

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES

YHACS MEETING HELD AT RICHMOND TOWN HALL, 27TH SEPTEMBER 2014

DELEGATES PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See Appendix 1

Kevin Trickett opened the meeting by thanking members of Richmond Civic Society for helping with the arrangements for the meeting and for picking up the cost of room hire and refreshments. He explained that it took a lot of work and responsibility off the shoulders of YHACS Committee members when local societies stepped up to sort out venues (and sometimes, speakers) using their local knowledge and contacts and he was grateful on this occasion to Richmond Civic Society for organising a very enjoyable meal out on the Friday night prior to the meeting and an informative tour of the Georgian Richmond Theatre Royal earlier in the day.

WELCOME FROM JOHN CLARKE, CHAIRMAN OF RICHMOND CIVIC SOCIETY

John welcomed YHACS members to the historic town of Richmond. The town is situated halfway along Alfred Wainwright's *Coast to Coast* walk across northern England. Wainwright describes it as 'unlike others, a place unique' and noted (ca 1973) that it resisted modern development. It has a very long history as a place of fortification, law and trade.

Richmond Civic Society holds a series of monthly lectures, produces an annual review, makes civic awards and has an active planning committee. Earlier this year, a photographic competition for children was organised.

MINUTES OF THE HULL MEETING 26TH JULY 2014

Adoption of the minutes of the meeting held at Hull on 26th July 2014 was proposed by Margaret Clarke, seconded by David Moss, and approved by the members.

There were no matters arising.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Kevin Trickett reported that he had attended the Civic Voice fringe event at the Labour Party Conference at Manchester at which the planning system was discussed in detail. There will be a similar event at the Conservative Party conference in Birmingham this coming week. This was a new departure for Civic Voice; an attempt to put messages across to current and future decision makers at a stage when they are formulating policy.

Kevin had also met with English Heritage commissioners at York, raising the issues of the need for conservation officers, local authority enforcement officers, better training for local councillors on planning matters and also more active participation by English Heritage itself at local planning hearings where EH has lodged objections.

Kevin had also attended the BRICK Work conference on preservation work held in Leeds on 23rd September. This is a new, 3-year initiative by the Prince's Regeneration Trust. There is a useful website which will be loaded with resources that civic societies will find of interest. There are also slides and clips from the conference. He recommended that members have a look at the website and consider registering to gain access to the full set of resources as they are added. See <http://brick-work.org/> .

The latest YHACS Newsletter had been issued electronically on 26th September.

The Spawforth Trophy and YHACS cash prizes will be next awarded at the AGM in January 2015. Details will be issued shortly on how civic society activities can enter for the prizes. Judging will take place on 1st November.

Kevin encouraged members to attend the CV Annual Convention in Canterbury on 25th and 26th October 2014. While it was important for societies to show their support for Civic Voice, these events offer excellent networking opportunities and some good speakers. While attending would not be cheap with an entry fee, travel costs and overnight accommodation to pay for, Kevin pointed out that societies should be able to cover at least some of the costs for their delegates.

Helen Kidman reported on the Civic Voice Regional Forum meeting which she had attended on behalf of YHACS.

This meeting was chaired by Freddie Gick and attended by a couple of trustees (Martin Meredith and Helen Marcus) and representatives of several regions and groupings within Civic Voice.

A paper had been submitted for discussion on formalising the status of the regional forum. This was agreed following discussion. The forum will meet quarterly in advance of board meetings where possible. The next meeting will probably be on 17th November 2014 (London). Then March (Birmingham), July (Leeds) and September (London).

Ian Harvey had given a comprehensive update in Civic Voice activities. Interesting points to note included:

- Every LA can apply for £30k to fund staffing costs for Assets of Community Value. The target clearance time for applications is 6 weeks (!)
- Civic Day – Societies and Regional Associations should be encouraged to use the event to promote community pride.
- CV is going to promote a Community Design Award along the lines of the Scottish Civic Trust scheme.
- HODS – Could societies move in where LAs have withdrawn funding/support?

- CV Archive – is likely to go to Bath Spa University and be digitized. There are 156 boxes of material. How do societies/ regional associations manage their archives?
- Local Listing - CV has funding to offer workshops in the regions if desired.
- Civic Voice Manifesto – This has been revised from the July document down to three key needs and three proposed changes. It is addressed at parliamentary candidates and MPs.
- Events Coordination - CV wants to coordinate events they stage with major regional events to avoid clashes – suggest that each region appoints an events coordinator.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Richard Ward is in America, but it was reported that there was little change in YHACS’ finances from those reported at the Hull meeting.

PRESENTATION BY CLLR JOHN BLACKIE, LEADER OF RICHMONDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL, ON YOUNG FAMILIES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Based at Hardraw near Hawes in Wensleydale, Cllr Blackie represents Hawes and High Abbotside as an Independent councillor on one of the only two Independent-controlled district councils in the country. He addressed the issue of young people and families becoming an endangered species in the Dales. Rural de-population during the last 15-20 years is seriously impacting on the provision of infrastructure such as affordable housing, schools, health facilities, banking and public transport, which in turn is driving more people away from the area. In some villages, over 50% of residential property is second or holiday homes and young people who wish to stay and start a family cannot afford to buy their own home. There are almost no jobs for qualified people, so those who go away to university are most usually unable to return and build satisfying careers.

Addressing these issues had been Cllr Blackie’s mission over many years. The Upper Wensleydale Community Office had been set up with a multi-agency presence including police, community bus service co-ordination, an internet café, post office, and community volunteer provision of services where public service providers were pulling back due to economic cutbacks. Dales people were resilient and self-reliant in providing such services when given the opportunity.

It had been necessary to work out how to do things differently, working in unique partnerships. There was a need to provide council homes, invoking local occupancy clauses to provide housing to local people on low wages. There was a need to be less prescriptive on house building materials - even in the National Park - to achieve affordable homes. Superfast broadband, being cabled from Leyburn to Hawes, was expected to be transformative. There was recognition that small amounts of financial

aid, which would be almost un-noticed in a large city, could bring huge benefits to a sparsely-populated rural area.

If the problems of rural areas are not addressed effectively, the impact will be profound, with rural depopulation continuing on a massive scale until communities completely lose viability, resulting in a landscape devoid of people.

JAMES GRAVENOR, CHAIRMAN OF RICHMOND BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST, THE STATION RENOVATION PROJECT

James Gravenor explained how the Station Project had been developed in Richmond. The substantial buildings formed the 1847 terminus of the North Eastern Railway branch from Darlington, which closed in 1969. The buildings were listed II* and throughout its life as a garden centre until 2001 the structure was preserved.

The Richmond Building Preservation Trust was formed to save station and ensure its future viability. It now houses a Cinema, Café /Restaurant, Display space, and meeting rooms, operating as a community enterprise. Funds to the sum of £2.75m were raised with grants from HLF, the single regeneration fund, and European funds. The enterprise encourages a variety of activities including live music, education and specialist /local food production. 75% of funding now comes from tenants.

The BBPT now plans financially to secure the community enterprise's future, strengthening governance of The Station, before moving on to other buildings at risk.

ADRIAN SPAWFORTH, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SPAWFORTHS 'WHY DO WE END UP WITH THE HOUSING WE GET?'

Adrian explained the constraints and economics of the house-building industry, demonstrating how planning, economics, marketing, social expectations and infrastructure impact on the size, design, materials and sites of new housing.

This was leading to there being little variation in new housing developments because so much was prescribed. There was little sense of place or the creation of a distinctive community on such estates. Elsewhere in the world there was a much higher proportion of self-developed housing which led to much greater variety of styles and lower costs. The requirement to provide 'affordable housing' placed a financial burden on house builders that had to be passed on to purchasers.

Almost all landowners have to secure an agent to develop housing because of the legal and commercial pitfalls in the business. This builds in high costs from the start. Further, property in the UK has been commoditized. Many homes are purchased as an investment and returns are expected.

Few changes were expected in the present shortage situation.

WORKSHOPS ON DESIGN QUALITY

Kevin Trickett explained that, in response to requests from members, the YHACS committee would be looking to run some workshops on design in general and housing in particular at some point during 2015. However, it was likely that YHACS would incur costs for these workshops that it would have to recoup by charging admission. Members of the audience indicated that they would be prepared to pay and it was agreed that a figure of around £30 per session would be reasonable.

CIVIC SOCIETY NEWS

David Moss highlighted the new guide to Selby Heritage – *Swanning around Selby* – see the Selby CS website for details. <http://www.selbycivicsociety.org.uk/>

AOB

None

Dates of Next Meetings

31st January 2015 - YHACS AGM at the Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate

Helen Kidman

28th September 2014

Appendix 1 - Attendees & Apologies

	Society/Organisation	Surname	First Name
1	Barnsley Civic Trust	Barnes	Geoff
2	Barnsley Civic Trust	Barnes	Phyllis
3	Beverley Civic Society	Ryan	Sandra
4	Goole Civic Society	Clarke	John
5	Goole Civic Society	Clarke	MArgaret
6	Halifax Civic Trust	Hanson	David
7	Halifax Civic Trust	Paxtow-White	June
8	Harrogate Civic Society	Hacker	Peter
9	Harrogate Civic Society	Siddans	Dave
10	Harrogate Civic Society	Siddans	MArgaret
11	Ilkley Civic Society	Kidman	Helen
12	Richmond Civic Society	Barber	Graham
13	Richmond Civic Society	Clarke	John
14	Richmond Civic Society	Grant	Colin
15	Richmond Civic Society	Hayward	Liz
16	Richmond Civic Society	Hayward	Paul
17	Richmond Civic Society	Hillyard	Carol
18	Richmond Civic Society	Miles	Fleur
19	Richmond Civic Society	Staite	Marita
20	Richmond Civic Society	Whyman	Anne
21	Richmond Civic Society	Whyman	Mark
22	Ripon Civic Society	Winpenny	David
23	Ripon Civic Society	Winpenny	Sheila
24	Scarborough Civic Society	Bridgewood	Glen
25	Scarborough Civic Society	Bridgewood	Pete
26	Scarborough Civic Society	Perry	Adrian
27	Scarborough Civic Society	Perry	Chris
28	Scarborough Civic Society/YHACS President	Cooper	Peter
29	Selby Civic Society	James	Barry
30	Selby Civic Society	Moss	David
31	Selby Civic Society	Moss	Irene
32	Skipton Civic Society	Clarke	Sheila
33	Skipton Civic Society	Wrathmell	Sue
34	Skipton Civic Society	Wood	Anne
35	Wakefield Civic Society	Berg	Max
36	Wakefield Civic Society	Blacker	Charlotte
37	Wakefield Civic Society	Spawforth	Peter

38	Wakefield Civic Society/YHACS committee	Trickett	Kevin
39	Wakefield Civic Society	Ward	Brian
40	Speaker - Richmondshire Council	Blackie	John
41	Speaker - Richmondshire Preservation Trust	Gravenor	James
42	Speaker - Spawforths	Spawforth	Adrian
	Apologies Received		
1	Addingham Civic Society/YHACS Committee	Robinson	Jim
2	Allertonshire Civic Society	Welburn	Dorothy
3	Bradford Civic Society	Hall	Alan
4	Bridlington Civic Society	Oliver	Cyril
5	Bridlington Civic Society	Payne	Jane
6	Brighthouse Civic Trust	Culpan	John
7	English Heritage	Wallis	Deborah
8	Goole Civic Society	Walker	Stephen
9	Grimsby, Cleethorpes & District Civic Society	Bassett	Graeme
10	Grimsby, Cleethorpes & District Civic Society	Bassett	Teresa
11	Horsforth Civic Society	Wright	Janis
12	Huddersfield Civic Society	Earnshaw	Lesley
13	Huddersfield Civic Society	Kirby	William
14	Huddersfield/Scalby and Scarborough Civic Societies/YHACS Committee	Ward	Richard
15	Hull Civic Society	Sharman	Dot
16	Hull Civic Society/YHACS Committee	Sharman	Malcolm
17	Leeds Civic Trust	Kitching	Lynda
18	Market Weighton	Leonard	Tony
19	Ossett Civic Trust	Amos	Ruth
20	Pickering Civic Society	Dixon	Judy
21	Pontefract Civic Society	Cartwright	Christine
22	Pontefract Civic Society	Cartwright	Paul
23	Pudsey & District Civic Society	Johnson	Molly
24	Pudsey & District Civic Society	Richards	Dave
25	Scalby Village Trust	Dixey	Hazel
26	Spenn Valley Civic Society	Amende	Erica
27	Spenn Valley Civic Society	Berry	Colin

28	Wakefield Civic Society	Brookes	Peter
29	Wakefield Civic Society	Davies	Sue
30	Wakefield Civic Society	O'Donnell	Mike
31	Wakefield Civic Society	Sargeant	Tony
32	Wakefield Civic Society	Smith	David
33	Wakefield Civic Society	Wood	Geoff
34	Whitby Civic Society	James	David