. Dover Pride
20. Artswork
21. Dover Smart Project
22. Residents Wildlife Group (Whitfield)
23. Dover for Gardeners Facebook Group
24. Access, Arts, and Adventures
25. Wild with Wheels
26. Emmaus Dover
27. St Martin's Church
28. Dover and District Beekeepers Association
29. The Sage Network and Dover Big Local
30. Little Urchins Hedgehog Rescue Dover
31. Global Action Plan
32. Wet Wheels
33. ShivaNova
34. Samphire
35. Maison Dieu
36. Dover Rugby Club
37. Dover Bowling Club
38. Dover District Tenants Consultative Group
39. River Tales
40. Chalk Stream Guardian Dress Project
41. Dover Arts Development
42. Astor College
43. East Kent College: Dover
44. Temple Ewell Primary School
45. Dover Grammar School for Boys
46. White Cliffs Primary School
47. St Richards Catholic Primary School
48. River Gardeners Association
49. Dover for Dovorians Facebook Group



INTRODUCTION TO DOVER



Dover's coast and countryside boast world-class biodiversity, an SSSI and a plethora of listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments. The White Cliffs, renowned globally, have served as England's iconic entry and exit point for centuries.

Dover's Port handles 1.6 million tourist vehicles annually, as well as 2 million freight vehicles, highlighting the significant volume of traffic passing through the town. The White (Langdon) Cliffs – the National Trust's iconic landscape – cope with the impact of over 3.5 million tourists per year and Dover Castle, one of English Heritage's most visited sites, attracts nearly 300,000 visitors per year. This unassuming, hardworking town and its instantly recognisable landscapes recognises the need for sustainability and pride in preserving both nature and history.

As a town with a rich history and an equally important future, Dover is poised to lead by example in addressing the challenges posed by climate change. From the iconic White Cliffs to our rare chalk grasslands, Dover's landscapes are integral to the identity of our town and the wider region. However, these landscapes are also vulnerable, and Dover in Bloom seeks to engage the entire community in efforts to protect and enhance them, ensuring that they remain a source of pride and a sustainable resource for future generations.

Dover in Bloom is a key initiative to enhance environmental sustainability and the biodiversity of Dover leveraging community involvement to increase a sense of place. By participating in the South and South East in Bloom competition, Dover is committing to improving its green spaces, fostering a climate-resilient town, and celebrating its natural beauty and unique heritage.

Inclusivity sits at the heart of Dover in Bloom. We invite citizens from all backgrounds – regardless of age, gender or ability to actively shape the future of our environment. When local residents, schools, community groups, and businesses take practical actions that promote environmental sustainability, enhance biodiversity, and build a stronger sense of community – then they take ownership and feel enfranchised in their own town.

In addition to environmental improvements, Dover in Bloom will make Dover's green spaces accessible and valued by all. Enhancing shared spaces by opening them up and giving them a purpose for people of all abilities is fundamental to this initiative. This will engender a sense of belonging and pride in the public realm.

This portfolio showcases the various initiatives currently underway in Dover to build a more sustainable and connected town. From the conservation of the River Dour through the restoration of our chalk grasslands to community gardens and youth-led environmental projects, Dover in Bloom is a reflection of the town's collective efforts to embrace sustainability, improve the local environment, and celebrate its unique heritage. It is a collaborative and inclusive approach that highlights how every individual, group, and organisation can contribute to Dover's future.



Photo credit: Annmarie Hirst



WHY BLOOM AND WHY NOW?



Future Foundry is proud to present the first-ever Dover in Bloom portfolio!

As an organisation that works closely with young people, we were inspired to launch Dover in Bloom after hearing from young people about their growing concerns over climate change. Our Dover Youth Survey, showed that many felt that Dover had been 'neglected,' and that their voices weren't being heard in decisions affecting the future of the town. But what was also surprising was how many young people reported spending significant time in nature and undertaking outdoor activities. They are spending more time outdoors, exploring the natural world, and wanting to make a real difference.

This feedback led us to programme the Dover Youth Festival 24: People, Place, Nature, Climate, where we worked with 40 local environmental, heritage, creative and landscape organisations. What we found was truly inspiring: Dover is already home to a number of incredible initiatives focused on protecting wildlife, combating climate change, restoring nature, and fostering sustainability. These efforts are making a real difference, and we believe that Dover in Bloom can bring all of this work together, celebrating the power of community collaboration across all ages and backgrounds.

We want young people to be at the heart of Dover in Bloom. Through creative projects, educational programmes, and hands-on activities, they're not only learning about the importance of protecting their environment – they're playing an active role in shaping a better, greener future for Dover. This involvement is crucial because, after all, they are the future stewards of our green spaces.

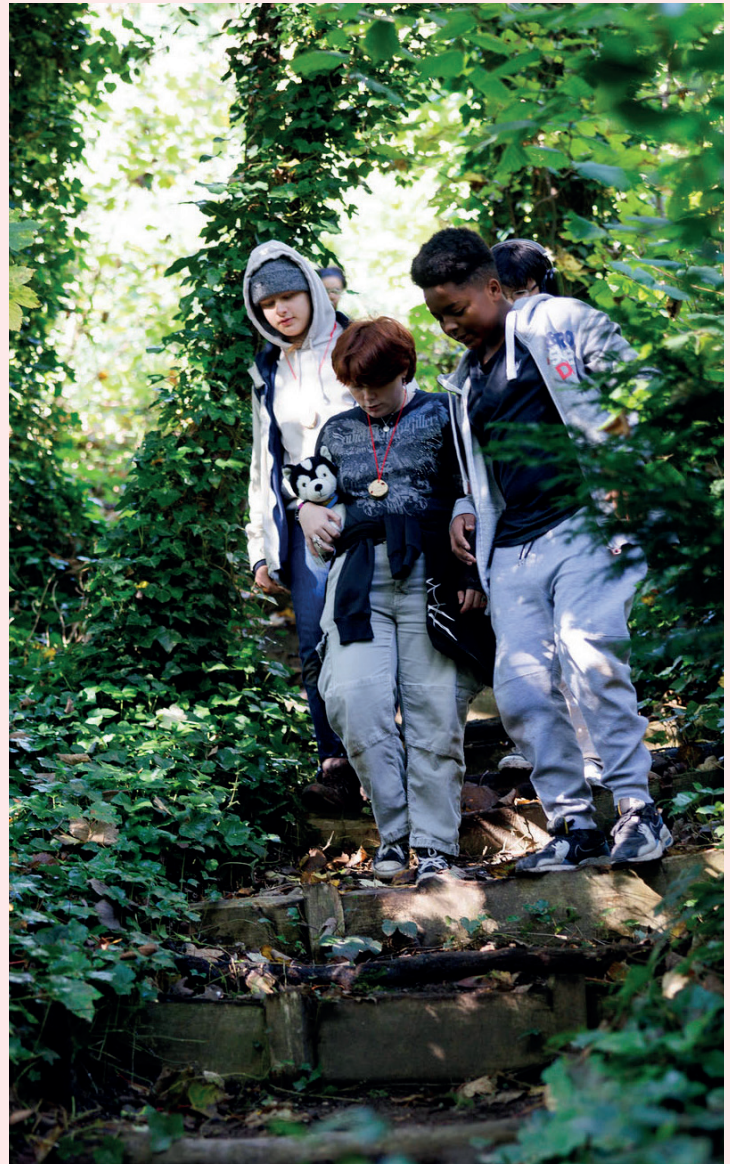


Photo credit: Future Foundry, Dover Youth Festival



Photo credit: Little Artlings

But Dover in Bloom isn't just for young people – it's also about being inclusive and for everyone in Dover. Two years of public consultation – the Dover Talking Shop – has delivered a Place Plan which identifies what is important to people of all ages in Dover. Their top priorities are Community and Open Spaces. Bloom offers a model where local people take control of their environment, determining their own present and their town's future. This model unites schools, youth groups, businesses, charities, local clubs, residents, and the public sector in taking action and being part of something bigger. It's about building partnerships, sparking new collaborations, and creating friendships across all generations.

Dover in Bloom isn't just about celebrating what we've already achieved; it's about making sure that the work to protect and enhance our environment continues for years to come. This initiative is about working together to create a sustainable, vibrant Dover – one that we can all be proud of for generations to come.

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Since April 2017, Dover District Council has managed its parks and open spaces through an in-house grounds maintenance team. This transition aimed to enhance service quality, responsiveness, and cost-effectiveness. The team is responsible for the upkeep of over 200 sites, including parks, sports pitches, cemeteries, and open spaces on housing estates.

The portfolio includes **Kearsney Parks (Abbey & Russell Gardens), Connaught Park and Pencester Gardens** as well as land owned by various external clients such as Kent Highways, East Kent Housing, the Highways Agency, Town Councils, and Parish Councils.

KEARSNEY PARK: HORTICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Kearsney Park encompasses Kearsney Abbey, Thomas Mawson's Grade II Listed Russell Gardens, and Bushy Ruff, collectively forming a significant green space in Dover. Following extensive restorations funded by over £3m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens have received the prestigious Green Flag Award for four consecutive years, highlighting the District Council's commitment to providing high-quality green space management.

The gardens are laid out as informal parkland around two ornamental lakes, with the River Dour flowing through. The area features a fine collection of specimen trees, including Beech, Lime, and Yew. A prominent Cedar of Lebanon is believed to be one of the oldest specimens in the country.

The parks are maintained and operated by Dover District Council. These historic parks are managed to high horticultural and heritage standards. This includes general upkeep, landscape restoration, and conservation ensuring the parks remain accessible and enjoyable for the public. In addition the parks benefit from the involvement of dedicated volunteers who participate in sessions, typically focused on areas such as the Grand Border and the orchard in Russell Gardens. Alongside the managed planting, there are large swathes of natural growth with wild garlic and bluebells in Spring and wood anemones in Summer.



Photo credit: Dover District Council



Photo credit:
Future Foundry

PENCESTER GARDENS

Pencester Gardens is a green space in the heart of Dover. Nestled behind the shopping precinct the gardens offer a central place to meet, sit on a bench, enjoy the views of Dover Castle and stroll along the river. The play area is popular with families and the small skatepark is alive with wheeled excitement. The River Dour meanders along one edge of the park as part of the River Dour Trail; a four mile (6.4km) walk from Temple Ewell to Dover Harbour. This park and open space has well surfaced routes suitable for visitors with pushchairs and/or wheelchairs. Pencester Gardens are Dover's family activity hub with many events ranging from the Multicultural Festival and Urban Fete through a Summer Performance in the Park programme on the Bandstand/Pavilion to forming the Start and Finish Point for the stunning Winter Light Up procession.



Photo credit: Gemma Dyer

PARKS & OPEN SPACES (CONTINUED)

CONNAUGHT PARK

Connaught Park, established in 1883, is set on the hillside below Dover Castle. The 30-acre park provides recreational facilities including tennis courts and a children's play area. Vestiges of grand Victorian Park life survive in the Ornamental Lake and lawns. Much of Connaught is a gently wild green space for walking, relaxing and enjoying the panoramic views.

Tennis Court Campaign - recent refurbishment of two tennis courts with a £57,500 grant from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) Tennis Foundation. The upgrades included resurfacing, new posts, netting, perimeter fencing, and an access-controlled gate with an online booking system. The Deal and Dover Park Tennis CIC now manages the courts, offering free park tennis sessions funded by Dover Town Council, coaching, and competitions for all ages and abilities. They also provide a 'Pay and Play' option and an annual household season ticket.

Skate Park Campaign - The Dover Activity Parks Community Interest Company (DAP CIC) is now leading the 15 year long campaign to develop a new wheeled sports park accessible for all in Connaught Park along with changing and toilet facilities, a measured trim trail and a refreshment kiosk. DAP CIC is led by local skaters and scooter riders.

Photo credit: Amy McCulloch

Friends of Connaught Park - facebook group continues to serve as a community that appreciates and shares memories of the park, with a focus on wildlife, nature, and community involvement.

These initiatives highlight the collaborative efforts between community groups, local authorities and residents to enhance Connaught Park as an inclusive public space.



Photo credit: Dover District Council



PARKS & OPEN SPACES (CONTINUED)

DOVER CEMETERIES

Dover District Council manages several cemeteries across Dover including: Buckland Cemetery (closed, pre-1857), Charlton Cemetery, Cowgate Cemetery (opened 1837, closed), and St James Cemetery.

Dover District Council has implemented a more sustainable approach to cemetery maintenance, since 2023. This aims to balance accessibility for visitors, promote biodiversity, and reduce fuel consumption. While areas with recent burials and entrances were maintained as usual, other sections have been allowed to develop into wildflower meadows, supporting local wildlife and reducing the need for frequent mowing.

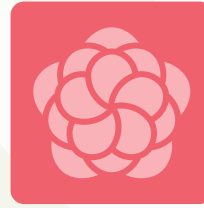
St James Cemetery, Commonwealth War Graves

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) is responsible for the maintenance of the war graves located in Dover cemeteries (*established Autumn 1916, graves: 1,268 total, 646 identified*). This includes the upkeep of headstones, memorials, and the overall site to ensure they are preserved in a traditional and respectful manner.

MAISON DIEU GARDENS

Exploring Models of Community Ownership

Dover Town Council is co-ordinating an innovative partnership project to bring Maison Dieu Gardens into community ownership, working collaboratively with neighbours and stakeholders. This initiative is being developed as a pilot scheme for the sustainable, inclusive maintenance of public green spaces, setting a benchmark for climate-resilient urban landscaping.



Stakeholders taking part in the development project include: Future Foundry, Riverside Centre, Dover Bowling Club, Dover Community Association, Dover Pride, Little Artlings and Dover Citizens Advice Centre.

The Maison Dieu & Riverside Landscape Strategy was commissioned by Dover Town Council and Future Foundry in 2024 and created by Architectural Designer Lettice Drake and Garden Designer Elizabeth Tophill which envisioned the future of Maison Dieu Gardens, as an accessible and inclusive public space that would enhance community engagement and radically increase biodiversity and climate change resilience.

MARKET SQUARE

As part of the £3.6 million redevelopment of Dover's Market Square, sustainable flower beds were incorporated to improve the aesthetics and support local biodiversity. These beds feature a variety of colourful plants like lavender, marigolds, and geraniums, selected for their appeal to pollinators and their low-maintenance nature.

Photo credit: Gemma Dyer



DOVER TOWN COUNCIL

ST EDMUNDS CHAPEL GARDEN

This historic 12th Century gem sits within its small, glowing garden on the heavily trafficked one way system. Rediscovered after centuries of being hidden behind walls and rededicated, the chapel is a tranquil micro space still used to celebrate mass and host intimate events ranging from classical music to puppetry. Informal pollinator friendly planting provided by Dover Town Council forms a perfect gateway to the otherworldly calm of the sunken chapel.

PEOPLE OF DOVER WAR MEMORIAL GARDEN

Framing the Grade II listed War Memorial unveiled in 1924 and listed as Grade II*, this is the most photographed garden in Dover. Full of free form pollinator friendly colourful planting, it is an exuberant backdrop to the Statue of a youth with Flaming Torch and a classical frontage to the Grade II listed Maison Dieu House, now the offices and Council chamber of Dover Town Council. The plants are a mixture of rehomed plants past their sell-by dates at local garden centres, gifts from towns we have cross channel links with and deliberately chosen formal box hedging. The lawn is organically maintained and provides a small green area in the centre of the urban space with benches to stop and rest or eat a Greggs pasty (carefully protected from passing protected gulls).

CLIMATE EMERGENCY 2019 AND ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRAL STATUS

In 2019, Dover Town Council formally declared a Climate Emergency, recognising the urgent need for action to address climate change at a local level. This declaration was a milestone marking 10 years of the Council quietly providing community leadership in practical actions to improve environmental sustainability in business. Small practical actions such as ending the use of plastic tableware, using recycled paper and buying local wherever possible provided credibility to the Climate Emergency Declaration.



Photo credit: Dover Town Council



Photo credit: Dover Town Council

Since then, the Council has continued in its environmental stewardship:

- Carbon Auditing – Annually reviewing energy use, transport, and operations to identify where emissions can be reduced or eliminated, the Council has been Carbon Neutral since 2019.
- Green Energy & Infrastructure – Switching to renewable electricity, improving energy efficiency in council buildings, and investing in low-carbon technology.
- Sustainable Procurement – Prioritising eco-friendly suppliers and reducing the environmental footprint of goods and services – non-plastic bunting in the High Street for example.
- Biodiversity & Land Stewardship – Actively managing green spaces like High Meadow Nature Reserve and allotments with conservation and sustainability at the core of our management plans and licences.
- Community Climate Action – Supporting projects such as River Dour clean-ups, Maison Dieu Gardens regeneration, and public education on native planting and sustainable living.
- Becoming part of the Motion for the Ocean movement in 2025 and writing to our MP to demand action for cleaner seas.

Dover Town Council continues to work to improve its environmental performance through practical, measurable change – demonstrating that even at a local level and in areas where poverty and deprivation are large scale challenges, councils can be powerful drivers of environmental responsibility and climate leadership. ”

DOVER TOWN COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

“ SUSTAINABLE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND COMMUNITY PLANT PROPAGATION

Dover Town Council strives to practice sustainable grounds maintenance across the town, adopting eco-friendly practices that prioritise biodiversity, environmental responsibility, and long-term climate resilience. Our approach combines traditional labour intensive care with innovative green solutions to reduce the environmental impact of urban landscaping. The Council provides public planters and planters throughout Dover town centre, including those in Castle Street, the underpass and Biggin Street. Many planters are filled with sustainable, hardy plants, many of which are grown locally by the Council in our own Polycrub – a durable greenhouse made from sustainable materials in Shetland. They are supplemented by annuals which are propagated and grown on in the Polycrub. In Athol Terrace, which overlooks the ferry port, we installed a laurel hedge to help reduce noise and air pollution affecting nearby residents. This green buffer supports air quality and provides natural screening.

Additional community-led greening has also been supported through funding to residents, who have successfully planted up previously unused flower beds in the Athol Terrace area, turning neglected patches into colourful and biodiverse microhabitats. Maison Dieu House courtyard garden at the historic 16th Century Council offices is entirely organic using recycled perennials. We are helping to fund an extension into the Biggin Hall Garden for our next door neighbours, Future Foundry.

The maintenance regime for the former Western Heights Sports Field has been revised starting with No-Mow May to allow for once a year scything of a chalk grassland meadow with native species to replace the rye grass surface. Public engagement to explain what and why we are doing this has begun. Wide mown paths for dogwalkers will be provided to assist in a smooth transition.



Photo credit: Dover Town Council



Photo credit: Dover Town Council

THE MEL WRIGLEY HUB

The Mel Wrigley Hub is more than just a growing space – it's a volunteer-powered hub that supports a wide range of local environmental efforts. From flower baskets to supporting the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership rangers, the hub plays a vital role in Dover's ability to deliver greener, more sustainable spaces.

In 2023 Dover Town Council purchased a previously contaminated piece of land. We transformed this site into a model of sustainable use by:

- Clearing and remediating the land removing several tons of gas cannisters, rubble and tyres.
- Planting a wildflower meadow to support pollinators and native species and using gabions as retaining walls to provide habitat for a range of insects.
- Removing non- native species such as sycamores and planting native hedgerow around the perimeter.
- Building an eco-friendly storage facility to house council vehicles with rainwater collection and solar panels about to be installed.
- Creating a volunteer hub using recycled materials to provide a workshop, meeting space and facilities for those who help maintain High Meadow Local Nature Reserve.
- Installing an incinerator toilet, which produces waste ash that is returned safely to the soil – eliminating water waste and the need for a traditional sewage connection.
- Constructing of the Polycrub on-site, where annual plants are now propagated and grown on for use in the town. Volunteers are also welcome to use this space to cultivate native species specifically for replanting at High Meadow and other conservation areas.
- Providing a rehoming site for slow worms removed under ecologist supervision from a nearby housing development.

Through these efforts, Dover Town Council is not only greening the town but also embedding sustainability into the heart of its operations - empowering residents, reducing emissions, and improving quality of life for people and wildlife alike. ”

DOVER TOWN COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY THROUGH GRANT FUNDING

The Council's green grants support local organisations like homelessness charities and community allotments. Investments in hot composters, irrigation, and solar-powered systems promote sustainable waste management and self-sufficient growing – alongside public education on climate-friendly practices.

ALLOTMENTS - EMPOWERING GREEN LIVING

Dover Town Council manages several allotment sites, offering residents the opportunity to cultivate their own plots.

- Pretoria Allotment Site – Green Lane, Dover – 82 plots
- Pilots Meadow Allotment Site – Off Adrian Street, Dover – 21 plots
- Prospect Place Allotment Site – Off Edgar Road, Dover – 44 plots
- Maxton Allotment Site – On Folkestone Road – 77 plots
- Astley Avenue Self Managing Allotment Site – 75 plots

These allotments provide residents with space to grow their own food and contribute to the local green landscape. Produce has also been supplied to the Dover Food Pantry which helps those in Food Poverty in the town. This is important in Dover which is a area defined by high levels of social and economic deprivation and health inequalities. Government research has shown that a male resident in the Dover Town Buckland ward is likely to die 10 years younger than a male resident of the neighbouring village of St Margaret's.

Photo credit: Emma Borle



Photo credits: Simon Bill



Sustainable Allotment Management:

Dover Town Council has put in place innovative and environmentally responsible practices across its sites to support both people and the planet.

Key initiatives include:

Water Conservation – Sustainable water management solutions, including boreholes and water meters, to reduce mains usage and encourage responsible irrigation. We refund the cost of water butts, tanks and guttering for greenhouses and sheds bought by tenants to harvest and use rainwater at the allotments.

- Organic & Low-Chemical Practices – Tenants must not use chemical pesticides or herbicides, promoting healthier soil and biodiversity.
- Wildlife-Friendly Spaces – The sites include hedgerows, wildflower margins, and bug hotels, creating mini ecosystems within the town with a minimum of hard surfacing – all of which is permeable.
- Composting & Waste Reduction – Tenants are supported to compost green waste on-site, reducing the need for external disposal and improving soil health.
- Community Engagement & Education – We work with tenants to share knowledge on climate-friendly growing, no-dig methods, and seasonal planting by providing repurposed containers for seed, plant and tool swaps.
- Fair & Transparent Management – Through tenant liaison and clear rules, we maintain plots in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and community-focused. ”

ENGLISH HERITAGE

DOVER CASTLE

Dover Castle, a Scheduled Monument within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is cared for by English Heritage. Spanning 41 hectares, the site includes nationally significant defensive earthworks, ecologically valuable chalk grassland, and deciduous woodland. The site welcomes approximately 270,000 visitors annually, and English Heritage manages the historic landscape with great care to protect both its natural and built heritage, whilst facilitating public access.

Dover Castle is a managed landscape with no ornamental planting. Instead, landscape care focuses on grassland conservation and sustainable maintenance.

Rotational cutting is carried out on the inner ramparts and steep slopes by trained operatives using brushcutters and rope harnesses. Cut material is cleared, where possible, to avoid nutrient build-up and to maintain appropriate conditions for native species.

Short grass regimes are maintained around high-traffic areas and historic structures to preserve views and ensure public access. These areas are monitored for erosion, and mowing patterns are adjusted as needed.

Annual tree and hedge management is undertaken across the site to maintain plant health, manage disease, and ensure public safety.

Wild orchids have been recorded within the castle walls, including, in 2025, at least ten pyramidal orchids (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) and five bee orchids (*Ophrys apifera*). These are left undisturbed to flower and self-seed, contributing to the diversity and seasonal interest of the site.

CONSTABLE'S TOWER KITCHEN GARDEN – FRIENDS OF DOVER CASTLE

The Constables Tower Kitchen Garden project, launched in March 2022 by the Friends of Dover Castle, aims to restore and renovate this part of the Castle as part of English Heritage's plan to revitalise neglected areas. The project focuses on growing traditional salad and vegetable crops, using seeds and cuttings nurtured in the greenhouse and potting shed. Over the past two years, efforts have focused on improving the soil quality and implementing a 'No Dig' approach to gardening, which enhances soil structure and encourages the growth of healthy crops without disturbing the ecosystem.

In 2024, the project expanded to further improve the soil's moisture retention and structure, addressing the challenge of free-draining soil. Inspired by the National Trust's Sissinghurst Castle, the team adopted the No Dig principles, where mulching, manuring, and soil improvers are added in autumn, followed by spring composting. This method has significantly improved soil health, promoting beneficial soil organisms and increasing crop yields. The garden's restoration is an ongoing work in progress, and the team is looking forward to continuing their sustainable practices and enhancing the garden's productivity in 2025.

Photo credit: English Heritage



NATIONAL TRUST

WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

Over 300 dedicated volunteers at the National Trust's White Cliffs of Dover support the site through year-round work. Their efforts include growing plants for the annual plant fair (running for 23 years), a key fundraising event to raise money for the management of the site. Volunteers often take plug plants and compost home, nurturing them until they're ready to be sold. Many also donate cuttings and divide plants from their own gardens to contribute to the fair. A small on-site garden with raised beds (running since 2009) is used to grow seasonal produce - such as blackcurrants, redcurrants, raspberries, onions, leeks, carrots, and strawberries - specifically chosen based on the café's upcoming recipes. An on-site apiary is cared for by a local beekeeper, providing honey for sale and supporting pollination across the site's wild landscape. Each of these efforts contributes to the site's sustainable, community-driven mission.



Photo credit: National Trust - White Cliffs of Dover



Photo credit: Kent Downs National Landscape and Aspiring Cross-Channel UNESCO Global Geopark

COWGATE GARDEN

The Municipal Charities' Cowgate Garden development was completed in May 2024. The garden was conceived to be in the tradition of all almshouse gardens – a place for the almshouse community to gather. With herbs and scents to entice the senses, attract pollinators, and connect to the Western Heights behind it.

An ancient Roman terrace was incorporated from the Classis Britannica Fort, and a water feature reminiscent of the holy wells that spring up in the Kent Downs. Bay laurels stand as tall as their Roman counterparts from centuries ago. The walls of the late Georgian cottages have been recreated using their original foundations; if you sit in the alcoves of Cowgate Garden, you are sitting in the living spaces of the many Roman soldiers and Dover families who have lived there throughout history. The garden is still young but already brimming with colour and will soon have vegetation trailing from its pergolas, flowers bursting from its beds, and fauna humming throughout. Cowgate Garden is a bright, modern space built on the site of a scheduled monument – a true commemoration of Dover's rich past.

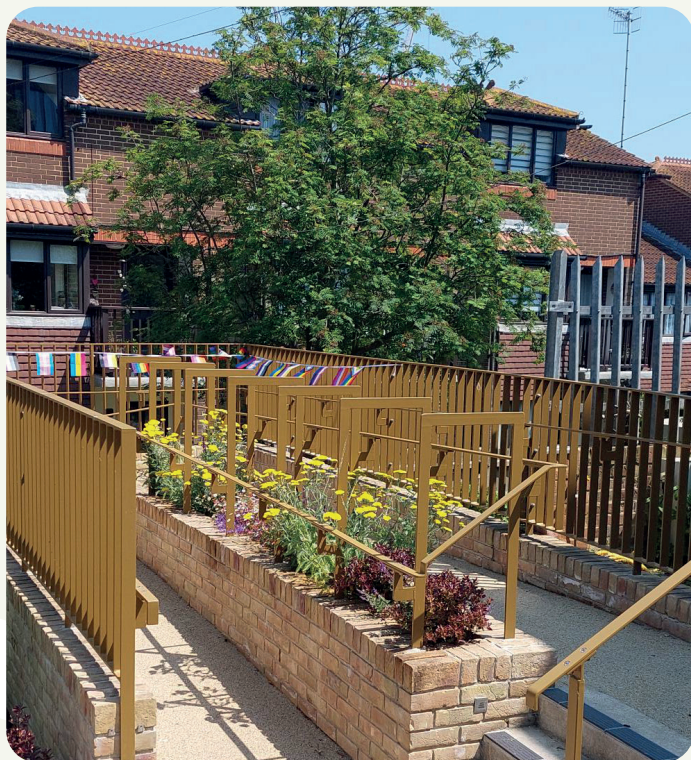


Photo credit: Municipal Charities of Dover

SPORTS GROUNDS

DOVER RUGBY CLUB – CRABBLE ATHLETIC GROUND

Established in 1873, Dover Rugby Club, also known as Dover Sharks RFC, is a cornerstone of the local sports community. Located at Crabble Athletic Ground, the club has undertaken several initiatives to enhance sustainability, engage the community, and promote environmental stewardship.

Sustainable Grounds Maintenance (Ongoing): Dover Rugby Club maintains two senior rugby pitches at Crabble Athletic Ground, with one pitch equipped with floodlighting. The club adheres to a maintenance programme rated M2/D1, the highest achievable for a community club, ensuring optimal pitch quality and sustainability.

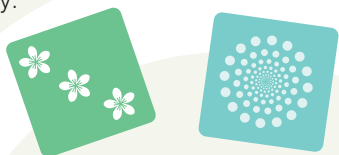
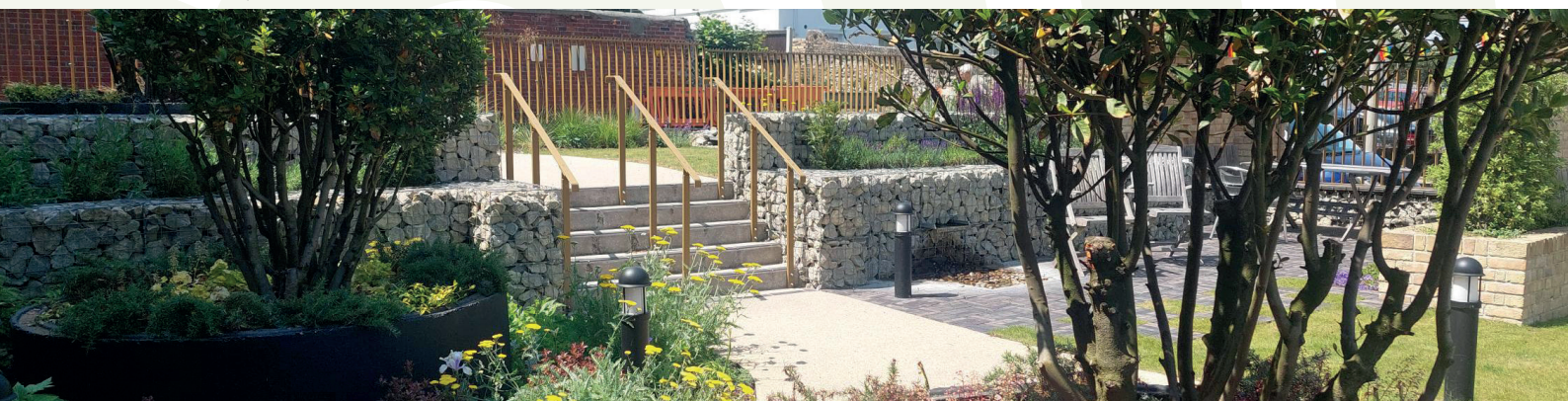


Photo credit: Municipal Charities of Dover

DOVER BOWLING CLUB – MAISON DIEU GARDENS

Located beside the River Dour, Dover Bowling Club uses sustainable grounds maintenance practices to protect the Chalk Stream from contamination, conserve water, and enhance biodiversity. Since 2015, the club has used organic practices to maintain its bowling green, prioritising eco-friendly weed and pest control. In 2020, a more efficient irrigation system to conserve water was installed and is used minimally allowing brown patches to develop on the green during dry periods. All works at the Club whether greens maintenance or work on the pollinator friendly border and baskets is done by volunteers, many of whom are older citizens. Dover is a Fairtrade town and the Club along with the Town Council and other local organisations has a policy to buy Fairtrade where possible. Since 2017, the club has enhanced its grounds with native plants and wildlife-friendly features, supporting local biodiversity.



GARDEN COMPETITIONS & AWARDS

DOVER DISTRICT TENANTS' CONSULTATIVE GROUP GARDEN COMPETITION

Each summer, Dover District Council, in partnership with the Dover District Social Housing Tenants' Consultative Group, hosts an annual Garden Competition. This event celebrates the dedication of local gardeners across various categories, including small, large, and uniquely designed spaces. In 2024, a new category was introduced to recognise the challenges faced by residents with different types of spaces.

REACH AWARDS DDC

In 2024, DDC launched the third year of its REACH Awards as part of the Council's support for Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean Campaign. These awards aim to honour individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to improving the local environment recognising environmental and community heroes in five categories.

GREEN SCHOOL AWARD

- DOVER GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Lizzie Reynolds was awarded grant funding to install raised flower beds, organised the planting of 100 new trees, and raised awareness of gardening and green issues among students and staff.

KEEP BRITAIN TIDY AWARDS

DDC has been shortlisted for the Keep Britain Tidy Local Authority Network Great British Spring Clean Award, recognising promotion, engagement, and delivery of the campaign.



Photo credit: Dover District Council



Photo credit: Dover District Council



Photo credit: Dover District Council



“Dover is a low-key, blue collar, tough scrabble sort of a port town. The towering cascades of summer geraniums in middle England are not for us, perched as we are on the very edge of England watching the cross-channel traffic come and go. But the lovely green fingers of chalk grassland Downs extend right up to the back gates of the social housing in our multiply deprived wards and Dovorians grow up with a deep-rooted love of landscape and seascape in their hearts. The recent move towards natural, sustainable planting with a firm focus on environmental responsibility feels right in Dover and this portfolio shows the authentic green spirit that motivates so many of us to get involved.”

ALLISON BURTON, TOWN CLERK

CROSS-CHANNEL GEOPARK & KENT DOWNS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE: A DEEP TIME LANDSCAPE REAWAKENING

Dover lies on a seam of chalk that once connected Britain to Europe – a vanished land bridge now re-imagined as a link between shared futures. The Cross-Channel Geopark and Kent Downs National Landscape celebrate this ancient terrain while restoring it for nature, learning, and local pride.

The proposed UNESCO Global Geopark includes key Dover sites – from Samphire Hoe to the White Cliffs and Dover Castle – recognising the area’s global geological and cultural significance. These landscapes are not just historic; they are living classrooms, wildlife havens, and community spaces shaped by deep time.

As Dover prepares its UNESCO application, the Cross-Channel Geopark becomes more than a designation – it is a shared, sustainable story linking past, people, and planet.

Kent Downs National Landscape and Aspiring Cross-Channel UNESCO Global Geopark



HERITAGE & ECOLOGY CONSERVATION IN SYNERGY

REACHING GREATER HEIGHTS

This section highlights how Dover is becoming a national model for heritage-led ecological regeneration.

The collaboration between heritage organisations, ecologists and local communities highlights the importance of integrated conservation strategies. By preserving both historical structures and enhancing natural habitats, these projects serve as a model for sustainable site management that benefits both cultural heritage and biodiversity.

The Reaching Greater Heights project is a collaborative effort led by English Heritage, with the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, Kent Wildlife Trust, and the Western Heights Preservation Society. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, this initiative aims to restore 80 hectares of chalk grassland across the east and west of Dover from Dover Castle to the Western Heights. The restoration focuses on clearing overgrown scrub to reveal ancient earthworks dating back 2,000 years, thereby preserving Dover's rich heritage.

Simultaneously, the project enhances biodiversity by providing stepping stones for species to migrate across nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), making them more resilient to climate change. A mixed-breed livestock herd is introduced for long-term conservation grazing, maintaining the delicate balance of the ecosystem.

Reaching Greater Heights is as much about people as it is about nature. Through a targeted programme of activities, the project is engaging young people, disabled people, and those affected by income and education deprivation – groups traditionally underrepresented in heritage. The plan includes community activities, access improvements, and co-created interpretation developed with and for the community.

Volunteering is a major focus, with new opportunities in landscape conservation, community outreach, and environmental monitoring. The project will involve over 100 volunteers, has created a countryside ranger apprenticeship and an early-career community engagement job, and is supporting upskilling in a district facing significant challenges.

"This is the first project to launch as part of English Heritage's new nature strategy and where better than in Dover where the world-renowned white cliffs offer such rich heritage and landscape combined."

DAVE HEDGES, ENGLISH HERITAGE HEAD OF ESTATES

"This project is an excellent opportunity to bring together heritage and nature conservation organisations to work together to conserve and improve the chalk grassland and protect the built heritage of the largest Napoleonic era fortification in the UK, the Western Heights, whilst promoting and increasing accessibility for the public."

RICHARD HAYNES, DIRECTOR, WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIP

"We're delighted to be working alongside our partners yet again to restore more areas of chalk grasslands, which have declined nationally by 97% in recent years. This initiative aims to breathe life back into these precious ecosystems, promoting biodiversity and preserving both our natural and historic heritage for future generations. Chalk grasslands are not just beautiful; they support a wealth of unique flora and fauna and have been likened to rainforests for their biodiversity benefits. And, having worked with Wildwood Trust last year to reintroduce Chough back into Dover's skies, the timing really could not be better!"

IAN RICKARDS, AREA MANAGER, KENT WILDLIFE TRUST



Photo credit: English Heritage

HERITAGE & ECOLOGY CONSERVATION IN SYNERGY (CONTINUED)

RESTORING HERITAGE AND NATURE AT WESTERN HEIGHTS

Dover District Council's Western Heights Regeneration project, supported by Historic England, is a significant initiative aimed at conserving and revitalising one of Britain's most important historical sites. In April 2024, Historic England awarded a £149,000 grant to Dover District Council for a three-year project focused on the conservation and regeneration of the Western Heights. This funding is matched by the Council, bringing the total investment to nearly £300,000.

The project brings closer the preservation of the Western Heights' historical structures, including the Drop Redoubt and the Grand Shaft, which are currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. Delivery is through a collaboration between Dover District Council, Historic England, the Western Heights Preservation Society, White Cliffs Countryside Partnership and English Heritage.

Key Objectives

Conservation Efforts: The project is an important step towards the preservation of the Western Heights' historical structures, including the Drop Redoubt and the Grand Shaft, which are currently on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

Community Engagement: A dedicated project officer co-ordinates volunteering opportunities, promoting the site through events and works closely with the Western Heights Preservation Society to increase public involvement.

Visitor Experience: Enhancing access to the site and improving connections with Dover's town centre and waterfront are central to the regeneration plans.



Photo credit: Paul Wells, Western Heights Preservation Society



Photo credit: English Heritage

DOVER CASTLE: FROM BATTLEMENTS TO BIODIVERSITY

Dover Castle's natural character is closely tied to local identity. Historic landscapes, panoramic views, and the presence of native flora and fauna foster pride of place and environmental awareness.

Managed by English Heritage, the site contains Lowland Calcareous Grassland and areas of Deciduous Woodland, both designated as UK Priority Habitats. These support a range of wildlife, including pollinators, butterflies, and notable bird species such as black redstart and chough.

To maintain and enhance these environments, conservation grazing is carried out on the outer ramparts under a contract with Kent Wildlife Trust. This grazing regime helps control dominant grasses like Tor Grass (*Brachypodium pinnatum*) and Erect Brome (*Bromus erectus*), creating the varied sward height and structure needed for chalk grassland species to thrive.

As part of a wider commitment to sustainable environmental management, English Heritage has eliminated chemical weed control from the castle's cyclical maintenance schedule. Weed management is now almost entirely mechanical, reducing environmental harm and improving safety for pollinators and other wildlife.

Further habitat restoration, scrub clearance, and access enhancements are being delivered through the Reaching Greater Heights project, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and made possible thanks to National Lottery players.

HERITAGE & ECOLOGY CONSERVATION IN SYNERGY (CONTINUED)

RED-BILLED CHOUGH: A SYMBOL OF ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

A remarkable success story is the reintroduction of the red-billed chough, a bird species extinct in Kent for over 200 years. Through a partnership between Kent Wildlife Trust, Wildwood Trust, and English Heritage, choughs were reintroduced to Dover Castle.

In 2024, the first wild chough chick in Kent for two centuries was successfully reared, marking a significant milestone in conservation efforts. The project aims to establish a sustainable chough population along the south coast of England.

Paul Hadaway, Director of Conservation & Engagement at Kent Wildlife Trust says:

“ The red-billed chough reintroduction project in Dover demonstrates that, even with the perilous state of nature and wildlife in this country it is still possible to restore nature and return missing species. ”

RARE BAT DISCOVERIES AT DOVER CASTLE: A TESTAMENT TO HERITAGE AND ECOLOGY

Greater Mouse-Eared Bat: A Historic Return

In early 2025, a significant discovery was made at Dover Castle: a female greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), the UK's rarest bat species, was found hibernating there. This marks the first time the species has been recorded in Kent in over 40 years. Previously, only a single male had been known to hibernate in the UK since 2002, earning the nickname 'Britain's loneliest bat'. The recent find offers hope for the species' resurgence in Britain.

Heritage sites like Dover Castle play a crucial role in bat conservation. Their stable, undisturbed environments provide ideal conditions for hibernation and roosting.

In 2024 and 2025, volunteers and conservationists conducted hibernation surveys at Dover Castle, leading to the discovery of the female bat. These efforts were part of broader initiatives by organisations like the Kent Bat Group and South East Ecology to monitor and protect bat species in the region. Such community-driven conservation work is vital for the continued protection and study of rare bat populations.



Photo credit: Kent Wildlife Trust

HERITAGE & ECOLOGY CONSERVATION IN SYNERGY (CONTINUED)

WESTERN HEIGHTS PRESERVATION SOCIETY

The Western Heights Preservation Society (WHPS) is a voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving and interpreting Dover's historic Western Heights fortifications. Through regular monthly workdays and community engagement, WHPS has revitalised key sites such as the Drop Redoubt, Grand Shaft, North Entrance, and St Martin's Battery, enhancing public access and appreciation.

WHPS is a significant partner in Reaching Greater Heights and Dover District Council's Western Heights Regeneration Project.

In addition to ecological conservation, WHPS hosts reenactment activities that help bring the area's landscapes and heritage to life, making the site more accessible and engaging. Their workday activities, open to all ages and abilities, focus on sustainable conservation practices, including scrub clearance, habitat restoration, and heritage interpretation.

WHPS integrates ecological and historical stewardship, playing a vital role in preserving Dover's natural and cultural heritage, helping to shape the area as a vibrant and sustainable asset for the community.



Photo credit: Western Heights Preservation Society



Photo credit: Western Heights Preservation Society

FORT BURGOWNE: ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Owned by The Land Trust, the 43-hectare Fort Burgoyne (a scheduled monument) is managed by the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP).

Conservation efforts have focused on enhancing biodiversity and creating green corridors. Notable species such as pyramidal orchids and ox-eye daisies now thrive thanks to changes in mowing regimes and habitat management. A new wildflower meadow at Burgoyne Heights and chalk grassland restoration at nearby Coombe Hole are helping connect key sites, boosting pollinator and reptile habitats.

In 2024, volunteers contributed over 2,000 hours, helping with scrub clearance, scything, and habitat creation. New skills – like traditional scything – have been put into practice to support meadow restoration and corridor creation across the estate.

More than 500 schoolchildren joined outdoor learning sessions in 2024, while adults took part in Green Angels courses on chalk grassland management. Events such as bat walks, reptile surveys, and wildlife trails welcomed over 1,000 visitors, with the site earning 'Education Site of the Year' from The Land Trust in 2023.

Looking ahead, plans include winter grazing with rare breed livestock and ongoing public engagement to support the estate's biodiversity and heritage.

INTERCONNECTED GREEN CORRIDORS: RIVER, LAND & SEA

DOVER'S GREEN CORRIDORS FOR WILDLIFE AND COMMUNITY

From the winding River Dour to the chalk downs and the English Channel, Dover's green corridors weave together habitats, heritage, and communities. These connected spaces support biodiversity, active travel, and climate resilience – linking land, river, and sea in a shared vision for a greener, healthier town.

THE RIVER DOUR

Chalk streams are incredibly rare globally, with only around 200 found worldwide, most of which are in the UK, making them a unique and irreplaceable ecological resource.

As one of the few chalk streams in the UK, the Dour is a specialist habitat for species including brown trout, kingfishers, and grey wagtails. The river's clear, nutrient-rich waters support a diverse range of aquatic life, making it an essential resource for biodiversity. In addition, the river serves as a vital part of the region's natural heritage, contributing to the overall health of the surrounding environment and offering opportunities for conservation, education, and community engagement.

OUR FINEST DOUR

Our Finest Dour is a White Cliffs Countryside Partnership project to raise awareness of and improve the health of the River Dour in Dover. It has been funded through a partnership of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Dover Town Council, Dover District Council, Southern Water, the Environment Agency, Dover Big Local and Affinity Water. It has brought a disused toilet block back into community use as the River Dour Hub. This small space on the banks of the Dour and close to the site of a former, polluting papermill, is used for educational and awareness events ranging from river dipping to fly fishing tuition to encourage responsible angling.

The project engaged 935 children in 2024 through educational sessions and events focused on the river's ecology.



Photo credit: White Cliffs Countryside Partnership

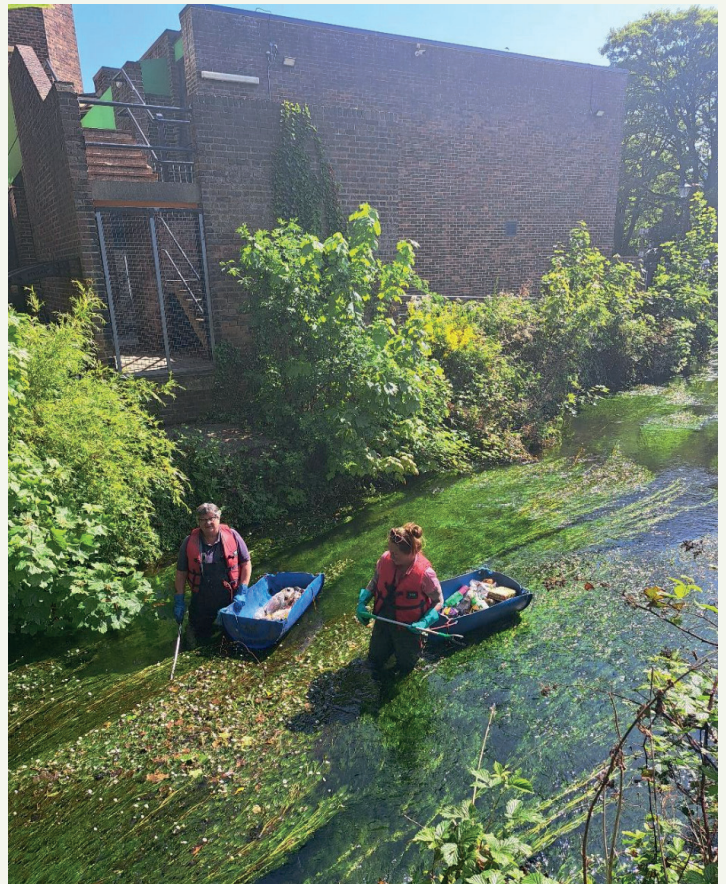


Photo credit: White Cliffs Countryside Partnership

This outreach helps build a new generation of river stewards. Additionally, 56 local residents attended workshops in 2024/25, where they learned about river care and their riparian responsibilities.

Ecological Efforts and River Health

Despite being a Heavily Modified Waterbody (HMW), the River Dour still supports significant biodiversity, including stream water crowfoot (*Ranunculus penicillatus*), which provides vital habitat for species like the genetically unique brown trout, as well as mayflies and shrimp. White Cliffs Countryside Partnership coordinates regular riverfly monitoring surveys, which are conducted by trained volunteers, to track the population of key invertebrates such as mayflies, caddisflies, and freshwater shrimp. These species serve as critical indicators of water quality and river health, highlighting the impact of pollution, siltation, and changes in oxygen levels.

WCCP and its volunteers play a key role in cleaning up the river, removing 70 bags of litter from the river and its banks in 2024 alone. Supported by Dover Town Council, this not only reduces harm to wildlife but also help foster a sense of environmental stewardship.

INTERCONNECTED GREEN CORRIDORS: RIVER, LAND & SEA (CONTINUED)

HIGH MEADOW NATURE RESERVE

Owned by Dover Town Council and managed expertly by WCCP, High Meadow Local Nature Reserve offers stunning panoramic views of Dover and provides a vital habitat for local wildlife. Straddling the Downs between the town wards of St. Radigunds, Tower Hamlets and Elms Vale, all of which feature every year in the 10% most deprived areas in England, High Meadow sits at the heart of a lifelong love of the landscape for many of Dover's residents. The Council is dedicated to sustainable management with a focus on biodiversity and long-term conservation.

Key Management Practices:

Conservation Grazing: Exmoor (native breed) pony grazing helps maintain the chalk grassland habitat, prevents scrub encroachment, and supports a diverse range of native species, including wildflowers, birds, and insects.

Habitat Restoration & Protection: Planting native species, protecting wildflower-rich meadows and maintaining paths to reduce erosion and encourage responsible access.



Eco-Friendly Practices: No use of pesticides, responsible waste management and encouraging community involvement in conservation projects.

Sustainability Education: Signage and events to raise awareness about biodiversity, climate resilience, and sustainable land management. Volunteer opportunities to engage the local community in conservation efforts.

Accessible Path Installation: In 2024, funding supported the installation of an accessible path to the summit, making the reserve more inclusive for disabled users and enhancing its enjoyment by all visitors.

Photo credit: White Cliffs Countryside Partnership



INTERCONNECTED GREEN CORRIDORS: RIVER, LAND & SEA (CONTINUED)

WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIP

The White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) is a not-for-profit organisation founded in 1989 to protect and enhance the distinctive coast and countryside of Dover and Folkestone & Hythe. Hosted by Dover District Council but operating independently, WCCP works with a range of partners from the public, private and charitable sectors to deliver conservation and community programmes across the region.

WCCP collaborates closely with partners, volunteers, and local communities to protect Dover's wild spaces, where heritage and ecology often intertwine.

Key sites include Cowgate Cemetery, Fort Burgoyne, High Meadow, River Dour, Western Heights, Samphire Hoe and Whinless Down.

Across WCCP's Dover sites the focus is on restoring and improving the rare chalk grassland habitat, which is famous for its floristic richness (there can be over 40 species per square metre of turf) and its rare and beautiful butterflies. Throughout the summer you can see a succession of orchids, including early spider *Ophrys sphegodes*, pyramidal *Anacamptis pyramidalis* and fragrant *Gymnadenia conopsea*, along with other plants, such as early gentian *Gentianella anglica*, kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria* and harebell *Campanula rotundifolia*.

Habitat Management and Wildlife Corridors

The chalk grassland habitat is maintained and improved by using a variety of techniques, including conservation grazing with cattle and ponies, scrub management, meadow cutting and the removal of invasive non-native species.

WCCP aims for its habitat management operations to be as sustainable and climate neutral as possible. Along with local farmers, they manage the rare chalk grassland areas with their livestock. Implementing conservation grazing across these sites is a sustainable way of improving their botanical diversity, and a unique way of delivering further engagement with the local community. Where grass cutting takes place, arisings are either used to make 'habitat piles', which benefit a range of animals, or used as green hay to spread on other, less rich, grassland in the local area.



Photo credit: White Cliffs Countryside Partnership



Photo credit: White Cliffs Countryside Partnership

Samphire Hoe

Samphire Hoe is a 30-hectare nature reserve at the foot of the White Cliffs of Dover, created from Channel Tunnel spoil in 1997 and managed by the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership on behalf of Eurotunnel. The reserve is home to over 200 plant species, including over 1,300 early spider orchids *Ophrys sphegodes* – a rare chalk grassland species pollinated by the miner bee *Andrena nigroaenea* – as well as thousands more orchids including bee and pyramidal varieties. The site supports 220 bird species, 30 butterfly species, and 380 moth species.

Samphire Hoe has been recognised with 17 Green Flag Awards and 6 South & South East In Bloom Awards, reflecting its high environmental quality and community contribution.

Volunteers and Community Involvement

WCCP's success is driven by volunteers. In 2024 alone, volunteers provided 819 days on tasks such as litter picks, river cleans, and species surveys. Events like bat walks, river dipping, and nature trails have reached over 420 people. At Fort Burgoyne's 'Sunday Funday,' over 300 attendees celebrated nature and sustainability.

Additionally, 1,200 local students participated in outdoor learning at Fort Burgoyne and along the River Dour, nurturing a connection with the environment.

Climate Action and Sustainability

WCCP is actively reducing its carbon footprint using electric tools, ASPEN fuels, and an electric van for community outreach.

With strong community involvement, WCCP will continue restoring and connecting chalk grasslands, ensuring these landscapes thrive long into the future.

INTERCONNECTED GREEN CORRIDORS: RIVER, LAND & SEA (CONTINUED)

KENT WILDLIFE TRUST – BLUE INFLUENCERS & HABITAT RESTORATION IN DOVER (2024–25)

Kent Wildlife Trust engages in Dover through pioneering youth focused projects and wildlife conservation efforts centred around chalk grassland and coastal habitats.

Blue Influencers Scheme is a national youth social action programme focused on empowering young people aged 10-14 to take action on environmental and climate issues, particularly those related to 'blue spaces' like coasts, estuaries, and rivers.

Blue Mentor Jenny Luddington works with young 'Blue Influencers' and with participation from Dover-based schools and youth groups, is running beach cleans, river scavenger hunts and projects such as wildlife murals and a community pond.

NATIONAL TRUST, WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER, LANGDON CLIFFS

Restoring Rare Species on the White Cliffs of Dover

This 18-month project, part of a £14.5 million Natural England investment across 63 UK sites, is focused on restoring ten rare species on the chalk grasslands of the White Cliffs and the Isle of Wight.

In collaboration with Butterfly Conservation, land managers have used strip-cutting to mimic terracettes – natural ledges where short and long grass meet – to create over 1 km of 'edge habitat'. This microhabitat supports several rare species, especially moths, and improves future habitat management.



Photo credit: National Trust, White Cliffs of Dover



Photo credit: Kent Wildlife Trust

The chalk grasslands of the White Cliffs are among England's most threatened yet biodiversity-rich habitats. Conservation work supports rare flora and fauna including:

Plants: Oxtongue broomrape, Yarrow broomrape.

Invertebrates: Rest harrow moth, Straw belle moth, Dew footman moth, White spot moth, Potter flower bee, Cliff furrow bee, and the Glanville fritillary butterfly.

Habitat techniques include improved mowing, grazing, and scrub management.

Volunteer Involvement

Over 400 volunteers support the site in varied roles:

Bio survey Volunteers (54 individuals) are surveying rare species and carrying out habitat restoration, contributing 1,344 hours between 2023–25.

Countryside Volunteers contribute around 3,500 hours yearly to manage chalk grassland, maintain paths, and support grazing systems.

Plant Fair Volunteers grow and sell plants at the annual Plant Fair to fund ongoing conservation.

General Volunteers (approx. 300) help with litter picking, visitor welcome, and site upkeep throughout the year.

Community Activities

In Summer 2024, Bug Hunt events at Langdon Cliffs invited families to explore wildflowers and insects, with 52 attendees over six sessions. Accessibility was a priority, allowing participation by all. Regular Guided Walks and Talks highlight the area's natural and cultural heritage, from edible wild plants to folklore. Since October 2023, over 290 people have attended events, deepening public connection to Dover's remarkable chalk landscapes.

CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

In Dover, climate action is rooted in place. From chalk cliffs to working port, this is a town shaped by sea, weather, and movement – and increasingly by its forward-thinking response to environmental challenges. Local authorities, partners, and residents are working together to reduce carbon, restore biodiversity, and create greener, healthier spaces for all. This section highlights bold steps being taken from district-wide strategies and seafront planting to zero-emission buses and a cross-Channel green shipping corridor. These efforts are not just about reducing environmental impact – they are about creating a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable Dover for generations to come.

GREEN CORRIDOR AT SHORT STRAITS (GCSS): PIONEERING ZERO-CARBON MARITIME TRAVEL

The Port of Dover is partnering with French ports and ferry operators on the Green Corridor at Short Straits (GCSS) project, a groundbreaking initiative aimed at creating a zero-carbon maritime route between Dover, Calais, and Dunkirk. This project focuses on the development of electric ferries and shore-side charging infrastructure, paving the way for decarbonising cross-Channel trade and passenger travel. By leading this collaborative effort, the Port of Dover is playing a key role in reducing the environmental impact of one of Europe's busiest maritime routes, driving the transition to cleaner, sustainable travel across the Channel.



Photo credits: Port of Dover



CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE (CONTINUED)

PORT OF DOVER: CHAMPIONING MARINE BIODIVERSITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Port of Dover is setting a high standard for environmental leadership, with initiatives focused on restoring biodiversity, reducing pollution, and engaging the local community.

Marine Habitat Enhancement – In partnership with Kent Wildlife Trust, the Port is restoring Old Park Hill, a 40-hectare nature reserve supporting species such as the Adonis blue butterfly, orchids, and reptiles, strengthening local biodiversity.

Monitoring and Protection – Regular ecological surveys are conducted across land and sea, including biannual intertidal monitoring at Langdon Bay and Shakespeare Beach, and quarterly surveys of benthic fauna and algae. Notable species such as Kingfishers and Black Redstarts are regularly recorded. Water quality is closely monitored within the harbour and the River Dour to maintain safe conditions at Dover Beach.

Pollution Reduction and Net-Zero Goals – With a goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2025, the Port has already reduced Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 98% since 2007. Measures include installing Seabins to reduce marine litter and tackling nutrient pollution.

Community Engagement – Collaborating with the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, the Port supports events like Shakespeare Beach surveys and beach cleans, promoting environmental awareness and stewardship.

Port of Dover Regatta - The Port of Dover Regatta has been awarded a platinum sustainable certification, specifically the Clean Regatta award, which is the world's leading environmental accreditation for water-based events. This award recognises the Port of Dover's commitment to sustainability at the Regatta since 2022.

Celebrating Native Flora – Along the seafront, the Port has introduced wildflower beds using plants adapted to the unique vegetated shingle habitat. These areas are managed with minimal intervention to support native biodiversity, featuring species such as sea kale, viper's-bugloss, wild carrot, and oxeye daisy.

Recognition – In 2024, the Port received the SEA Award for its work with the Asuka II cruise ship, recognising its commitment to environmental responsibility.

Photo credits: Port of Dover



CLIMATE ACTION & SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE (CONTINUED)

DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Delivering Real Change for Climate, Communities and Nature

Dover District Council is taking ambitious, practical action on climate change and sustainable development through investment, innovation, and collaboration.

Dover Fastrack: Connecting Communities Sustainably

Launched in November 2024, Dover Fastrack is Kent's first zero-emission bus service, connecting Whitfield, Dover town centre and Dover Priory station via dedicated lanes that prioritise buses over general traffic. This £34 million investment offers a fast, accessible, and eco-friendly transport option, reducing reliance on private vehicles. A fleet of ultra-low emission buses currently operates on the route, with full electrification coming in 2025. The route also incorporates wildflower verges and green corridors through the town, supporting biodiversity alongside mobility.

Green Infrastructure and Nature-Based Solutions

The Dover District Green Infrastructure Strategy, adopted in June 2024, sets out a bold, joined-up vision to restore ecosystems, manage water more sustainably, and create healthier, greener spaces for residents and wildlife alike. The strategy focuses on chalk grassland restoration, wildlife corridor connectivity, and improved access to natural areas, offering localised responses to climate change and ecological decline.

Projects supporting this strategy include rainwater gardens in the new Dover Beacon redevelopment, and rewilding initiatives such as reduced mowing regimes at the District Council's Whitfield offices – benefiting pollinators, orchids, and public awareness of sustainable grounds maintenance.

A District-Wide Commitment to Net Zero

Dover District Council declared a Climate Emergency in January 2020 and has since cut corporate emissions by almost 50% compared to 2011 levels. It aims to achieve carbon neutrality across its own operations by 2025, with a district-wide target of net zero by 2050. The Council's Climate Change Strategy, launched in 2021, was shaped by a cross-party Member Working Group and is now supported by the Climate and Nature Forum, which meets quarterly with town and parish councils and local groups to collaborate on climate action.

Recent regeneration projects reflect these priorities. The Dover Beacon scheme, Maison Dieu's energy upgrades, and the £26m Dover District Leisure Centre – built to BREEAM 'Very Good' standards – together represent over £56m invested in low-carbon infrastructure. The Leisure Centre, Kent's most energy-efficient, features a combined heat and power (CHP) system, 70 rooftop solar panels, and holds a Grade A energy performance certificate.



Photo credits: Dover Town Council

Innovation in Everyday Operations

Sustainable practices embedded in Council operations include investment in an electric utility vehicle for Kearsney Parks, a hybrid remote-controlled mower for maintaining banks around the town, and ongoing exploration of low-carbon technologies to reduce emissions further.

DOVER TOWN COUNCIL - BIKE HIRE SCHEME

Provided by Dover Town Council, to encourage outdoor exercise and reduce the reliance on cars for short journeys the app-based scheme provides accessible, eco-friendly travel around Dover, with docking stations at key locations such as the train station, Market Square, seafront, and White Cliffs. E-bikes are available also to overcome the natural disinclination of would-be users to tackle the steep ascents between the town centre and residential areas. Research has shown e-bikes are as good as manual bikes if not better for providing a good cardio workout.

Phase 2 Expansion: funding has been won to extend the scheme in a second phase, adding more hubs to serve parks, ferry terminal and places of work.



GRASSROOTS GROUPS

Dover is overrun with thriving community-lead grassroots groups and organisations, doing their bit to make the town blossom with eco-friendly actions.

FUTURE FOUNDRY AND BIGGIN HALL

Biggin Hall was built in 1881 of knapped flints. It was lovingly restored after years of neglect with hundreds of hours of volunteer time by owners Dover Community Association (DCA). It was then transformed into a creative, circular hub by Future Foundry who now provide it free of charge, in partnership with DCA, for local people developing grassroots cultural, educational and environmental activity in the town. The space is used as a base for Future Foundry alongside Dover Pride, Access, Arts and Adventures, Ceramic Art Dover, makers markets, drama and dance workshops.

The Biggin Hall Garden is being developed this summer, having been permanently fenced off to reduce violent antisocial behaviour in the area. A consultation process with the groups and communities that use the space and neighbours has led to designs for an urban pollinator garden with a stage, large table for shared meals and decorated youth cafe tables, all designed and created by the users of the space. Funding has been provided by Dover Town Council and the Asda Foundation. Future Foundry is a local, artist-led organisation rooted in Dover's creative and environmental life. They focus on amplifying the voices of young and marginalised people, helping them build confidence, skills, and connections through hands-on cultural projects. As a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England, they have secured funding through to 2027 – bringing both stability and ambition to their work in the town.

LITTLE ARTLINGS is a free, weekly nature and plant based creative club for 0-10 years and families. They focus on the natural world, foraging, sustainable materials and locally made plant based food. The club offers creativity, nature and a sense of belonging for families, with a safe outdoor space



Photo credit: Artswork



Photo credit: Future Foundry, Dover Youth Festival

for play, exploration, and confidence-building. The project has delivered over 50 sessions, regularly welcoming 35 attendees and reaching 900+ people at the Dover at Night Festival with workshops and an immersive projection and soundtrack of the River Dour.

ARTSWORK are actively involved in fostering youth-led art projects in Dover, particularly those that intersect with environmental sustainability and community engagement. Initiatives include an eco-friendly bike shelter and vibrant murals. A Young Cultural Changemakers programme at EKC Dover College created a runway full of upcycled garments with Eco Fashion Artist Eirinn Hayhow, who uses second hand and natural materials (flowers, coffee, and moss) culminating in an exhibition and fashion runway in Dover Town Centre.

DOVER FOR GARDENERS is a Facebook group with over 1500 members who have fostered a gardening community of enthusiastic amateurs looking for local advice, skills swapping and non-commercial gardening expertise.

RIVER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION is a friendly club for amateur and 'armchair' gardeners of all ages. Members engage in growing fruits, vegetables, plants, and flowers, as well as crafts and floral art. They run coffee mornings, seed swaps and the Spring Show which showcased over 500 exhibits from local schools and organisations.

GRASSROOTS GROUPS (CONTINUED)



Photo credit: Dover and District Beekeepers' Association

DOVER & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

was established in 2011 when a swarm of bees settled on a Weigela bush in a Dover garden, now the closest known apiary to Europe and inspected each year by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Dover & District Beekeepers Association is at the forefront of monitoring and responding to the invasion of Asian hornets in the UK, with local bees accessing the abundant species of plant life found on Dover's Western Heights. The association promotes practical beekeeping through advice, mentoring, equipment loans and educating beginners in bee behaviour and life cycle.

TRANSITION DOVER - BRIDGE STREET WILDFLOWER CORRIDOR

started in 2016 when Transition Dover began the transformation of a neglected patch of land on Bridge Street, alongside the rear wall of Morrisons supermarket. Originally a barren, rubble-strewn area, the site has evolved into a vibrant wildflower corridor, a diverse mixture of garden flowers and wildflowers thanks to the planting of native British wildflower seeds, specifically suited to coastal areas. Dedicated volunteers continue to maintain the site by litter-picking, trimming back overgrown plants, reseeding with native species and using green waste for composting. All equipment is donated or borrowed, minimising waste and reducing the need for new resources. The wildflower corridor not only contributes to local biodiversity but also serves as a visual symbol of community-driven environmental action.

BEFORE



AFTER



Photo credits: Transition Dover

THE DOVER WOMBLES are a dedicated team of volunteers working year-round to brighten and care for public green spaces across the town. Their efforts include planting, weeding, and maintenance at sites like the Market Square, The Art Club planters, Dover Unitarian Church Gardens, and Dover Priory Station. They provide gardening and maintenance at the Cowgate Cemetery, now a nature reserve, in partnership with the Dover Society and supported by White Cliffs Countryside Partnership. They also organise numerous litter-picking sessions across the town, focusing on areas such as Shakespeare Beach.



Photo credit: Dover Wombles

ST MARTINS CHURCH

The community peace garden project will create a welcoming space where local residents can come together, grow food, and share gardening knowledge. Supported by a grant from Dover District Council, the project has established a patio area for group gatherings and community use. Plans for the summer and autumn include planting fruit trees along a well-used path to provide children with a healthy snack on their way to and from school. Raised beds will also be installed for growing vegetables and flowers, with the hope of forming a local gardening group to care for the space.



Photo credit: Transition Dover

GRASSROOTS GROUPS (CONTINUED)

THE DOVER SOCIETY was founded in 1988 to promote high standards of planning and architecture, and to inform the public about the area's geography, history, archaeology, and natural history. They are committed to preserving and enhancing Dover's historic and natural environment, maintaining Cowgate Cemetery and Nature Reserve with fortnightly gardening meet ups over the last 20 years.

LITTLE URCHINS HEDGEHOG RESCUE DOVER

was established in June 2022 and is a dedicated wildlife rescue service that provides medical care, rehabilitation, and release for hedgehogs and other wildlife including seagulls, jackdaws, moorhens, and rabbits. The rescue operates entirely on donations and volunteer support, with an annual fundraising summer fete. In addition to their rescue efforts, they engage with the community through educational talks at schools, nursing homes, and scout groups to raise awareness about local wildlife conservation.

RESIDENTS WILDLIFE GROUP (WHITFIELD)

is a community initiative encouraging local residents to dedicate at least 10% of their outdoor space to support wildlife. They promote biodiversity and foster connection between residents and their natural surroundings.

EMMAUS DOVER COMMUNITY GARDEN

Launched to engage the local community through individual gardening plots, encouraging cultural diversity, sustainability, and environmental care. Volunteers from Mitie Security, B&Q, Emmaus companions, and staff – around 24 people in total – contributed over three months to establish the garden. Plot owners maintain a variety of plants and share responsibilities like watering, pruning, and composting, with reclaimed wood and locally sourced materials enhancing sustainability. Habitats were relocated to support biodiversity, and an opening session



Photo credit: Emmaus Dover



Photo credit: Little Urchins Hedgehog Rescue

provided education on sustainable practices. Now home to 10 thriving plots, the garden has revitalised the area and inspired a growing sense of pride and ownership. With more space available, the project is set to expand, offering continued opportunities for community involvement and eco-friendly living.

SAGE NETWORK

The Sage Network transformed a piece of waste ground at Dover's Charlton Shopping Centre, developed in partnership with Dover Big Local – into a thriving urban community garden, designed to support people with health conditions, social isolation, or a need for connection. The garden welcomes up to 100 people each week, through group sessions and therapeutic gardening, members gain structure, purpose, and friendship. The space is run using organic, sustainable methods – composting, water harvesting, and pollinator planting – and is enhanced with bird baths, bug hotels, and upcycled materials. Its reach continues to grow through school visits, wildlife partnerships, and collaborations with groups like Canterbury Cathedral and Stepping Out for Carers.

It's a small space with a big impact – boosting both community wellbeing and urban biodiversity in central Dover.

DOVER REPAIR CAFÉ is a community initiative facilitated by Transition Dover that provides a space for residents to have their broken items repaired for free, fostering a culture of repair over disposal. Held monthly at Biggin Hall, the café brings together skilled volunteers and community members to share knowledge and resources, eat cake and drink tea!



ARTISTIC INSPIRATION

From Shakespeare to Vera Lynn, Dover is a muse to generations of artists.



CHALK STREAM GUARDIAN DRESS PROJECT

by artist Jenni Cresswell is inspired by the rare and fragile River Dour, one of only 200 chalk streams in the world. A richly embroidered textile piece, the dress traces geological strata up to the riverbed, incorporating detailed stitchwork that illustrates the structure and character of a chalk-fed stream. Native plant and animal species will be added using both their Latin and common names, with the Dover community encouraged to add their own reflections to a dedicated panel of the dress using cut-out images of keystone species like the Brown Trout and European Eel.

RIVER TALES is a collaboration between the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP) and the River Dour Partnership (RDP), and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to celebrate the River Dour by bringing community stories, ecology, and creative engagement together in honour of Dover's unique urban chalk stream.



Photo credit: Jenni Cresswell and Maison Dieu

DOVER BY SIMON BILL AND DOVER ARTS DEVELOPMENT

published 2025 is a compelling mix of memoir, travelogue, allotment diary and cultural commentary that delves into the town and its surroundings in 12 essays. Dover is seen as England in microcosm, with its beauty, people, history, the social and cultural challenges it faces. The book's themes are further explored in 12 slide talks and discussions at a range of venues across Dover and elsewhere. Most recent was 'Nature and Horticulture in Dover', an event at White Cliffs Visitors Centre which included a species identification walk with Mel Wrigley of the National Trust.

DOVER SMART PROJECT creates bold, environmentally themed murals, co-created by local children and older residents. Locations like Whitfield underpass and Barton Path now host vibrant art celebrating nature and community. Committed to sustainability, the team reused site materials and minimised their carbon footprint with artists walking or using public transport to attend sessions. Over 600 people have taken part, from school groups to local residents. Phase One of the next mural on Bench Street is already underway, ensuring creativity and environmental awareness remain central to Dover's evolving landscape.



Photo credit: Simon Bill and Dover Arts Development

WINTER LIGHT UP MARINE CONSERVATION TRAIL

was a trail of five English Channel sea creature lanterns lighting up shop windows in Dover Town Centre, created by the Future Foundry team in partnership with Dover Town Council to showcase the extraordinary local marine wildlife. Alongside information panels, all of these (Grey Seal, Green Shore Crab, Sea Trout, Spiny Seahorse, Compass Jellyfish) can be found in the Dover Straits.



Photo credit: Dover Smart Project



ENORMOUS ECO-EVENTS!

What better way to build community than by organising massive events and hosting huge festivals? They bring people from all walks of life together to animate the town's green spaces and enjoy Dover's iconic coastal ecosystems and unique heritage.

DOVER'S WINTER LIGHT UP

In its fourth year, this annual event celebrates the wildlife of Dover in the winter with a light festival, creating the opportunity to bring the whole town together. A collaboration between Future Foundry and Dover Town Council featuring star lanterns carried by 600 children accompanied by 12 giant wildlife lanterns, carried by volunteers alongside carnival bands. The event highlights species found in the local landscape, being reintroduced through conservation programmes, and visible on the hills of the town through grazing programmes. This year's procession included the Little Egret, Fox, Chough, Highland Cow, Konik Pony, Badger, Pine Marten, Seagull, Peregrine Falcon, Frog, Stag and Hare. The lantern sculptures have taken over 500 hours of sculpting using nothing but bamboo, willow sticks and tissue paper. Each year new characters are made and old renewed to ensure the event is sustainable and waste free.



Photo credit: Future Foundry

SHIVANOVA'S WORLD A TENT is a vibrant, multicultural festival at Burgoyne Heights bringing diverse communities together to enjoy culture and heritage in the beautiful Kent AONB countryside surrounding Dover. This mobile festival for fields and parks celebrates the coming together of cultures, music, dance and nature.

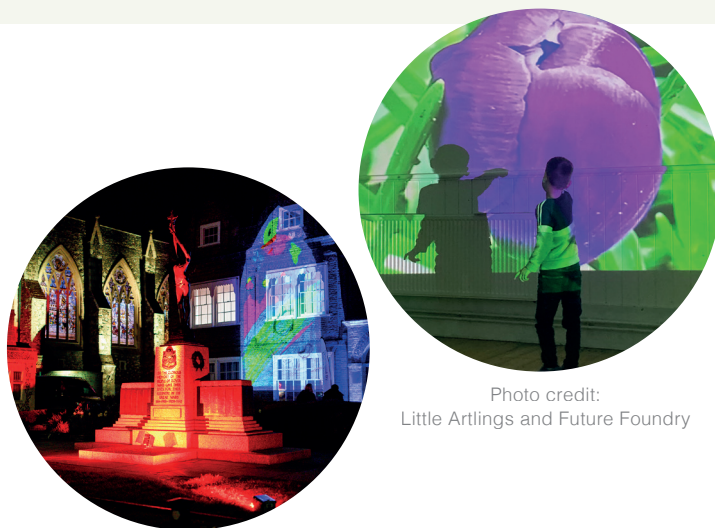


Photo credit:
Little Artlings and Future Foundry

Photo credit:
Artswork and Maison Dieu

DOVER AT NIGHT 2025 - THE RIVER DOUR

A vibrant celebration of Dover's heritage, culture, and the unique chalk stream the River Dour, organised by the Maison Dieu and Artswork. A diverse programme of activities across 15 venues in Dover town centre in partnership with over 20 community groups and organisations, including:

- 1,000 pieces of river inspired artwork by children projected onto various town buildings.
- Dover Museum - ceramic pieces inspired by the River Dour and torchlit gallery tours.
- Little Artlings and Future Foundry - immersive installation of River Dour film and soundtrack.
- Animated history of the Dour created by 600 children projected onto Maison Dieu House.



Photo credit: ShivaNova

ENORMOUS ECO-EVENTS! (CONTINUED)

DOVER PRIDE are committed to using eco-friendly and lightweight sustainable materials for big builds, with protest placards and signage designed to be reused, recycled and repurposed annually. All performers are encouraged to use eco-friendly glitter and biodegradable props, while vendors are asked to reduce waste and plastics. Dover Pride organise events throughout the year, such as their 'Binbags & Gladraggs' litter pick and are reducing emissions with team members using carpools to events, meetings and away days when connecting in solidarity with other pride events across Kent.



Photo credit: Dover Pride

THE PORT OF DOVER REGATTA brings the beach and harbour to life, attracting thousands of visitors annually with activities like dragon boat races and live music. In 2024, it raised £10,000 for local charities. Since 2022, the event has earned the Clean Regatta Platinum Certification for its commitment to sustainability, including eliminating single-use plastics, promoting local food vendors, and encouraging sustainable transportation. The regatta aligns with the Port's goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.



Photo credit: Samphire's Multicultural Festival

SAMPHIRE'S MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

Held in the heart of Dover at Pencester Gardens, the festival brings together communities through music, dance, food, and shared stories, creating an inclusive space that fosters belonging and connection. Organised by local charity Samphire Dover, which supports refugees, asylum seekers, and marginalised communities through advocacy, education, and outreach. With participants from many different cultures, the event promotes social inclusion, cross-cultural understanding, environmental & community action, and community pride, reflecting Dover's growing commitment to inclusivity and unity.

THE MAISON DIEU'S STONE MASONRY FESTIVAL

The Maison Dieu, one of Dover's most historic buildings, has recently undergone a remarkable transformation through the Reawakening the Maison Dieu project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. This extensive restoration has used traditional building techniques – including lime mortar and locally sourced materials – to carefully conserve the building's unique stonework, grotesques, and stained-glass windows. The project has not only preserved important elements of medieval craftsmanship but also supported local heritage skills and sustainable construction practices.

Leftover stone from the restoration, along with insights gained from the project, will inform the Stone Masonry Festival, with planning underway for 2026. The festival will feature masons carving animal forms inspired by the building's historic details, using original stone blocks from the site. The project also explored the Maison Dieu's historical gardens and medieval planting, laying the groundwork for a new visitor trail that will celebrate the area's cultural and ecological significance. The Maison Dieu stands as a powerful symbol of Dover's heritage, renewal, and commitment to sustainability.

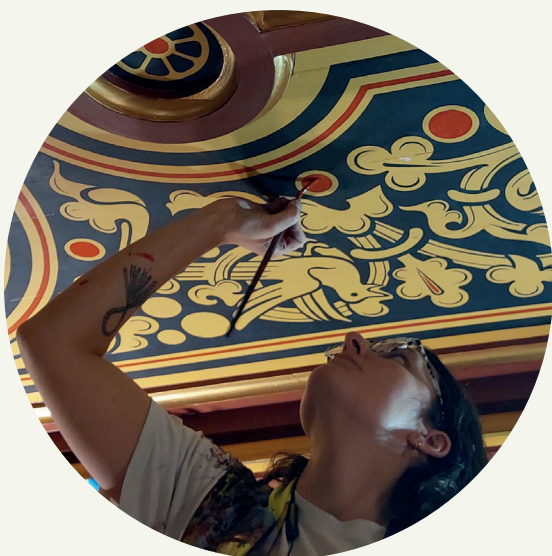


Photo credit: Maison Dieu and Arte Conservation

EDUCATION & AWARENESS

To empower future generations to flourish, environmental awareness is top of the curriculum to encourage creativity, sustainability and community.

ASTOR SECONDARY SCHOOL has a sixth form eco group that has undertaken sustainability projects such as tree planting, installing LED lighting, and promoting biodiversity on school grounds.

KENT WILDLIFE TRUST PROGRAMME offers a Forest School programme tailored to the home education community. These outdoor sessions, suitable for children aged 4-11, focus on nature exploration, environmental stewardship, and hands-on learning experiences. Activities include den-building, fire-making, and marshmallow-toasting, all conducted in a natural setting to foster a deep connection with the environment.

EKC DOVER COLLEGE celebrated a week of sustainability activities for Earth Day and implemented a biodiverse gardening project to enhance local ecosystems and promote environmental awareness among students with gardening activities; planting native species, pollinator plants and creating habitats for local wildlife. Last year EKC Dover College collaborated with Kent Wildlife Trust and Artswork's Young Cultural Changemakers to take part in workshops with artists focusing on natural dye-based textiles, fashion, and graphic design. The EKC Group has committed to becoming carbon net zero by 2040, reducing business travel and paper usage, installing solar panels and appointing a full-time sustainability officer.



Photo credit: DGSB Garden



Photo credit: Global Action Plan

GLOBAL ACTION PLAN empowered pupils, trained teachers, and created greener school spaces shaped by young hands. Working with coastal schools across Kent to empower young changemakers and with the support of #iWill Lottery funding, children spent 10 weeks exploring their values and planning their own environmental or social action projects.

Dover Christchurch Academy - tackled litter in their school grounds and brightened classrooms with greenery using their project grant.

St Edmund's School - enhanced their environment with planting and supported pollinators by adding bee hotels and water stations.

St Radigund's Youth Club - improved their local park through litter picks and added colourful flower troughs to brighten the space.

WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIP had over 3,000 local school children attend education programmes at Fort Burgoyne, the River Dour and Samphire Hoe in 2024/25. They also run free family friendly events every school holiday, including the Big Summer Festival in August, with a focus on nature, landscape and local heritage.



EDUCATION & AWARENESS (CONTINUED)

TEMPLE EWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL are an RHS 5* Gardening School with a spiritual garden! These 'Blue Influencers' promote responsible fishing and tackle littering, raising awareness of marine plastic by creating sea creatures from crisp packets and holding an assembly to inspire their peers. They've been awarded a REACH award for 'Green Organisation of the Year' by Dover District Council and a green school award, thanks to work such as a sustainability project with local artists, talks from White Cliffs Countryside project and having written letters to the Prime Minister about deforestation.

DOVER GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR BOYS secured grant funding to install raised flower beds, plant new trees, and raise awareness of gardening and green issues among students and staff. Students across all year groups have been involved in the installation, planting and continued maintenance of the garden, growing a mix of bee friendly plants and a variety of vegetables. Their herb garden provides rosemary and oregano for food technology lessons.



Photo credits: DGSB Garden



Photo credit: Temple Ewell Primary

WHITE CLIFFS PRIMARY SCHOOL is multiple award-winning, creating projects to support and enhance local biodiversity. In partnership with organisations such as the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, they participate in hands-on activities including creating wildlife-friendly gardens, conducting wildlife surveys, and contributing to habitat restoration efforts. The school offers after-school clubs such as gardening and Eco Warriors to further involve students in sustainability initiatives.

ST RICHARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL has an outdoor classroom, amphitheatre, and fire to support outdoor learning activities, including gardening projects and Forest School sessions. St Richard's also won an academy-wide competition to secure funding for an outdoor allotment, allowing each class to care for its own raised planting bed. Engaging science competitions, such as potato and tomato growing, further enrich students' connection to nature and sustainable practices.



CASE STUDY 1

DOVER YOUTH FESTIVAL: PEOPLE, PLACE, NATURE, CLIMATE

Free festival for young people aged 11 to 19, promoting creativity, environmental awareness, and community spirit - aiming to deepen young people's knowledge, understanding, and pride in their environment, and to foster a stronger connection to the land and promote sustainable practices.

91% of Dover Youth Festival participants associated spending time outdoors with overwhelmingly positive emotions like happiness, relaxation, and revitalisation, with 72% reporting noticeable mental health benefits such as feeling peaceful or better within themselves.

Led by Future Foundry in partnership with 40 organisations, including Dover Castle, Port of Dover, White Cliffs Countryside Project, Kent Downs National Landscapes and Kent Wildlife Trust. A diverse array of local landscapes were represented and explored, using natural materials.

Funding: DEFRA's Farming in Protected Landscapes and Kent Downs National Landscape, Arts Council England, Dover Town Council.



Photo credit: Future Foundry

Dover Youth Festival Events and Highlights:

- **Bushcraft at The Pines Garden** - made fire by hand, foraged and cooked campfire cake.
- **Stargazing at Dover Castle with English Heritage and South East Kent Astronomical Society.**
- **Cyanotypes at Samphire Hoe with Emily Parris** - landscape photography and cyanotype.
- **White Cliffs Wild Food Walk and Lunch** - with Ecologist Melanie Wrigley.
- **Tales of the Dour: River Stories on Air** - exploring the River Dour through the art of radio.
- **Kent Wildlife Trust: Re-introducing the Chough to Dover** - chough-themed handicrafts.
- **Dover Grammar School for Boys** - Song about climate anxiety written and recorded in one day.
- **Future Foundry Film Club (11-19)** - premiere of 'Dover Our History' featuring the Pleistocene Chalk Land Bridge and Megaflood and the unique Cross-Channel geology.



Photo credit: Future Foundry



Photo credit: Future Foundry



CASE STUDY 2

FUTURE FOUNDRY'S CLOSING THE LOOP

A free circular economy training programme for young artists, makers, activists & the eco-curious. Ten week project for 27 young creatives and makers aged 17 to 30, exploring concepts of the Circular Economy and Cradle to Cradle, alongside climate change, resource depletion, waste and pollution.

"My favourite thing about Closing the Loop was learning that other people do care about sustainability. I can't do much on my own, but with others I can make a difference." - Abby

The collective overcoming of climate anxiety was central to the project, with participants developing their own innovative solutions and research, which was showcased in an exhibition and event.



Photo credit: Future Foundry

CLOSING THE LOOP AIMS TO ENGAGE & INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION, INFLUENCE LOCAL DECISION MAKERS, AND CONNECT WITH CREATIVE & INDUSTRY LEADERS. TO CHANGE PERCEPTIONS OF WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE IN DOVER ARE CAPABLE OF & HOW POWERFUL + ACCESSIBLE CREATIVITY & CULTURE CAN BE IN REACHING COMMUNITIES WITH CLIMATE & SUSTAINABILITY MESSAGES.

Photo credit: Future Foundry

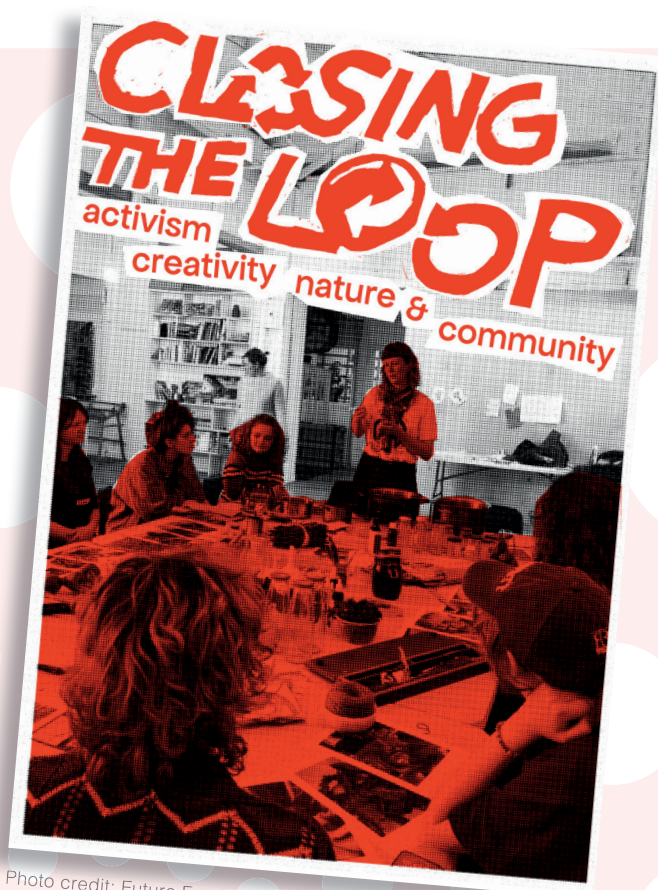


Photo credit: Future Foundry

Closing The Loop Workshops and Highlights:

- **Introduction to Permaculture** - Graham Burnett, author of Permaculture for Vegans.
- **Introduction to the Circular Economy** - Lisa Oulton, Director Future Foundry.
- **Environmental Justice Questions Workshop** - Harun Morrison (Greenpeace Artist).
- **Tensei- The Second Harvest** - Annabelle Cox - feedstock as an alternative to plastic.
- **Carla Knight, artist and herbalist** - natural materials to make ink, drawing tools and fabrics.
- **Anthotypes with Melanie King** - developing photographs with nettles, sea beet and spinach.
- **Visit to Sweeep Kuusakoski** - recycling plant processing 33.3% of UK electrical waste.



ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACES IN DOVER

Dover has made significant progress in reducing barriers and broadening access to outdoor spaces, especially for marginalised, disadvantaged and disabled individuals and communities.

The following initiatives empower people to engage with the natural world in a way that's inclusive, enjoyable and life affirming - ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, ability, or cultural background, has the opportunity to find joy through nature:

1. NORTH DOWNS WAY NATIONAL TRAIL - PUTTING DOWN ROUTES

The "Putting Down Routes" project, funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and DEFRA's Farming in Protected Landscapes, seeks to make the North Downs Way and Kent Downs National Landscape more inclusive. In partnership with groups like Black Girls Hike and Wild With Wheels, the project ensures that the trail is accessible and welcoming to all and enhances the experience of diverse groups through tailored events and activities.

2. MUSLIM HIKERS

The Muslim Hikers have organised two walks in 2024, one as a fundraising event for aid packs for children in Palestine, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh and one in collaboration with the National Trust exploring the South Foreland Lighthouse and the Wanstone Battery. They promote physical activity, mental well-being, and social connection through hiking and outdoor activities.

3. BLACK GIRLS HIKE

Black Girls Hike UK events like the Dover to Deal hike, provide safe spaces for Black women to explore the outdoors. They promote inclusivity and environmental engagement, creating welcoming spaces for women to connect with nature.



Photo credit: Black Girls Hike

4. SAMPHIRE PROJECT

The Samphire Project, a Dover based refugee and migrant charity, run monthly guided walks to promote social inclusion and well-being, ensuring that everyone has access to nature and environmental education.



Photo credit: Dover Pride

5. LGBTQIA+ OUTDOOR ENGAGEMENT - DYKES WHO HIKE

Dykes Who Hike organises walks in and around Dover for LGBTQIA+ women and non-binary individuals. They aim to create welcoming spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community to connect and engage with nature.

6. GLAD RAGS AND BIN BAGS - DOVER PRIDE - ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

Dover Pride has integrated sustainability into its programming. For their 'Glad Rags and Bin Bags' event, participants dress in fabulous outfits for a collective litter-pick - combining community engagement with environmental responsibility, and advocating for sustainability within the LGBTQ+ community.

7. DOVER YOUTH FESTIVAL - OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The 2024 Dover Youth Festival, led by Future Foundry and supported by Kent Downs National Landscapes and DEFRA, offered outdoor activities like star gazing, bushcraft, and ecology explorations for young people. The activities were designed to help Dover's youth connect with and feel comfortable exploring their local environment. Free travel and meals were provided to ensure accessibility.

ACCESSIBLE GREEN SPACES IN DOVER (CONTINUED)

8. WET WHEELS

Wet Wheels provides accessible marine experiences. Using specially adapted boats, individuals with profound disabilities can explore coastal environments, experience the beauty of the sea, and gain a greater appreciation for marine life and conservation efforts.

9. ACCESS, ARTS AND ADVENTURES

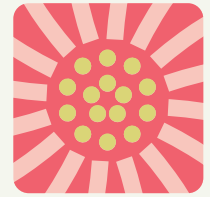
Access, Arts and Adventures offers accessible walks through heritage sites and natural landscapes, providing opportunities for people of all abilities to explore and enjoy the rich history and beauty of the Kent countryside. Their walks are designed to be inclusive and to increase well-being through engagement with nature and heritage.

10. WILD WITH WHEELS

Wild With Wheels offers accessible "Wild" walks in and around Dover, helping participants connect with the natural landscape in Kent. Their walks cover a range of rural and urban environments, eg. High Meadow, Western Heights, and Samphire Hoe, highlighting conservation efforts and emphasising the health and well-being benefits of being outdoors.



Photo credit: Wild for Wheels



11. WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

The National Trust has developed a 400-metre accessible cliff top pathway suitable for motorised wheelchair & mobility scooter users, incorporating many rest and seating points. The visitor centre, toilets and parking are fully accessible.

12. SAMPHIRE HOE

This 30-hectare coastal park, created from the Channel Tunnel excavation, features a 2km circular trail suitable for wheelchair and mobility scooter users. With plenty of seating, toilets, and a café, it is a welcoming space for all visitors.

13. KEARSNEY ABBEY & RUSSELL GARDENS

These historic parks have paths that are fully accessible to wheelchair users. They have accessible toilets and are easy to access by public transport. They cater to individuals with physical, learning, and mental health needs, ensuring everyone can enjoy the green spaces.

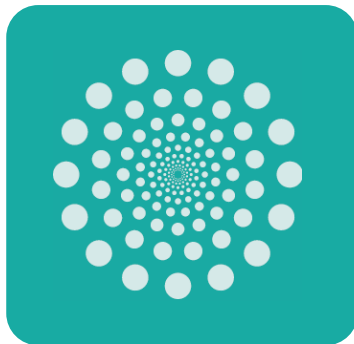
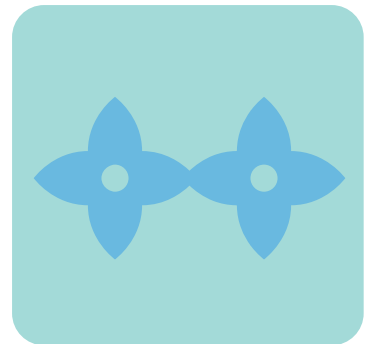
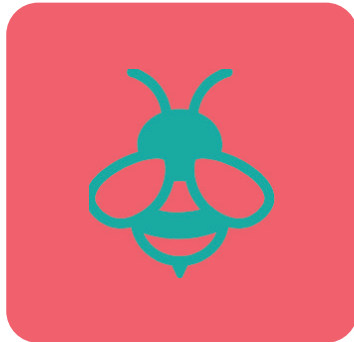
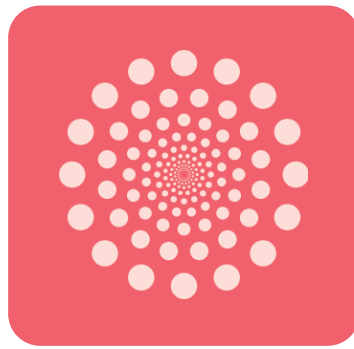
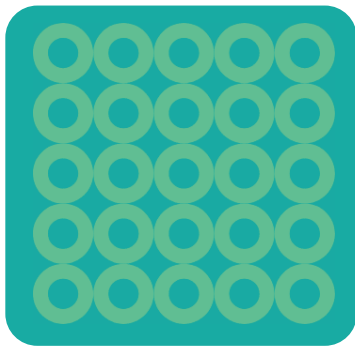
14. DOVER CASTLE

Dover Castle has mobility scooters available for visitor loan, and wheelchair access to much of the grounds. There is a free mobility bus between steeper areas and includes a Changing Places facility for those with complex needs.

15. DOVER MARINA AND WESTERN DOCKS

The newly developed marina area offers smooth, wheelchair-accessible walkways as part of the Dover Western Docks Revival project. The redevelopment also includes accessible green spaces along the waterfront.





This portfolio showcases the various initiatives currently underway in Dover to build a more sustainable and connected town. From the conservation of the River Dour through the restoration of our chalk grasslands, to community gardens and youth-led environmental projects - Dover in Bloom is a reflection of the town's collective efforts to embrace sustainability, improve the local environment, and celebrate its unique heritage. It is a collaborative and inclusive approach that highlights how every individual, group, and organisation can contribute to Dover's future.

Dover in Bloom is produced by Future Foundry, with the support of Arts Council England, Dover Town Council and Dover District Council. Design & layout: kirsa@kirsaw.com

