

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES

YHACS MEETING HELD AT THE ABBEYFIELD CENTRE ILKLEY, ON 25TH APRIL 2015

DELEGATES PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See Appendix 1

WELCOME FROM HELEN KIDMAN CHAIR OF ILKLEY CIVIC SOCIETY

Helen welcomed YHACS members to Ilkley, stating that Ilkley was a wonderful place to live and that those of who did so were exceedingly fortunate. She explained that the civic society (50 next year) fitted into a complex matrix of some 300+ voluntary sector organisations and action groups in the town but was able to draw on the goodwill, skills and time of many professional experts. The town faces a number of difficulties including being remote from a local authority which is making economies through centralisation. There were at least seven other organisations in Wharfedale dealing with planning issues, most of whom had spent significant time at the recent local plan hearing fighting over development in the dale.

YHACS members wanting to re-visit Ilkley might come for the Tour de Yorkshire, Yorkshire Day or for HODS, when the civic society was planning to visit the grounds of the Lutyens House 'Heathcote' for the first time in many years.

WELCOME FROM CLLR ANDREW WALBANK, CHAIRMAN OF ILKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Andrew warmly welcomed people to the historic town of Ilkley and pointed out a number of interesting buildings and features, which he hoped people would find time to visit. These include the wonderful moor, woodlands, the riverside and archaeology as well as architecture.

MINUTES OF THE RICHMOND MEETING 28TH SEPTEMBER 2014

These were proposed by David Winpenny, seconded by Carol Hillyard and approved by the meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Kevin reported that he had attended several events including meeting the Communities Minister, Stephen Williams MP, in Wakefield and attending Scarborough Civic Society's Annual Lunch where he had been guest speaker.

He updated the meeting on developments at Horbury Civic Society where, as a temporary measure to assist the Society and prevent its closure, the YHACS committee was now in office, pending the recruitment of sufficient new members to form a steering committee in the run up to YHACS handing control back to members of the local

community. He pointed out that the former committee had dwindled in number to the point where the Society was struggling to keep going. The untimely death of HCS committee member Ted Fawcett last summer had created additional problems as he had much of the information relating to the accounts and administrative matters on his computer, all protected by passwords which no one else knew. Kevin urged member societies to read the front page article in the latest edition of *Society Insight* where Richard Ward explained the perils and pitfalls of not sharing information with other committee members: all societies (and, indeed, families) needed proper contingency arrangements in place to prevent similar problems.

Kevin also asked societies to bear in mind that YHACS was there to help. If a society is facing problems that seem unsurmountable – don't opt for closure of the society until after speaking to YHACS.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Richard Ward reported that YHACS had 36 member societies, with a further 5 subs not paid. Those societies will be reminded. The bank balance was £5382.

PETER SPAWFORTH/YHACS AWARD

Richard Ward explained the latest thinking on the annual Peter Spawforth Award. YHACS was keen to encourage societies to enter for an award. In an effort to persuade more societies to participate, it had been decided that societies would be able to submit *any* event, activity or achievement within the year from 1st October 2014 to 30th September 2015. YHACS judges would then use their discretion to identify those entries worthy of recognition. The prize regime would remain as before (1st prize £200, 2nd prize, £100, 3rd prize, £50) with awards being made at the AGM in January 2016.

PRESENTATION BY ADRIAN SPAWFORTH, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SPAWFORTHS – The Green Belt is Dead; Long Live the Green Belt.

Adrian gave a lively presentation on the background to the Green Belt, pointing out that the popular conception of what the Green Belt is and does often exceeds the reality of what it is capable of doing to protect green space and asked whether there wasn't a better way of permitting development while protecting green spaces and the natural environment.

YHACS PORTFOLIOS

Four YHACS portfolio holders ran short sessions on the content and objectives of their portfolios and invited members to comment on content and omissions. Notes were taken away for further consideration. See Appendix 2 for a summary of this discussion activity.

CIVIC SOCIETY NEWS

Tony Leonard is now chair of the Market Weighton CS. An EGM has been called for 18th May 2015 in order to seek members to form a new committee as existing committee members did not wish to continue. YHACS members will support this initiative and some will attend the meeting in person.

Kevin Trickett pointed out that key roles can be difficult to fulfil even in thriving societies and that advertising for trustees outside the membership, or approaching people in the wider community who had the skills, contacts and knowhow, might be a solution.

AOB

Kevin also added that he is speaking at Addingham CS on 'How I crossed the Atlantic' on 14th May and on the History, Influence and Style of Art Deco at Harrogate CS on 30th July.

Dates of Next Meetings

Skipton, 18th July
Pontefract, 10th October
AGM, Harrogate, 30th January 2016

Helen Kidman
29th April 2015

Appendix 1 - Attendees & Apologies

	Society/Organisation	Surname	First Name
1	Addingham Civic Society	Robinson	Jim
2	Addingham Civic Society	Wood	Maureen
3	Addingham Civic Society	Appleyard	Keith
4	Aireborough Civic Society	Woods	Clive
5	Barnsley Civic Trust	Barnes	Geoff
6	Barnsley Civic Trust	Barnes	Phyllis
7	Bradford Civic Society	Hall	Alan
8	Brighouse Civic Trust	Culpan	John
9	Doncaster Civic Trust	Anderson	Tina
10	Doncaster Civic Trust	Coote	Peter
11	Harrogate Civic Society	Siddans	Dave
12	Harrogate Civic Society	Siddans	Margaret
13	Huddersfield Civic Society	Earnshaw	Lesley
14	Huddersfield/Scalby and Scarborough Civic Societies/YHACS Committee	Ward	Richard
15	Ilkley Civic Society	Blackburn	David
16	Ilkley Civic Society	Brown	Kate
17	Ilkley Civic Society	Cockshott	Alex
18	Ilkley Civic Society	Shillitoe	Denise
19	Ilkley Civic Society	May	Graham
20	Ilkley Civic Society	Peacock	Graham
21	Ilkley Civic Society	Kidman	David
22	Ilkley Civic Society	Kidman	Helen
23	Ilkley Civic Society	Smith	Martin (Cllr)
24	Ilkley Civic Society	Stallworthy	Jan
25	Ilkley Civic Society	Thompson	Jackie
26	Market Weighton Civic Society	Leonard	Tony
27	Pontefract Civic Society	Cartwright	Christine
28	Pontefract Civic Society	Cartwright	Paul
29	Richmond & District Civic Society	Hillyard	Carol
30	Ripon Civic Society	Winpenny	David
31	Ripon Civic Society	Winpenny	Sheila
32	Scarborough Civic Society	Bridgewood	Glen
33	Scarborough Civic Society	Bridgewood	Pete
34	Scarborough Civic Society	Perry	Adrian
35	Scarborough Civic Society	Perry	Chris
36	Scarborough Civic Society/YHACS President	Cooper	Peter

37	Selby Civic Society	Wildash	Jim
38	Skipton Civic Society	Wood	Anne
39	Wakefield Civic Society	O'Donnell	Mike
40	Wakefield Civic Society/YHACS committee	Trickett	Kevin
41	Wakefield Civic Society	Ward	Brian
42	Wakefield Civic Society	Wood	Geoff
43	Ilkley Parish Council	Wallbank	Cllr
44	Speaker - Spawforths	Spawforth	Adrian

Apologies Received

1	Beverly Civic Society	Hopkins	Pamela
2	Bridlington Civic Society	Oliver	Cyril
3	Bridlington Civic Society	Payne	Jane
4	Castleford Civic Trust	Wallis	Tony
5	Goole Civic Society	Clarke	John
6	Goole Civic Society	Clarke	Margaret
7	Grimsby, Cleethorpes & District Civic Society	Bassett	Graeme
8	Grimsby, Cleethorpes & District Civic Society	Bassett	Teresa
9	Harrogate Civic Society	Hacker	Peter
10	Harrogate Civic Society	Pankhurst	Henry
11	Hornsea Civic Society	Miller	John
12	Hull Civic Society	Sharman	Dot
13	Hull Civic Society/YHACS Committee	Sharman	Malcolm
14	Leeds Civic Trust/YHACS Committee	Grady	Kevin
15	Leeds Civic Trust/YHACS Committee	Kitching	Lynda
16	Pickering Civic Society	Potter	Mike
17	Pudsey & District Civic Society	Depelle	Jackie
18	Saddleworth Civic Society	Makin	Dave
19	Scalby Village Trust	Dixey	Hazel
20	Selby Civic Society	Moss	David
21	Skipton Civic Society	Clark	Sheila
22	Spenn Valley Civic Society	Amende	Erica
23	Spenn Valley Civic Society	Berry	Colin
24	Wakefield Civic Society	Spawforth	Peter

Appendix 2

YHACS PORTFOLIO DISCUSSIONS: Issues raised at Ilkley 25th April 2015

1. Planning Portfolio – Portfolio Holder: Helen Kidman

- The time limit for speaking at planning panels is too short
- Planning Officers can be selective in their evidence and can often waffle on which results in time constraints for other cases.
- Panel members need training and sometimes vote on party lines. Panel members can have no local knowledge and vote on what the planning officer tells them – no site visits.
- The system is not democratic
- Civic Societies need to impact officers and councillors – but how? You cannot get to a councillor on a specific case because if they do discuss things with the public, they then have to declare an interest and may be barred from participation.
- Developers talk to planners early in the process and off the record – why can't we?
- Separate YHACS meeting series for people interested in planning as it's such a big topic. Not necessarily on YHACS days - may be a different audience – need to consider this.
- Some people do not understand planning language or the reasons behind planning decisions
- Get planning officers to talk at a YHACS meeting
- Share planning inspectors' decisions across YHACS
- All societies in each LA to talk to planning officers together
- Planners are not accessible
- Policy - the volume is overwhelming – needs a short critique on each new piece
- Societies need guidance on the NPPF
- YHACS should exploit synergy with CPRE

2. Towns and Cities and Public Realm Portfolio – Portfolio Holders: Richard Ward and Peter Cooper

- In Ilkley: Every public service is getting worse. If you complain about a service cut the local authority line is: OK, which service would you like to cut instead?
- In general: Loss of original features in conservation areas.
- There is a lack of dialogue between local authorities and civic societies. This is something Scarborough CS is addressing with quarterly meetings with the Head of Planning.
- Doncaster: Problems with HMOs, but seen as a response to demand.
- Shopfronts: Bradford has a policy but doesn't use it.
- Pontefract: Transport - three stations in Pontefract but not many trains.
- In general: Quality of street furniture and a proliferation of 'A' boards.
- Harrogate: Volume of new houses puts pressure on transport/infrastructure (link here with infrastructure portfolio holder). Infrastructure ignored. Schools: Full.
- Scarborough and Harrogate: Inappropriate road lighting in conservation areas.
- In general: Need information in good time in order to comment; need to be on the front foot, often information is received too late in the consultation process.
- Yorkshire Water: Seem to have resources to invest.
- Transport: We need a new plan. Traffic and potholes!
- Backlog of road maintenance, estimated nationally at £12bn.
- Planning in towns and cities: Lack of enforcement officers, listed buildings with unauthorised work (e.g. Beverley), Conservation Areas not policed. It seems resources are concentrated on major cities, smaller towns neglected.
- Proliferation of estate agent boards, they can be controlled (at Headingley in Leeds).
- Public Art?

3. Infrastructure Portfolio – Portfolio holder: Jim Robinson

- Many mentioned the size and breadth of the Portfolio subject. Covering such wide ranging issues.
- Subject matter should be broken down into the main sub headings with each being a portfolio!
- Someone mentioned in its widest form that: 'infrastructure development is probably one of Society's biggest challenges'
- In 'Planning' the impact and strain on the current infrastructure is rarely considered, special reference to schools, roads and the provision of health services.
- Is the Community Infrastructure Levy working (CIL)? Probably not.
- Is the CIL imposed?
- Much discussion about Traffic related problems as housing developments expand.
- The car takes priority with pedestrians in a poor second place.
- We are car dependant.
- Lack of good public transport also a burning issue.
- Much money is wasted in trying to fix transport problems, without tackling the causes.
- Need more bus lanes and in many areas there should be a review of bus routes.
- Cycle lanes are not expanding and where they exist often ignored, by drivers.
- Huge traffic related problems at school times.
- Local Authorities don't appear to understand 'transport integration'.
- Can effective Neighbourhood Plans help?
- On the positive side, it was mentioned that local shopping appears to be on the increase in some areas which helps transport related problems.
- Flood risks in the planning of new housing developments can get ignored.
- Incidents of sewerage related problems in new housing developments has also been an issue in some areas

4. Design Portfolio – Portfolio Holder: David Winpenny

- First question is 'what is good design' – can we agree on criteria?
- Need to encourage good modern design, not timid pastiche which is often pushed by local authorities
- First step to gather together local authority design guides for assessment

- YHACS could then offer, in general terms, a design guide that distils basic principles and best practice
- Suggestion that YHACS could provide a portfolio of good examples of design – with different sizes of development
- Need advice on materials as well as on basic design
- It was pointed out that a basic need was for local authorities to have the people with the skills to assess design in planning applications
- YHACS could join with other groups (RIBA, TRPI were suggested) to have a united front
- Another suggestion was for YHACS to have a panel of experts to offer societies guidance in design
- We should see this as an opportunity to offer the expertise we can summon to help hard-pressed authorities
- We also need to have the expertise to keep abreast of the latest legislation on planning and design – almost a full-time job in itself
- A suggestion was made that YHACS should have its own Design Awards in the area – though others thought a proliferation of awards might be counterproductive.
- The design brief should encompass signage and shop fronts, street furniture and road design as well as building design