

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES

MINUTES OF THE YHACS MEETING HELD ON 28TH APRIL 2017 AT THE COOPER GALLERY, BARNSELY

DELEGATES PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See Appendix 1

1. Welcome from Alan Parks, Barnsley Civic Trust

Alan gave the meeting apologies from the chair of Barnsley Civic Trust who was currently undertaking a sponsored charity walk in Spain.

In welcoming YHACS members to Barnsley, he pointed out how much the town had changed in the last forty years. In the 1970s, the town had 30 coal mines, of which there is now little evidence. The town retained a good urban form and some significant buildings. The town centre is currently under redevelopment. The Civic Trust is a small but very active organisation that was re-formed in 2007. The annual shop awards are popular and a number of blue plaques have been erected, the latest to Joseph Brammer, a hydraulic engineer. The society hosts visits by other civic societies, and is represented on the town's independent design panel.

2. Welcome to Barnsley, The Mayor of Barnsley, Cllr Linda Burgess.

The mayor offered members a warm welcome to Barnsley and explained that the theme for her year of office has been celebrating the 'Best of Barnsley'. The town has fantastic heritage and history of the mining, glass and linen trades. Included in the celebration were the people, places, organisations and businesses within the metropolitan district. The town hall, built 1933, remains a special place. A new town centre development, the Glassworks, was in the course of construction. It had taken a long time to get to this stage, but will be worthwhile. The mayor exhorted members to come back and visit the town.

3. Minutes of last meeting held on 29th October 2016 in Goole

These were proposed by Chris Perry, seconded Tony Leonard and approved by the meeting.

4. Matters arising

None

5. Chairman's Report

Kevin Trickett reported that he had been busy as ever promoting not only Wakefield and Wakefield Civic Society but also YHACS on TV and in the Wakefield business magazine TopicUK.

On top of that, he has spoken at the RTPi conference in York on the subject of Conservation Areas (where he met Dr Tanner, and invited him to speak at today's YHACS meeting). As a result of his presentation, Kevin had been invited to speak to two open public meetings of the Stockton Heritage Group in May with a view to encourage people to join and to help members formulate their ideas on their plans for the future.

Talking of the future, Kevin reminded everyone that the YHACS committee had organised a one-day futures workshop to be held in Wakefield on 23rd June. The number attending was limited to around 20 but the first workshop would be free to YHACS members. Anyone wishing to book a place should contact Kevin urgently. If the workshop was judged successful, YHACS would consider running further workshops in the region but may have to introduce a charge. Civic Voice colleagues had expressed interest in the work that YHACS was doing on this topic.

Bookings for the Civic Voice Annual Convention, to be held in Wakefield on 20/21st October 2017 and co-hosted by Wakefield Civic Society, are now opened (via Eventbrite) and members were

urged to book places quickly – and to make sure they booked overnight accommodation at the Cedar Court Hotel in Wakefield before the rush started!

6. Treasurer's Report

Richard Ward reported that the balance in the account was £5361.74 with 37 paid up member societies. YHACS has changed bank in order to avoid paying any current a/c charges. Bridlington, Scalby and Pudsey societies have not joined this year.

7. Guest Speaker: Dr John Tanner, Barnsley Metropolitan District Council Arts and Heritage Service

John is responsible for heritage regeneration in Barnsley. He spoke about three examples, Barnsley town centre, Elsecar and Cannon Hall.

In the town centre, the town hall built in 1933 and a source of pride in Barnsley, has been cleaned and sensitively renovated and now looks stunning. Space in it is now available.

In setting up the new museum there, it became apparent that many young people lacked awareness of Barnsley's past beyond its coal-mining history. A project is underway to collect memories of not only the mining industry, but also the glass and linen industries with a view to introducing new exhibitions. It is hoped that this will encourage local people to visit other places of historic interest. The museum lacked a local collection of its own and had to put out a call for artefacts which had resulted in the donation of thousands of items of interest.

At Cannon Hall (designed by John Carr of Horbury), the exterior is being restored over the next few years and features in the Georgian parkland such as the coach house, the ice house, pre-Raphaelite statues and the lakes are being renovated.

Elsecar has been a conservation area since the 1970s. It is the model industrial estate village to Wentworth Woodhouse but not well known. Many of the buildings associated with coal and iron production, with bridges by Brunel and miners' cottages designed by John Carr still exist. The place is like Beamish, but everything is original! There is major industrial archaeology, including buried coke ovens. The site has massive potential but there are threats of housing development. The site is a heritage Action Zone and together with Wentworth Woodhouse has won a Great Place award.

8. Conservation – Who Cares? Kevin Trickett.

Kevin Trickett gave a condensed version of his RTPI presentation.

He began by asking who really cared about conservation areas (and, for that matter, listed buildings)? He said it was obvious as he walked around many conservation areas that many property owners didn't seem to care very much; and local authorities didn't seem to care enough to be willing to pump resources into enforcement, although with current spending pressures, this was to some extent understandable. The general public might tut, but often lack the willingness to mobilise to do anything, so maybe it fell to civic societies to carry the torch as the people who really do care about conservation.

Kevin said that, to be effective, civic societies need to consider defining what is important for them in conservation areas – different societies might take differing views based on the context of what was happening in their area. Was it authenticity that mattered or just a 'look'? Should societies be campaigning to preserve the original fabric and be insisting on original methods when it came to repair and restoration? If so, to which period should properties be restored when refurbishment plans were being proposed for older properties? Should we be insisting on, for example, telephones and central heating being removed where these were not original features? If not, then what else were we willing to make compromises on? Were uPVC window frames acceptable in conservation areas, for example? If so, what about solar panels and satellite dishes? And if local civic societies were against such incongruous features, would there be backing (and appropriate enforcement) from local authority officials?

Kevin showed numerous examples of what not to do and not to allow – including telephone wires and electricity cables being tacked onto exteriors of buildings because it was easier and cheaper

to do so than laying them internally where floorboards might need to be lifted, carpets rolled back, and furniture moved. He also showed examples of poor maintenance, satellite dishes, inappropriate paint schemes, poor quality shop fronts, and so on.

Perhaps, he said, it was more important just to preserve the look and feel, the general character of an area. In this case, it mattered less about the materials used, or what happened on the inside of buildings which the public generally didn't see, if the streetscape looked and felt 'old': ensuring that the external façades were taken care of and urban clutter removed, for example. Of course, it was necessary to avoid the 'Disneyfication' of heritage where 'instant history' was introduced because all new developments had to be 'in period', rather than allowing architects to design schemes in the modern idiom. Kevin showed a selection of photos of such modern schemes actual and proposed for Wakefield, pointing out how modern architecture could be used to complement traditional architecture in conservation areas. It was, at the end of the day, for each society to devise its own campaign position.

Finally, Kevin outlined how civic societies could help conservation officers with local knowledge, continuity, acting honest brokers, and so on, even, if resources allowed, helping with conservation area appraisals.

9. Guest Speaker: Craig Broadwith, Historic places Adviser, Historic England

Craig Broadwith explained his role, working with community groups, developers and local authorities. He gave an interesting background to the history of civic amenities from the earliest scheduling and listing.

Conservation areas are fairly new in this respect, having appeared in the late 60s. By 1970 there were still only 30 but now there are 875 in Yorkshire alone. They vary in size, quality and character.

One in 16 conservation areas is at risk. These are reviewed annually to establish their condition, vulnerability and trajectory. Local Authorities have the power to take action but often lack the resources to do so. This may be through Townscape Heritage Schemes, Article 4 Directions, refusing damaging planning applications and ensuring that new-build is properly integrated into the streetscape in conservation areas.

Craig cited Haworth as an example, where poor shop fronts and a lack of maintenance had had a negative effect. This was improved by helping retail businesses to understand the conservation area, improve their offer to visitors and capitalise on events such as the Tour de Yorkshire (this weekend).

Craig saw challenges from a number of directions – housing v heritage, growth v conservation areas and market failure v conservation areas, but he also saw solutions. For example, encouraging residential use for upper floors of old buildings (as at Little Germany in Bradford) and the use of local listed building consent orders.

Again Craig saw a role for societies, in terms of local engagement, promotion and collecting the stories and telling them, thus enhancing local understanding and appreciation.

9. News from Civic Voice - Paul Bedwell, Trustee, Civic Voice

Paul Bedwell reported the latest developments. Following the Greenbalance review of Civic Voice undertaken last year, the organisation is re-locating from Liverpool to Birmingham to offices at the Coffin-works, a move which takes advantage of the fact that the building is co-owned by Birmingham Civic Society but also responds to the need to find new premises following the expiry of the lease at the Liverpool office. Some staff changes will result and two new posts are currently advertised on the Civic Voice website dealing with office management and membership. Interviews for these posts will be in June.

In the CV Design Awards, three of the 18 projects shortlisted are in Yorkshire. They are Sunnybank Mill at Farsley, Sunbridge Wells in Bradford and the Greater Green Scheme in Sheffield.

York Civic Trust has joined Civic Voice. A larger societies meeting is being held on 6th May in Leeds hosted by Leeds Civic Trust.

Paul encouraged societies to register their Civic Day events, for members to sign up for the convention in October in Wakefield and to consider whether they could offer the possibility of Study Tours as part of the Big Conservation Conversation.

10. Civic Society News

a. Leeds Civic Trust – Martin Hamilton, Director

Martin explained that he had recently taken over from Dr Kevin Grady as Director of the Trust. Kevin had retired in December after nearly 30 years at the helm of Leeds Civic Trust.

He explained that Leeds CT is working hard for the Big Conservation Conversation with an article on doors and windows in their newsletter, Heritage Awards and a spotlight on specific buildings at risk such as the White Cloth Hall. They had also won the YHACS/Peter Spawforth Award in January this year for the work they had done to survey listed buildings in and around the city.

Leeds has 78 conservation areas many of which have not yet been appraised.

Leeds CT has a number of Affiliated Organisations, meeting 6 monthly.

A Heritage Conference is planned.

b Wakefield Civic Society – Kevin Trickett, President

Kevin reported on the Heart of Wakefield Project, a partnership between Wakefield Council, Wakefield Historical Society, Leeds Beckett University and the Civic Society to research and then to promote the history of Wood Street in Wakefield, the hearty of the administrative and civic area of the city. The project was funded by the Heritage Lottery. Wood Street was also the centre of the Wood Street Conservation Area.

The project includes art works, oral histories and community engagement. Wakefield Civic Society had undertaken to put up a minimum of three new blue plaques (funded by the HLF grant), to deliver 12 guided walks by the end of September, and to produce a book on the history of the street and its buildings, which Kevin himself is writing. There is strong council support for this project.

Kevin said that he firmly believed people got out of life what they were prepared to put in. He had engaged with this project wholeheartedly and found it a fascinating way to learn more about his own city and build up his personal networks. Meanwhile, the challenge of writing the book – and obtaining permission to use a number of historic photos and maps – was proving very rewarding.

11. Any other business

YHACS Futures Workshop, Wakefield, 23rd June 2017: members were reminded to book early as there were only a limited number of places available.

12. Date of next meeting: Saturday, 29th July, Hornsea

Annex 1

	Society/Organisation	Surname	First Name
1	Barnsley Civic Trust	Barnes	Geoff
2	Barnsley Civic Trust/YHACS Committee	Barnes	Phyllis
3	Barnsley Civic Trust	Fisher	Angela
4	Barnsley Civic Trust	Griffiths	Cecily
5	Barnsley Civic Trust	Griffiths	Goff
6	Barnsley Civic Trust	Gould	Pauline
7	Barnsley Civic Trust	Parks	Alan
8	Barnsley Civic Trust	Greenfield	Norman
9	Barnsley Civic Trust	Greenwood	Sylvia
10	Barnsley Civic Trust	Roberts	Peter
11	Barnsley Civic Trust	Howley	Michael
12	Barnsley Civic Trust	Howley	Valerie
13	Brighouse Civic Trust	Culpan	John
14	Castleford Heritage Trust	Drake	Alison
15	Castleford Heritage Trust	Wallis	Tony
16	Doncaster Civic Trust	Anderson	Tina
17	Doncaster Civic Trust	Coote	Peter
18	Doncaster Civic Trust	Holmes	John
19	Goole Civic Society	Walker	Rachel
20	Goole Civic Society	Walker	Stephen
21	Huddersfield Civic Society	Earnshaw	Lesley
22	Ilkley Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society	Kidman	Helen
23	Leeds Civic Trust/YHACS Committee	Hamilton	Martin
24	Leeds Civic Trust	Taylor	Jane
25	Market Weighton Civic Societ/YHACS Committee	Leonard	Tony
26	Ossett Civic Trust	Amos	Ruth
27	Ossett Civic Trust	Mitchell	David
28	Pontefract Civic Society	Barnes	Rosemary
29	Pontefract Civic Society	Cartwright	Christine
30	Pontefract Civic Society/YHACS Committee	Cartwright	Paul
31	Huddersfield/Scalby and Scarborough Civic Societies/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society	Ward	Richard
32	Scarborough & District Civic Society	Perry	Adrian
33	Scarborough & District Civic Society	Perry	Chris
34	Scarborough Civic Society	Bridgewood	Glen
35	Scarborough Civic Society	Bridgewood	Pete
36	Sheffield Civic Trust/Civic Voice	Bedwell	Paul
37	Skipton in Craven Civic Society	Wood	Anne
38	Wakefield Civic Society	Broadbent	Jean
39	Wakefield Civic Society	O'Donnell	Mike
40	Wakefield Civic Society	Spawforth	Peter
41	Wakefield Civic Society	Spawforth	Pat
42	Wakefield Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society	Trickett	Kevin
43	Wakefield Civic Society/Barnsley Civic Trust	Ward	Brian
44	Wakefield Civic Society	Wood	Geoff

	Guest Speakers:		
45	Craig Broadwith, Historic England		
46	Dr John Tanner, Barnsley Museum Service		
47	Cllr Linda Burgess, Mayor of Barnsley		

Apologies Received

1	Addingham Civic Society	Robinson	Jim
2	Bradford Civic Society	Hall	Alan
3	Goole Civic Society	Clarke	John
4	Goole Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Horbury Civic Society	Hicks-Clarke	Margaret
5	Historic England	Wall	Deborah
6	Hornsea Civic Society	Salvidge	Nicki
7	Leeds Civic Trust	Kitching	Lynda
8	Pudsey & District Civic Society	Depelle	Jackie
9	Richmond Civic Society	McDonald	John
10	Ripon Civic Society	Winpenny	David
11	Saddleworth Civic Trust	Makin	David
12	Scarborough Civic Society/YHACS President/Market Weighton Civic Society/Horbury Civic Society	Cooper	Peter
13	Selby Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society/Horbury Civic Society	Moss	David
14	Selby Civic Society	Wildash	Jim
15	Skipton in Craven Civic Society	Clarke	Sheila
16	Spenn Valley Civic Society	Amende	Erica
17	Wakefield Civic Society	Holwell	Margaret
18	Whitby Civic Society	James	David