

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES

MINUTES OF THE YHACS MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT THE CITY HALL, BRADFORD

DELEGATES PRESENT AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

See Appendix 1

Welcome from Kevin Trickett

Kevin welcomed members and thanked Bradford Civic Society for the morning walk and organising the meeting.

Welcome from Si Cunningham, chair, Bradford Civic Society

Si welcomed members to Bradford and to the magnificent Banqueting Hall in the City Hall. The visit to Sunbridge Wells, the talk on Bradford Beck coming up, the City Park project and the latest developments with the Odeon were all evidence of great civic pride in the city of which the Civic Society is a part. He hoped members would enjoy their visit and be encouraged to come back and spend longer exploring what's on offer.

Welcome from the Deputy Lord Mayor of Bradford Cllr Doreen Lee

Cllr Lee welcomed members with reassurances that the city is growing and thriving, but with plenty of scope for future improvements. Sunbridge Wells had been a fantastic development of great interest as were the Mirror Pool in City Square which had been very popular with families during the summer. She acknowledged that more restoration work was necessary at the top of the town. Bradford District was not just the city, but included Saltaire, Haworth, Keighley and Ilkley – plenty of interesting places to visit.

Minutes of last meeting held on 29th July 2017 at Hornsea

These were proposed by Paul Bedwell, seconded by Malcolm Sharman and approved by the meeting.

Matters arising

None.

Chairman's Report

Kevin reviewed the Hornsea meeting with a word cloud on the benefits of YHACS membership – networking came out on top – see attached.

Kevin reported he had visited Seville and Venice during the summer, two cities with very different town planning challenges.

His recommended reading included

- *Death and Life of American Cities* by Jane Jacobs
- *Walkable Cities* by Jeff Speck
- *Outskirts: Living Life on the Edge of the Green Belt* by Jon Grindrod

Kevin had organised an evening walking tour of Wakefield for members of Huddersfield Civic Society.

YHACS had produced its latest newsletter distributed this week.

Thinking of different types of societies, Kevin categorised possible options that societies might want to consider:

- Think Tank – small groups of experts seeking to influence politicians and the public, perhaps by doing no more than publishing position papers.
- Policy Group – again, probably smaller groups using their knowledge and expertise in seeking to influence policy, local, regional and national by issuing papers, talking to decision makers and do on.
- Pressure Group – slightly larger group, made up of concerned residents and campaigning to achieve improvements locally, prevent closures of local facilities, and so on.
- Projects Group – focused very much on running their own improvement schemes, raising funds through sponsorship and grants. May achieve its aims through collaborating with other organisations which do the actual project delivery.
- Membership organisation – larger group, developing membership programmes and activities to engage the membership (eg, meetings, talks, excursions, newsletter, etc) alongside campaigning and lobbying for local improvements and place-making activities.

Kevin said that civic societies had typically been membership organisations but this put pressure on committees to run membership programmes on top of delivering their main objectives around planning and place-shaping. This put extra pressure on the committee and might even deter people from standing for the committee or prevent the committee focusing on the place-shaping activities.

Another side effect of societies being membership organisations first and foremost was that we collectively tended to judge the success or otherwise of our societies by the number of members we could attract, or by how many of our members turned out for our events. This approach threw up some interesting anomalies. Comparing Leeds, Wakefield and Addingham civic societies, Kevin pointed out that Leeds had the most members overall, and Wakefield least. However, when viewed as a percentage of the local population, Addingham came out top with Leeds faring least well.

Of course, members can provide, through their subscription and donations, a useful source of income and that is important – but there are other ways of raising money – some organisations have ‘supporters’ rather than members and if his own experience was anything to go by, Kevin pointed out that many committee members were actually out of pocket running their societies: maybe it would be easier (and even cheaper!) for committee members to each pay £50 a year into a small fund to cover essential items (such as civic Voice and YHACS memberships and insurance!) and to dispense with the idea of being membership organisations altogether?

Kevin suggested that, as a movement, we perhaps needed to move away from the obsession with membership numbers and think instead more about the impact a civic society was having locally and how the work of the society was valued by the local population and other stakeholders. Even a small society can make a big difference and if the society is respected, its advice valued and its outputs appreciated, then the number of members it has isn’t really a material consideration.

Moving on to other matters, Kevin outlined the Civic Voice Convention arrangements at Wakefield on 20-21 October 2017. He urged members to book places which could be done via the Civic Voice website. For those extending their stay, members would be welcome at the 19th October meeting of Wakefield Civic Society when Kevin would be talking about future trends in society and their potential implications for civic societies. There would also be a free guided walk in Wakefield on Sunday morning, 22nd October 2017.

Treasurer’s Report

Richard Ward reported that the balance was £5,405.24 plus funds for Market Weighton Society, with all member societies now paid up for 2017.

Guest Speaker – Barry Lerner, Friends of Bradford Becks

Barry gave an illustrated presentation on the improvement schemes for the Bradford Beck and its tributaries which had become polluted during the C19 industrial development of the city and subsequently culverted. The Friends of Bradford Becks were instrumental in getting the watercourses opened up and cleaned up for the benefit of both the public and wildlife. For more information visit www.bradford.beck.org

Guest Speaker – Kate Walham, Odeon project

The former cinema and ballroom is to benefit from Northern Cultural Regeneration funding which will see the building restored to its former glory as a landmark building in the centre of Bradford after many years of dereliction. Bradford Civic Society is supporting the restoration.

Kate explained that it had been announced in the previous month that the NEC Group will run the restored 1930s cinema in Bradford as a concert and events centre which will become a 4,000 capacity music venue in a £15m restoration project.

Guest Speaker – Margaret Hicks Clark Goole Civic Society

Margaret gave a short presentation on Goole Civic Society's latest project promoting Goole. This is a video, of which we saw a sneak preview of the first few minutes. She described how they had hired a drone for overhead shots and explained the complexities of the editing process. Members were impressed!

News from Civic Voice:

a). Guest Speaker – Joan Humble, chair of Civic Voice

Joan thanked Bradford Civic Society for hosting the meeting and for the enjoyable walk visiting Sunbridge Wells, which had recently won a Civic Voice Design Award.

The Civic Voice Design Awards were made for new builds, restoration and conservation areas. Civic Voice aims to encourage societies to celebrate and improve their localities and offers advice and support on planning and related issues.

She strongly recommended the Civic Voice Convention to members and looked forward to meeting them there.

b). Helen Kidman – Civic Voice Regional Forum

Helen Kidman, who chairs the forum reported on the wide variety of topics which the forum had discussed and the key messages passed to Civic Voice board members after each meeting. The YHACS representative on the Forum is now Paul Cartwright. Helen explained how the forum is an important link between regional associations and the board and asked YHACS and societies to keep the forum in the picture about:

- What is happening – good and bad where you are?
- What issues are there for Civic Voice?
- What civic issues interest your MP and Councillors?

Civic Society News – Just a minute

Society representatives are invited to speak for just 60 seconds. If you would like a longer slot at a future meeting, please contact Kevin Trickett.

- Martin Hamilton, Leeds Civic Trust brought members' attention to a conference entitled Rebuilding our Heritage on 14th October at Chapel FM Seacroft. Tickets via Leeds Civic Trust or Eventbrite

- Peter Cooper, Scarborough Civic Society requested for support for a petition seeking automatic immediate listing protection for potential listed buildings at risk of demolition. See: <https://www.change.org/p/uk-parliament-give-automatic-interim-protection-to-buildings-proposed-for-listing>
- Chris Hughes, Ripon Civic Society informed the meeting that Ripon was to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2018 and announced that the July 2018 YHACS meeting would be held in Ripon.
- Si Hughes, Bradford Civic Society drew attention to the 'Lock In' at the Bradford Police Museum and the River of Light Festival on 13th and 14th October 2017.
- Malcolm Sharman, Hull Civic Society recommended that members visit Hull before the end of the City of Culture year and explained that the Culture Company was to develop the festival's legacy.
- Rachel Walker, Goole Civic Society explained that they were proposing to set up a Heritage Action Zone in Goole in an attempt to save a number of buildings which may be under threat.
- Clare Nash, Skipton in Craven Civic Society advised members that it was official that Craven is the 'happiest place in the UK' and one of their latest initiatives is an archaeology project on a limestone quarry industrial tramway.
- Kevin Trickett invited members to think about joining the YHACS committee. This was not an onerous task but it did provide insights into the civic society movement and an opportunity to promote YHACS.
- Helen Kidman, Ilkley Civic Society advised members that the Community Asset Transfer for the Ilkley Manor House and three adjacent cottages from Bradford Council to a Trust is about to take place and that the Manor House will be open to the public with a display of future plans, during the Ilkley Literature Festival on 14th and 15th October. Both the Manor House and the Lit Fest are supported by the civic society. ICS is hoping to set up a local archive of documents in the Manor House itself for their next project – any advice welcome.

Any other business

None

Date of next meeting: The AGM Saturday, 27th January 2018 at the Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate.

Appendix 1 – List of Attendees and Apologies

	Society/Organisation	Surname	First Name
1	Addingham Civic Society	Robinson	Jim
2	Barnsley Civic Trust	Barnes	Geoff
3	Barnsley Civic Trust/YHACS Committee	Barnes	Phyllis
4	Bradford Civic Society	Cunningham	Si
5	Bradford Civic Society	Hall	Alan
6	Bradford Civic Society	Oates	Mandy
7	Castleford Heritage Trust	Wallis	Tony
8	Civic Voice	Douce	Phil
9	Civic Voice/Blackpool Civic Trust	Humble	Joan
10	Blackpool Civic Trust	Humble	Paul
11	Brighouse Civic Trust	Culpan	John
12	Doncaster Civic Trust	Kimber	Steve
13	Goole Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Horbury Civic Society	Hicks-Clarke	Margaret
14	Goole Civic Society	Clarke	John
15	Goole Civic Society	Walker	Rachel
16	Goole Civic Society	Walker	Steven
17	Grimsby & Cleethorpes Civic Society	Bassett	Graeme
18	Halifax Civic Trust	Hanson	David
19	Huddersfield Civic Society	Earnshaw	Lesley
20	Hull Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society	Sharman	Malcolm
21	Hull Civic Society	Sharman	Dot
22	Ilkley Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society	Kidman	Helen
23	Leeds Civic Trust/YHACS Committee	Hamilton	Martin
24	Leeds Civic Trust	Kitching	Lynda
25	Leeds Civic Trust	Taylor	Jane
26	Market Weighton Civic Society/YHACS Committee	Leonard	Tony
27	Ripon Civic Society	Hughes	Christopher
28	Ripon Civic Society	Taylor	Richard
29	Ripon Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society	Winpenny	David
30	Scarborough & District Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society/	Cooper	Peter
31	Scarborough & District Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society/Huddersfield Civic Society	Ward	Richard
32	Sheffield Civic Trust/Civic Voice	Bedwell	Paul
33	Skipton in Craven Civic Society	Clarke	Sheila
34	Wakefield Civic Society	Martin	Colin
35	Wakefield Civic Society	O'Donnell	Mike
36	Wakefield Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society	Trickett	Kevin
37	Wakefield Civic Society/Barnsley Civic Trust	Ward	Brian
38	Wakefield Civic Society	Wood	Geoff
39	Whitby Civic Society	Stangoe	Joyce

	Guest Speakers:		
40	Deputy Mayor of Bradford		
41	Barney Lerner		
42	Kate Walham		
	Apologies Received		
1	Beverley Civic Society	Hopkins	Pam
2	Castleford Heritage Trust	Drake	Alison
3	Doncaster Civic Trust	Coote	Peter
4	Grimsby & Cleethorpes Civic Society	Turner	Martyn
5	Halifax Civic Trust	Paxton-White	June
6	Hull Civic Society	Fowler	Cynthia
7	Hull Civic Society	Fowler	Michael
8	Pontefract Civic Society	Cartwright	Christine
9	Pontefract Civic Society/YHACS Committee	Cartwright	Paul
10	Richmond Civic Society	Hillyard	Carol
11	Saddleworth Civic Trust	Harrison	David
12	Selby Civic Society/YHACS Committee/Market Weighton Civic Society	Moss	David
13	Selby Civic Society	Wildash	Jim
14	Wakefield Civic Society	Smith	Anne-Marie
15	Wakefield Civic Society	Swift	Kevin