



Visioning Event Overview

The 20th March 2009 saw Kent County Council facilitate an event with interested parties and key stakeholders, businesses, creative organisations and children from the Kent region (predominantly in the Dover area). The attendees came together to discuss and debate the opportunities and ideas for the arrival of the 2012 Olympic Torch in to the UK via Dover and the ongoing relay throughout the region on it's journey to the wider UK.

The willingness of the all delegates to contribute their own time and ideas to the event was remarkable. Interest and support of the relay and the arrival of the torch in the UK was fantastic. Without exception, those present freely gave their own ideas in order to support the efforts of KCC. From creative visions through to practical solutions, the ideas kept flowing and if there is any criticism that could be levied towards the event it would purely be that there was perhaps not enough time to capture all ideas and thoughts.

Children from local schools were invited to participate as equals with adult delegates. Their input really lifted the event and added a powerful dimension with the injection of their youthful exuberance and thinking, with ideas ranging from the poignant and thoughtful through to refreshing and left field! Their involvement clearly encouraged the adult members of the group to forget any inhibitions and 'loosen up' contributing to the overall success of the event.

Once the event was complete, all off-line conversations whilst delegates networked remained positive and remarkably free of the cynicism and negativity that can often accompany such events. This was, we believe, due to the enthusiasm for the project and the inclusive nature of the visioning event. Everyone truly had a voice.

Key Themes, Ideas and Objectives for the Torch Relay and Arrival of the 2012 Olympic Torch in Dover.

The visioning event gave rise to recurring opinions and ideas surrounding the legacy opportunities and themes and objectives for the venture. These are cumulated and summarised below.

Legacy

The 2012 Torch arrival and relay can and will act as a stimulus for new and existing ventures:

- The logical 'touch paper' for a genuinely memorable, accessible and 'like never before' UK Torch Relay
- Restoring Dover's place / perception as a destination, not merely a location passed through en route to or from the rest of the UK.
- A crucial touch point to revitalise Dover and the surrounding region.
- A unique opportunity to 'reinvent' how Dover and Kent are presented to or perceived by the rest of the UK, Europe and beyond.
- An ongoing legacy and focus that is not simply about buildings and infrastructure but also on the softer aspects of establishing and enriching deeper values and ambition aimed primarily at the children and youth of the area.
- There are two and half years before the 2012 Torch relay and Games – now is the time to plan carefully and thoughtfully for the years before and after the pivotal 2012 Torch arrival and relay.

Themes & Objectives

Numerous common strands of thought were aired at the event:

- Any event activity should pull together numerous different activities, strategies and events.
- The event or activity should not just be a single event – but a programme of activity peaking with the arrival of the Torch.
- The activity should be notable in it's own right and sit in the memories of those in the UK and around the world that watch.
- All local residents and businesses should be involved – either in the event itself or contributing within the build up to the programme or its legacy in some way.
- Importantly this event is everyone's 'moment'. Competing in the Olympics or Paralympics is not possible for most, but participating in this event is most certainly possible.
- Positive timely collaboration between local businesses, school and local authorities is key to reaching out and embracing the communities in the region.
- The media has a positive and pro-active role to play in helping to both spark and sustain interest with the ideas that are generated.
- Key themes need to be generated and then repeatedly presented so that the messages run as a consistent drumbeat leading up to and through

the Games. Attitude change will then occur leading to positive behavioural change.

- Culture and in particular the arts will have a massive influence in this activity. Create the right event and the audience will come. A whole range of culturally based events could constitute a programme of activity that intelligently links in to the Torch event and then runs and builds in perpetuity afterwards.
- Given the scope, the activity has the advantage of being multi-cultural, multi-disciplined and can appeal to all ages. A touring 'Festival Programme' could ignite the UK's 'Garden' and the South East / Kent with dance, music, drama, art, street theatre, performance art, film and even perhaps creating the world's best food festival.
- All activity should be authentic – i.e. not just for show, but should have meaning and relevance.
- The Torch arrival and subsequent relay has the potential to be a vital mechanic in the ignition of so much activity.