

**YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES**  
**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**  
**held at the White Hart Hotel Harrogate**  
**at 1pm on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2006.**

**1. Present**

Some 65 members and guests representing about 30 YHACS member societies. Full list at Appendix 1.

**2. Apologies for Absence**

Richard Ward (Huddersfield CS), David Blackburn (Ilkley CS), Roger Foster, Richmond CS, Brigg CS, Owston Ferry Society, York CT, Bingley CT, Silsden CS.

**3. WELCOME to Harrogate**

**Cllr Caroline Bayliss**, Mayor of the Borough of Harrogate welcomed everyone to Harrogate and hoped that people would have time to enjoy a visit to the town and 'take the waters'. She paid tribute to the work of Harrogate Civic Society and emphasised the importance of the civic society movement in the region. She pointed out that Harrogate had recently been named as 'Britain's 3<sup>rd</sup> best town' (though many people disputed this and considered it much better than 3<sup>rd</sup> best).

**Lilian Mina**, Chairman of Harrogate Civic Society, thanked the mayor and also extended a welcome to members. She brought members up to date with the long campaign to save the Royal Hall. All tickets for the fundraising Starlit Ball had sold very quickly. Lilian felt that YHACS had brought civic societies together and recommended visits not only to Harrogate but also to nearby Knaresborough and Ripon.

**4. Minutes of the AGM 29.01.05**

These were approved. Proposed by Mike Burke and seconded by Jim Wildash

**5. Matters Arising.**

There were none.

**6. Annual Report**

Peter Cooper presented the annual report which appears at Appendix 2. The annual report was proposed by Gwynne Walters and seconded by Jennifer Alderson, and the vote to accept it was unanimous.

**7. Treasurer's Report**

Don Pickis had pre-circulated the certified accounts and explained the figures presented. The accounts were proposed by Roger Watkins and seconded by Mike Green and the vote to accept them was unanimous. Don was stepping down as treasurer with effect from this meeting. Peter Cooper thanked Don for his work as Treasurer for the last five years and pointed out that in the last three years, YHACS turnover had increased from about £400 to £35 000 – an indication of how YHACS is developing.

**8. Election of Officers**

Chairman                      Peter Cooper  
*Nominated by Ilkley CS and Skipton in Craven CS.*  
Vice Chair E                 Walter Jones  
*Nominated by Harrogate CS*  
Vice Chair W                 Don Pickis  
*Nominated by Harrogate CS*  
Treasurer                     Richard Ward  
*Nominated by Ilkley CS*  
Secretary                     Helen Kidman  
*Nominated by Ilkley CS and Skipton in Craven CS*

All were elected unanimously.

### **9. Election of Executive Committee**

Mike Burke                     *Nominated by Wakefield CS*  
Kevin Trickett                 *Nominated by Wakefield CS*  
Kevin Grady                    *Nominated by Wakefield CS*  
Roger Watkins                 *Nominated by Wakefield CS*

All were elected unanimously. Potential executive committee members were invited to express their interest to any member of the committee.

### **10. Guest Speaker Ian Smith of English Heritage**

Ian Smith is a regional planner at English Heritage and he spoke on the changes to the Planning System which are being introduced. He pointed out that the old county structure plans, District Local Plans and UDP represented a very slow inflexible system. It had taken Leeds 12 years to put its UDP in place, with 20 000 objections and at a cost of £2m.

What was now needed was something much more responsive, which took sustainability into account and ensured that current activity did not prejudice future generations.

The new system is based on the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks. The RSS looks at areas of Yorkshire and Humberside from a strategic angle, unencumbered by administrative boundaries, identifying a number of areas for planning purposes:

The Leeds City region – including Barnsley  
The Coastal Strip of North Yorkshire and East Yorkshire  
York  
Sheffield, South Humberside and the remainder of East Yorkshire  
The remainder of North Yorkshire

The Public Consultation phase of the RSS is three months and it was suggested that societies may wish to support the Historic Environment Policy. A new green belt is proposed for York. Some local authorities have already made it clear that they think that the RSS has gone too far in setting policy for their areas. If societies are aware of historic sites where there are already issues they are urged to contact Ian Smith [ian.smith@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:ian.smith@english-heritage.org.uk)

Unlike with the old system, the LDF documents to be produced will not all be produced at once. The first document to be produced will be a project plan. Many councils are currently working on their Statements of Community Involvement and societies were urged to express an interest in this element to ensure that they are consulted in later phases.

Future documentation includes Core Strategy and Vision documents, then broad policies as in a structure plan and site specific allocations. Some places will also get Action Area plans where significant development may be expected eg Leeds and Wakefield.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (such as design statements where adopted and Conservation Area management plans), will become Supplementary Planning Documents. Ian cited Hull as a good example of these.

There will be an annual monitoring report, which will analyse LDF progress.

The LDF Process will be to gather evidence and details of significant issues, then to go into public consultation on issues and worked up options, followed by submission of proposals to Government Office and the Planning Inspectorate. After that decisions will be taken about further public stages. Public Inquiries are not likely to be as long and involved as under the current system.

The discussion was then opened to the floor.

A negative issue which has arisen has been that some authorities only intend to publish LDF documentation electronically which could exclude some people from engaging in the process. It was pointed out that grants were still available for any society to obtain IT equipment, much training was free and most libraries offered easy access. Some members were concerned that LAs were publishing in 'unusual' IT programmes which were inaccessible or difficult to use.

Members expressed concern that the system was becoming ever more complicated and that societies were often fighting a losing battle on planning appeals against developers with legal support and funding.

There was concern that funding for heritage activities might reduce. There is currently a consultation exercise on lottery funding on which societies may have views to promote (see DCMS website; consultation closes end Feb 06).

The question of overstretched infrastructure was raised – sewage, traffic, schools and some members considered that they lacked the skills to comment on these.

### **11. Website Forums - Katie Bishop**

Katie made a computerised presentation of shots from the new YHACS Forum on the website. This new facility needs to be brought to the attention of all civic society members so that they can participate in the ongoing debates which it is hoped the website will generate. Katie explained the easy procedures for logging on and the security arrangements to prevent misuse. It is hoped that everyone will make use of the facility to provoke debate, exchange information and that it will promote wider participation in YHACS and raise our profile. This will be especially important for societies who are unable to send representatives to meetings.

### **12. Report from the Civic Trust - Kevin Trickett**

CT's modernisation programme continues, but CT has had to make economies. Civic Focus, which was expensive to produce has ceased publication. CT are looking at replacement publication. On the positive side, CT had won the Green Flags programme for a 3 year period following competition.

Kevin reported that Katya Condi who organises Heritage Open Days will be invited to make a presentation at the next YHACS meeting. Preparations are under way for HODS 2006 with workshops to be held in Wakefield on 16.03.06 and Sunderland on 22.02.06. CT wanted to see more young people involved in HODS events.

The CT National Committee is continuing to change its emphasis, strongly encouraging societies to update and concentrate on good design, civic pride speaking for the community and holding consultation exercises. Societies will need to make full use of IT in future and members are encouraged to take advantage of the free training available in most areas.

### **13. Reports from Societies and Current Issues**

- David Moss (Selby CS) drew attention to some little known legislation, the 1841 School Sites Act, found on the Friends of the Earth website. This concerns the proceeds from the sale of endowed land for schools, which is payable to the descendents of the donors rather than the owners. It might impact on local authorities selling former Victorian School buildings and sites for retail and residential to realise profits.
- Donal O'Driscoll (Spen Valley CS) raised the subject of overspending on grant-funded projects and the need to be clear on the availability of any funds earmarked as 'contingency'.
- David Makin (Saddleworth CS) raised the subject of permitted development rights in conservation areas and advised that a pilot project was taking place in Dobcross village CA.
- Althea Farmer (Knaresborough CS) updated the meeting on the long series of planning applications at the site of Mario's restaurant (which is on the Nidd waterfront just below the elegant viaduct in Knaresborough). Although approval was eventually given to build there, the proposals had been scaled down considerably in successive applications due to the concerted opposition. What had initially been proposed as blocks of

flats had been finally reduced to four cottages. Althea thanked YHACS members who had supported their campaign.

- Jennifer Alderson (Spenn Valley CS) drew attention to the changes in Listed Building classifications. Grade 2\* is being abolished. Buildings will be reallocated to either Grade 1 or Grade 2, so will still be protected. Societies need to check that any Grade 2\* buildings are correctly allocated. Mike Green (Huddersfield CS) further highlighted the need to get the Victorian interiors of pubs listed – help is readily available from the Victorian Society and CAMRA.

Helen Kidman 17<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

## APPENDIX 1

### Present:

NAME	SOCIETY/ORG
Cllr Caroline Bayliss	Mayor of the Borough of Harrogate
Rachel Lee and Ian Smith	English Heritage
Peter Cooper	Scarborough CS
Don Pickis	Stearnor Bottom Society
Wynn Jones	Whitby CS
Michael Green	Huddersfield CS
Mike Burke, Henry Pankhurst, George Crowther, David and Barbara Blackwell, Lilian Mina, Howard Hughes, Ivy Maltby, Brenda Taylor	Harrogate CS
Kevin Trickett, Peter and Fran Slater, Margaret Morgan	Wakefield CS
Katie Bishop	YHACS
Ruth Wheeler and Nic Sheppard	Wetherby CS
Gwynne Walters and Sheila Clark	Skipton CS
Donal O'Driscoll and Jennifer Alderson	Spenn Valley CS
Andrew and Emma Hastie	Keighley and District Local History Society
Adam Fowler	Hull CS
Mary de Jager, Stephanie Hinchcliffe, Joan Barton and Althea Farmer	Knaresborough CS
Jean and Joe Greenan	Scalby VT
Jean and Stuart Curwen	Market Weighton CS
Roger Watkins	Howden CS
Helen Kirk	Forest of Galtres Society
Frank Kirk	York Georgian Society
Bob Shallcroft	Horsforth Civic Society
Peter Middleton	Aireborough CS
Lorna Gartside, David Harrison and David Makin	Saddleworth CT
Malcolm Stroud	Todmorden Conservation Group
Dorothy Welburn	Allertonshire CS
Marilyn Lawton	Rotherham CS
Cyril Oliver	Bridlington CS
David Moss, John Golding and James Wildash	Selby CS
Harry Drifill	Horbury CS
Malcolm Brocklesby and John Crapper	The Oulton Society
David Rhodes	YHACS
Saskia Hallam	The Civic Trust
Keith Knight	Institute of Historic Building Conservation
David and Helen Kidman	Ilkley Civic Society, Bradford Civic Trust

## **APPENDIX 2 - Chairman's Report**

This has been another successful year for your Association.

As a measure of progress, when YHACS started we had about two dozen member societies and a budget of £500. We now have charitable status, 70 member societies and next year we will have a budget of £35,000.

Our Association Development Officer, Katie Bishop continues to be a major asset to our Association; as well as continuing to edit and produce the newsletter and masterminding our new website, this year she led the project to establish a new civic trust in Bradford and is currently working on a similar project for Sheffield. Katie will be telling you more about her work later this afternoon.

Last year we had meetings in Harrogate, Todmorden, Scarborough and Rotherham; we felt it was essential to travel around to try and engage with as many member societies as possible. I think this idea had mixed results; we did see a few new faces but constantly seeking new venues is a challenge; maybe there is something to be said for having a routine.

We continue to work closely with many other bodies; we have attended events organized by the Regional Development Agency and Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber and have attended two meetings of the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly. We have been represented at all the meetings of the Civic Trust National Committee; the trust continue to give us help and guidance on many issues. Kevin Trickett, Chairman of the National Committee, will tell you more about Civic Trust matters later on. We continue to have an excellent working relationship with English Heritage; they offer us practical support in many ways. We are sorry that Regional Director David Fraser and Assistant Regional; Director John Hinchliffe are no longer at Tanner Row but we look forward to working with the new Regional Director, Maddy Jago.

We digested the results of our survey of member societies last year and now have our buddy system up and running. This is a system where committee members of YHACS attend individual society meetings (only if requested!) to offer encouragement, help and support. These visits are proving very revealing...

Just before Christmas we were informed that we had succeeded with an application to Awards forAll for funds to set up a Civic Society in Sheffield. The day after we had a phone call to say that our Application for £25,000 under the Home Office ChangeUp programme had been approved. A good end to the year although the only drawback with ChangeUp is that the money has to be spent by the end of June this year.

The ChangeUp project is about helping societies address the regional agenda and modernizing to tackle the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We are going to

do this by recruiting a Civic Society Officer and organizing a series of events throughout the region. Applications for the post have been received; we are interviewing next week.

It remains for me to say that none of the above would have been achieved without the hard work of an excellent committee helped by members of individual societies. Thanks are due to them all.

Peter Cooper