



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

Member of



SOCIETY INSIGHT

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**"ENVIRONMENT
& CLIMATE
CHANGE"**

TOWARDS LIVING SUSTAINABLY IN ADDINGHAM

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With the world focussed on combatting the coronavirus pandemic it's easy to forget about other global but equally existential challenges facing humanity.

The problems of climate change and biodiversity loss have not gone away. Indeed the present health crisis serves to remind us just how extreme the pressure of human activity on the natural world has become and how interconnected these different crises are.

The overall challenge is how to decrease the pressure of human activity on the natural world and safeguard nature for future generations whilst, at the same time, maintaining our quality of life. It's a challenge that needs addressing at all levels of human society. Sadly, national governments can be frustratingly slow in showing leadership, but there is much that we can do at the local level to make a difference: raising awareness, taking action where we can and setting examples. Encouragingly in Yorkshire, as in the UK as a whole, many local authorities have now set out plans to combat climate change, declaring ambitions to reach zero carbon targets by 2030. Some have gone further by declaring an ecological as well as a climate emergency. These twin crises are a reflection of the bigger question of how to live sustainably or, in the words of One Planet Living "how everyone can live happy, healthy lives within the limits of the planet leaving space for wildlife and wilderness" (<https://www.bioregional.com/about-us>).

The One Planet Living framework has inspired Ilkley to produce a sustainability plan for the town (<https://towncouncil.ilkley.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Ilkley-Sustainability-Plan-Draft-Nov-2019.pdf>). Our work in Addingham is also inspired by the One Planet Living concept. We centre our activities on four of its principal themes: wildlife friendly, sustainable water, zero carbon and zero

waste. These themes are strongly inter-related. They form a very useful way of structuring our volunteer work programme, one that we could recommend to other groups.

Wildlife friendly

After almost four years of biological recording since our formation in 2016 we are now beginning to gain some understanding of our village wildlife populations. We have ongoing projects on hedgehogs, birds, butterflies, bees, wildflowers and trees, and once the coronavirus lockdown has been lifted we'll start monitoring bat populations. We send our records to the Wharfedale Naturalists Society in Ilkley and to the West Yorkshire Ecology Service (WYES) in Wakefield. The WYES database is especially important as this is one of the primary sources of information for local authorities in assessing the biodiversity impact of proposed developments in planning applications.

It is too soon to say whether our wildlife populations year on year are changing but we are beginning now to be able to identify populations at risk. For example, we now have an understanding of the distribution of hedgehogs in the village. We have been especially successful in rescuing injured hedgehogs and there is increasing awareness in the local community about how to protect them.

We also have had success raising awareness about the loss of insect pollinators and the importance of maintaining and restoring wildflower populations and hedgerows throughout the village. With the help of our volunteers and the support of the Parish Council we have been growing native wildflowers from seed in pots and planting them out in our village green spaces. We



began on road verges and in our main village centre recreational field but now our wildflower programme extends to include the grounds of our churches, to the golf course and to a number of private gardens in the village. The idea is not only to restore wildflowers and wildflower habitat but also to create a mosaic of closely-spaced wildflower patches that provide nectar and pollen for bees, butterflies and other pollinators.

Sustainable water

Our work on water in Addingham focuses on our 4Becks project, so called because we have four principal becks running through the parish. They all suffer from pollution and Town Beck in particular is in poor ecological condition. In addition to nutrient pollution from agricultural land above the village, the beck in the village itself flows through culverts and over weirs thereby impeding fish passage and it receives contaminated runoff from impermeable street, roof and driveway surfaces. In older parts of the village surface waters run directly into the sewer system and after heavy rain

untreated sewage is discharged directly into the Wharfe at Low Mill. We monitor the becks using our team of beck stewards who clear the becks of litter, look out for pollution events and record wildflower and bird populations.



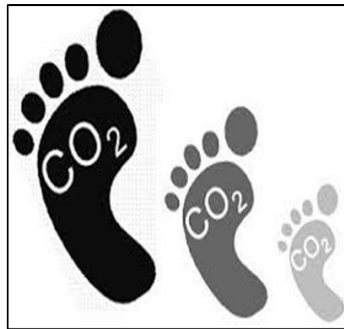
Flooding is also a problem caused by water flowing off the fields around the edges of the village, by rising groundwater in basements along Main St., and by over-topping of the beck in the lower parts of the village close to its confluence with the Wharfe. We are working

with the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust, Bradford Council, Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency to help residents prepare for flooding and in particular we are planning environmentally friendly flood protection schemes that reduce flood risk and at the same time help to improve water quality and freshwater life. These include plans to introduce Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) to our housing estates and Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures to slow the flow of surface water from agricultural land upstream.

Zero carbon

The most pressing problem we all face is that of climate change with the need both to reduce greenhouse gas (mainly carbon) emissions by eliminating our dependence on fossil fuels and also to sequester carbon (as carbon dioxide) from the atmosphere by planting trees and building up soil organic matter.

The starting point for us in Addingham as a community was to measure our carbon footprint using an online calculator. Last year (2019) we urged residents to use the calculator on the WWF website: <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk> and send in their personal data so we could calculate a village average. We had 41 responses. Values ranged from 6.7 tonnes per year to 17.4 with an average of 11.7. Judging from these figures, we are not doing especially well! The target (using the WWF calculator) for this year (2020) is 10.5 tonnes per person. We intend to contact those 41 residents who responded last year and ask them to repeat the exercise. We need to reach close to zero by 2030!



It's probably a tall order. Although there is now good awareness of the issues in the village progress is slow. In 2017 we carried out a survey of homes on solar power installations and found only 2% of properties with panels. Given the termination of the Government feed-in-tariff (FIT) subsidy in March 2019 it's not surprising few solar panels have been fitted recently and this percentage has not increased.

We are strongly supportive of electric vehicles (EVs) and the phasing out of petrol and diesel-powered cars and there are now a small number of EVs in

the village, yet so far we have no publicly available charging facility. Our local authority has not included Addingham in its charge point installation plan and our attempts to find a location for charging points in the village have so far been unsuccessful. This is especially a concern for residents in the older parts of the village where home charging is not an option.



Other important greenhouse gas mitigation measures are equally difficult to implement. Residents understand the importance of flying less but seem very reluctant to do so and in a part of Yorkshire where livestock farming is the dominant form of agriculture suggestions that less beef and lamb should be eaten are understandably unpopular! We've had more success with tree planting but tree planting is not a panacea, it needs to be done thoughtfully with the right trees in the right place taking care not to damage other wildlife habitats – and it should be no substitute for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

So whilst there are many things that can be done locally to reduce our carbon footprint, in our experience so far achieving the required reduction within the timeframe needed will be difficult without further Government incentives.

Zero waste

We started to ramp up our zero waste campaign in Addingham in the middle of 2019. Earlier this year we took over the display space in our newly refurbished village Hub to showcase the initiatives we've been taking and in February our monthly Civic Society speaker meeting was devoted to the issue with the title "How Green is our Village, Part 3: War on Waste".



Dave Johnston and Ian Benson who lead our zero waste working group gave a presentation on "Zero waste Addingham" and Edith Grooby, Bradford's Waste and Recycling Manager, attended to take part in the discussion and answer questions. Our plan now, once the coronavirus pandemic is over, is to publicise our programme within the village by giving talks on recycling and waste

reduction to other clubs and societies. Our local authority tells us that our recycling rate by household is 31% by weight. Our aim is to increase that to 50%, by increasing participation rates and improving the understanding of residents about what can and can't be recycled.

Our Primary School is setting an example. It has signed up to become a "plastic free" school under the Surfers against Sewage plastic-free school programme.

We have a number of other initiatives on the go. We now have six refill points for personal water bottles in the village under the national Refill scheme and we have several Terracycle collection facilities. Terracycle (<https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/>) is an international project designed to recycle the "non-recyclable" such as coffee capsules, crisp packets and toothpaste tubes. The Scouts have set up a crisp packet recycling scheme (<https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades/crisppacket>), and we, the Civic Society, now collect Tassimo and L'Or coffee pods at our monthly speaker meetings (<https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades/tassimo-lor>), - or we will do when we our speaker meetings start again.

Many of our village businesses are doing their best to avoid single-use plastic and we have drawn attention to the problem by organizing a 'Mass Unwrap' event at our local Co-op reported by the IlkleyGazette <https://www.ilkleygazette.co.uk/news/18297183.village-mass-unwrap-highlights-plastic-packaging-use/>. The Co-op itself was extremely cooperative....

Just before the lockdown began, one of our village shops, The Plantation, opened a "waste-not" counter to sell a range of cleaning products using refill containers. No doubt it will thrive once it re-opens as residents are becoming increasingly conscious of the need to minimise the use of plastic packaging.

Finally, we have plans to start a "table-top trail sale" to focus attention on re-use as well as recycling. The idea is, for one day in the year, to ask residents to put useful but unwanted household items out in garages or front gardens for other residents to buy. Funds received would then be donated to an environmental charity.

Final remarks

Our work in Addingham has been most rewarding, not least because it has brought many like-minded residents together, and from a Civic Society perspective, it has extended our involvement with the wider village community. But most importantly we believe we're beginning to have an impact! Time is not on our side, but it is most encouraging to see similar local environment groups springing up not just in our area of Yorkshire but all around the country.

Perhaps we can save the Planet yet!

Rick Battarbee
Addingham Civic Society Environment Group



VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

It was good to see so many people at the YHACS Annual General Meeting in Harrogate back in January: over 60 people turned up and, even if I say so myself, it was a really good event.

As has become our practice, we started with dinner at the hotel on Friday evening for those staying over night and those able to join us. This is always a convivial start to a YHACS event and a chance to relax and talk about all sorts of things not necessarily related to civic society matters. Yes, a bottle or two (or three...) were opened and the conversation flowed. Some people might even have hugged each other before retiring to bed; it was all so lovely and, well, historical.....

No one could have foreseen back then what was to befall not just us, but the nation and, indeed, the world, within a matter of just a few weeks.

Now that we are aware of the severity of the situation, it would be all too easy for many of us just to curl up and wait for it all to be over, but as leaders within the civic society movement, we have some responsibility to our members and the causes we campaign for to try to keep our societies ticking over as best we can – and this is where modern technology comes to the rescue.

At my own society in Wakefield, we have been holding executive committee meetings and, sub-committee meetings by video conference (using Zoom) and we even held an abridged form of the Society's Annual General Meeting in the same way: it works, it helps us to get things done and while there may be some drawbacks to having face-to-face events, it also has its advantages. Meetings have been very focused, sometimes shorter than usual, and there's no travel time or costs associated with attending a video conference.



The YHACS committee recently held its first meeting by video conference (*left*) and I have also had video conferences with people at Civic Voice, all from the comfort of my sofa.

For the time being, this is how things are going to be. Even the sort of 'public' events we usually run will have to be re-imagined – and we're on a steep learning curve. The YHACS committee agreed to experiment with some sort of video conference or other on-line event for our quarterly meetings in July and September (which were originally planned to take place in Addingham and Halifax respectively). We'll say more about this when we have worked out exactly what it is that we can deliver.

Now, this time of year is typically when civic societies are holding their annual general meetings. If your year ended on 31st December, you may be breathing a sigh of relief that you were able to hold yours before lockdown commenced. But if you were planning to hold your meeting from mid-March onwards, you may be wondering what to do.

For those civic societies that are charities, you need to follow the guidance from the Charity Commission. The Commission is expecting charities to try to get their annual returns in on time but if you know you won't be able to do that (and you have 10 months from the end of your reporting year), then you need to talk to the Commission to seek an extension – I think you will find agreement

forthcoming. However, the Commission does urge you to comply with your 'governing document' which for a small charity is likely to be your written constitution (it is slightly different if your charity is also a company). Your constitution might set out what you can and cannot do.

Wakefield Civic Society's constitution says that we must hold an AGM within the first six months of the calendar year. We did consider delaying it from the advertised date of 23rd April, but on balance thought that extension of just a few weeks would not achieve very much (and we have to give 21 days' notice of the date of the meeting, so it didn't leave us much wriggle room to hold the AGM by the end of June).

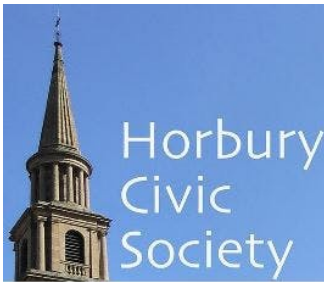
Fortunately, as our constitution was written in 1964, it was silent on the subject of telephone and video conferencing – neither had been invented in the 1960s – which meant that while it didn't say we could hold our AGM by video conference, it didn't bar us from doing so either. This meant that we didn't need to hold a face-to-face meeting like we usually do and the committee agreed we should hold the meeting by video.

There is legal precedent, which the Charity Commission draws attention to on its website that courts will only view a 'meeting' as such if people can be both heard and seen. This means that telephone conferences will not fit the bill.

What you decide to do at your own society will be up to your committee to decide. Where you depart from the usual ways, then you should make sure that you record the decisions of the committee in your minutes. In the current climate, it's unlikely the Charity Commission will take action against any small charity doing its best to stick within the spirit of the law, but make sure you record the decision to protect yourselves and also make sure to keep your members informed of what you are doing so that you are taking them with you. Your members are likely to be sympathetic and supportive, but leaving them in the dark is one way of almost inviting complaints later.

Some societies might be thinking of reducing or waiving membership subscriptions this year because they cannot deliver their usual programmes and they are reluctant to charge membership fees in a year when there are few if any membership benefits. I do advise you to think long and hard before taking such a course of action. Civic societies are not set up to deliver membership benefits; they are set up for the purposes set out in their constitution – and that work needs to continue in some format or other over the coming months. That we are membership organisations does of course mean that we offer our members certain benefits, but that is a by-product of our existence. The chances are, you will still be incurring costs during the months we are in lockdown and it is only right that, if your members believe in the cause, they should continue to support you during these difficult times. And don't forget that many civic society members are retired and less likely to have suffered any significant reduction in their income as a result of the epidemic. Yes, you may need to be prepared to offer some sort of waiver for anyone facing hardship, including corporate members who have had to cease trading for the duration, but don't automatically write off your main source of income by telling all your members that you aren't going to charge subscriptions because of what is happening. At least give the subject very serious thought.

**Kevin Trickett MBE,
Chair**



HORBURY'S 7TH REDBOX GALLERY COMMISSION

In November 2017 the Horbury Civic Society paid BT £1 for the telephone box on Queen Street, Horbury.

The box is a K6 (short for Kiosk 6), designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott for the Silver Jubilee of the coronation of George V in 1935. Between 1936 and 1968 the GPO installed around 60,000 K6 boxes; today some 10,700 of the cast iron boxes survive.



But the advent of the mobile phone meant that the day of the urban telephone box was over, and BT sold off thousands of the boxes to private buyers in the mid-1980s, and since 2008 has sold a further 1,800 to local communities for just £1 each through its Adopt a Kiosk scheme.

This has seen boxes transformed into public libraries, exhibitions, information centres and fitted with life-saving defibrillation machines, while villagers from Shepreth in Cambridgeshire even turned their kiosk into a one-night-only pub named the “*Dog and Bone.*”

Horbury Civic Society’s latest installation in the Redbox Gallery “*The Exploding Lawnmower*” will be in place until mid-April. It has been supported by Arts Council England and Wakefield Council. It is the seventh work to be commissioned for Redbox Gallery.

Alan Pergusey, the artist explains:

“This spring themed installation is devised in collaboration with Horbury Lawnmowers who kindly donated a vintage Suffolk Punch lawnmower for me to ‘explode’ and, subsequently, to curate and exhibit as individual parts within the

Redbox Gallery. I felt that there should be a circular, repetitive movement as part of the installation to imitate the machinery and the grass cutting function of the mower and to address this I've included several scale model gardeners with their mowers and wheelbarrows on a miniature revolving lawn. For the nighttime I have installed a disco light which creates a very lively atmosphere."

Graham Roberts

PÉTANQUE AND IT'S NOT A LOAD OF 'BOULES'

Having spent many hours playing this hugely popular social pastime in Spain, one of the Society's Trustees, Ken Birch asked the question: 'Well, why not here in Addingham?'



That started a journey which came to an end in February with the official opening of our very own 'Community Pétanque Court'. It was by no means an easy project: we had to find a suitable location, raise the funds, locate a contractor who could determine how to build a court (!), secure Village support, etc. A perfect site owned by our Parish Council was identified right in the centre of the Village and after a bit of lobbying they agreed we could use it and we were off and running....

The Court is 12m by 5m and constructed to both French and Spanish requirements (!) and its location is ideal for casual use as and when. It is adjacent to the Village's Bowling Club and we've had support from their members and no doubt we'll see some serious rivalry taking place! No bookings are required just turn up and play, but residents must bring their own set of boules.



Over 40 people turned up for the opening on a cold and wet February morning when they were also given basic instructions and there was plenty of enthusiasm, so that bodes well for the future.

Maintenance is non-existent, a bit of sweeping and the clearing of leaves, but that's about it.

Hopefully, we'll be able to fund a couple of permanent benches for all the spectators, but in the meantime folding chairs will be the order of the day..well, when the weather gets a bit warmer.

A snip at £1500 and no VAT!

Jim Robinson



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND PRESENTATION OF THE YHACS/PETER SPAWFORTH AWARDS

The YHACS AGM was held at the Cedar Court Hotel in Harrogate on 25th January 2020.

After the formal business of the AGM where the annual report and accounts were approved and elections to the committee formalised, we moved on to hear our three guest speakers. In keeping with our theme of the environment for 2020, two of our key-note speakers addressed environmental matters in their presentations.

Professor Rick Battarbee of Addingham Civic Society spoke about '*One Planet Living*' – how we all need to think about the resources we use given that there is only one Earth but the world's population is using natural resources at a rate far faster than the planet can sustain – in part because developed and developing countries are taking more than their share. This is leading to habitat destruction, biodiversity loss and global warming.

Rick was followed by Jemima Parker of Zero Carbon Harrogate who spoke about initiatives that local people can follow to reduce their carbon footprint and how this was being pursued in the town, the idea to get down to being carbon neutral in due course.

Our third guest speaker, was Joan Humble, chair of Civic Voice who brought us up to date with the work of Civic Voice and the work they have been doing, including their campaigning on issues of design quality and the future of our high streets. Joan set out the plans to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Civic Voice in 2020 (sadly now on hold).

After the presentations, we moved on to present the YHACS/Peter Spawforth Awards. This year, there were 12 entries:

1	Addingham Civic Society	Young People are the Future
2	Beverley Civic Society	Wednesday Market History Board
3	Doncaster Civic Trust	Film Project
4	Dronfield Civic Society	K6 Phone Kiosk refurbishment
5	Goole Civic Society	Railway Station improvements
6	Harrogate Civic Society	Harrogate Plaques website
7	Huddersfield Civic Society	New Website
8	Pontefract Civic Society	50 th Anniversary Programme
9	Scarborough Civic Society	Annual Programme?
10	Selby Civic Society	50 th Anniversary Programme
11	Wakefield Civic Society	Forgotten Women of Wakefield
12	Whitby Civic Society	Conservation Area Project

We applied our tried and tested judging methodology where YHACS committee members score the entries but are not, of course, allowed to score their own societies.

The following results were announced:

Third Place - £50 prize
Wakefield Civic Society



Second Place - £100 prize
Pontefract Civic Society



First Place - £200 prize
and the
Peter Spawforth Trophy
Addingham Civic Society



It was fitting, if purely co-incidental, that our first prize was given for an environmental scheme but it was a close-run result with Pontefract only a hair's breadth behind in the scoring.

Congratulations to the winners – and a big thank you once again to all who submitted entries.

Kevin Trickett MBE



HUDDERSFIELD CIVIC SOCIETY'S ANNUAL JOINT LECTURE

On 3 March Alex Whitbread, a partner at Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios, gave the Society's annual joint lecture with the University of Huddersfield School of Art, Design and Architecture in the University's Charles Sikes Building.

The talk's title was "A Decade of Reinvention across the Pennines: A Perspective from FCBSudios."



Alex covered a wide range of developments across the North, ranging from dramatic new city centre schemes in Leeds and Manchester through to complex redevelopments around heritage sites from Stoke to the South Bank of Leeds.

An excellent presentation showed the range of techniques used by architects when master-planning a major new development, as at Kirkstall Forge near Leeds, through to modelling potential future building combinations and designs with their differing impacts on sightlines.



The talk concluded with examples close to Huddersfield and mentions of the key role of integrating transport, primarily improvements in rail transport, into new urban developments.

Geoff Hughes

CIVIC VOICE CALLS ON COMMUNITY GROUPS TO MONITOR HOW PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING CONTINUES UNDER COVID19 REGULATIONS



Call follows the introduction of regulations which allow local authorities to hold virtual planning meetings

Civic Voice – the national charity for the civic movement – is today asking local authorities, communities and others to feedback on how the new regulations are being implemented. Is this impacting on the way in which communities are involved in influencing planning decisions?

Following the introduction of “**Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020**”, which allows local authorities to hold virtual planning meetings, Civic Voice is asking all stakeholders in the planning system to feed into their research, to understand the impact that the new regulations may be having on community participation in the planning process.

Sarah James, Policy and Membership Development said, “We accept that these are short-term but necessary amendments to ensure that the planning system can continue to function. Planning decisions will need to continue through this period so that the planning system is well placed to play its vital role in supporting the recovery of the economy. We are aware of some community groups that have called for decisions to be halted during this time, but we do not share this view.”

The new regulations came into effect on April 4th and give local authorities the right to hold planning committees virtually. This will enable local planning authorities to continue to make decisions during the current crisis. The Regulations apply to meetings held, or required to be held, before 7th May 2021

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/392/contents/made.>>

Sarah James finished by saying, “We are confident that the Government is not wanting to put barriers in the way of communities participating in the planning process. Nonetheless, the fear is that these new rules will make it much harder for communities to share views and that we might see more mediocre or poor schemes ‘nodded through’ without the usual, proper scrutiny. It is unlikely that there will be a ‘one-size fits all’ approach, so we are calling on community groups across the country to help us monitor and review how local planning authorities are adapting and responding to the new legislation.”

We want to hear from you. The good, the bad, the innovative and the ‘business as usual’ so that we can highlight nationally, the current practice across the country in this ever-evolving situation.

Share your experiences at info@civicvoice.org.uk.

Article abstracted from a Civic Voice Press Release issued 7th April 2020

David Moss



FIXING THE ROOF... HOW CIVIC SOCIETIES CAN KEEP IT TOGETHER

When's the best time to fix the roof? In the summer, when the sun is shining, or in the winter, when it's pouring with rain?

Now, you might argue that the winter is the best time – after all, if it's raining, you can see where the problems are while in the summer, when there's no indication of any problems, you just want to relax and enjoy the good times.

In some ways, this analogy is akin to the coronavirus epidemic. Before it hit, we were all getting on with our lives and not really thinking about storm clouds on the horizon. But then the virus emerged and life, as we knew it, changed for everyone, and suddenly we had to start fixing the roof.

My point here is that events can overtake any of us, unexpected and unbidden at any time. Some events will be relatively minor – no more than a slipped slate or roof tile – but others will be much more serious and have huge consequences – more akin to the whole roof coming off. Coronavirus definitely falls into the latter category.

So, how prepared were you for the calamity that has beset us? I'm talking here about how equipped your civic society was to manage its way through the situation. How agile and resilient is your society to keep going through the current emergency?

As some readers will know, I've been 'involved' in the civic society movement for over 30 years and I've seen a lot of changes over that time. Some societies have been on the front foot (and I'd like to count my own society among that number) while others have been much more hesitant and, indeed, resistant to change.

How agile and resilient is your society to keep going through the current emergency?

I became a member of Wakefield Civic Society in 1989 having already enjoyed some of their outings and events prior to taking out membership. In April 1990, I agreed to join the Society's Executive Committee and then, in 2002, I became its president. When I first joined the committee, minutes and newsletters were printed using a typewriter and copied using an old-fashioned duplicator. They were then assembled, put in envelopes and hand delivered or posted to members, a time-consuming and costly process. Electric typewriters and eventually computers were introduced but 'modern technology' was still a minority sport.

When I became president, I decided to 'modernise' by getting everyone on the committee to use email. It took some effort to convince people that this was the future and some people never made it on-line; they either retired or passed away without ever using a computer. But we pushed forward, extending email distribution of our newsletters and other information to our wider membership. Over the years, we have moved from having just a handful of members on email to the position we are in today, where we have over 95% of our

membership now receiving their news from us by email. On top of that, we have a website and make full use of social media – yes, we are on Facebook, Twitter and now Instagram. These channels allow us to communicate not just with our members, but with a much wider audience – stakeholders, partners and the general public. We do, of course, still keep in touch with members who are not on email. This is usually by post (and sometimes telephone) but occurs less frequently than for those on email.

The coronavirus epidemic changed everything. We have had to cancel all our events for the time being which is a considerable blow and will affect our ability to fundraise and attract new members. However, we have not stopped working. We continue to talk to our members, mostly by email of course, but we are using social media too. Oh, and we have just opened a Zoom video conferencing account which has enabled the committee to see and speak to each other at our monthly committee meetings. Once you get used to the technology, it can actually be good fun to ‘see’ people in this way. On 23rd April, we even held the Society’s Annual General Meeting using Zoom. It was a much-slimmed down version of our usual AGM and we asked for volunteers from the membership to take part. The important thing is that we did it and that enabled us to do the legal stuff we have to do to comply with the requirements of our constitution and also those of the Charity Commission.



One benefit from the experiment is that it has given us confidence to start experimenting with more on-line communication, possibly even putting short videos on-line. It’s early days yet, so we are not sure exactly what we are going to be doing, but it clearly won’t be business as usual. We need to be innovative if we are going to stay relevant. We certainly don’t want people to forget we are here!

So, by fixing the roof while the sun shone – by which I mean moving on-line early on and then, over the years, building up communication lines with members and others through a variety of channels, we were reasonably well-placed for when the weather turned bad. Who knows, even after lockdown ends and the need for social distancing is reduced, we may continue to apply some of the new methods we are adopting now.

Video conferencing might not always be the way we would prefer to work, but it’s a really useful facility. In fact, so many people are using it that I now find myself taking part in meetings with people across the country to the point where my diary is once again filling up – and the real beauty of it is the convenience and low cost. I no longer need to do a two-to-three-hour commute to get to a meeting in London, say, and then repeat the journey to get home, taking a whole day out of my calendar and a wedge of cash out of my wallet.

We need to be innovative if we are going to stay relevant. We certainly don’t want people to forget we are here!

I’d like to think that the civic society movement has cottoned on to the benefits of technology and that civic societies are firing on all cylinders still. Sadly, though, I know that’s not always true and I have heard from a few people who don’t know how they will keep things going over the next few months. Well, now is the time to start experimenting. Open that Twitter account, think about video conferencing and try to get email addresses for as many of your members as you can. Don’t worry too much about getting things wrong to begin with; we all make

mistakes in the early days, and you can always ask others for help if you get stuck. One useful tip is that you can often find on-line tutorials on YouTube for almost anything you need help with (some better than others!). They have certainly helped me on a number of occasions!

Now, I know that some of you will say ‘most of our members aren’t on-line, so there’s no point’ and you’ll shrug your shoulders and do nothing. I’ve encountered that reaction so many times over the years! But you have to start at some point and now is as good a time as any – it’s not as if you’ll be going anywhere, is it? Take the plunge – start a tweeting, ask your committee to join you in a video conference, start broadcasting to the world about what you are doing!

And while I am not advocating that you abandon your members who are not on-line, think about the future of your society.

Is the future of the civic society movement going to be based on an outdated model of printing and posting newsletters to a predominantly older membership group, or is it going to be based on attracting lots of new members who are geared up and wired for both sound – and video?

Kevin Trickett MBE



SPEN VALLEY CIVIC SOCIETY OPENS ITS JO COX COMMUNITY WOOD!



The opening ceremony: from L-R Kim Leadbeater, Gordon Leadbeater, Jean Leadbeater, Max Rathmell Chairman SVCS, Erica Amende Sec SVCS, Colin Berry Treasurer SVCS, at the information board.

In one of the last public events before the Covid19 lock-down, over two hundred people gathered to celebrate the official opening of a new community wood where more than 1,000 trees and hedging have been planted, and new paths, fences and gates installed. The site lies in the West Yorkshire constituency of Batley and Spen, where Jo Cox was MP from May 2015 until she was murdered in June 2016.

The project was devised by Spen Valley Civic Society and funded by Biffa

Award, as part of the Landfill Communities Fund, with additional funding and support from Kirklees Council, the Woodland Trust and DEFRA. Civic Society members have worked tirelessly with volunteers from local communities, to transform the 3.7 acre site. Picnic tables and benches offer a stopping-off point for visitors and can be used as an outdoor classroom for local schools. Next to these is an information board aimed at children called “Where the wild things live.” Nest boxes and wild flowers have recently been added. The project will improve habitat for wildlife in this built-up area and counteract air pollution as the wood grows and matures.

A tree sponsorship scheme sold out very quickly, with 78 trees now celebrating personal events such as a birth, marriage or the life of a loved one. Part of the site is a community orchard planted as a tribute to Civic Society member John Appleyard. Jo Cox’s parents, Jean and Gordon attended the official opening along with Jo’s sister Kim. They unveiled an information board which includes local history and details of the former MP’s achievements, plus pictures drawn by her Children Cuillin and Lejla. Other VIP guests included Chief Executive of Kirklees Council Jacqui Gedman; MP Tracy Brabin; Kirklees Council Officers; local Councillors; and representatives from Biffa Award, & Natural Kirklees. Jo Cox’s sister Kim said: *“This is a fantastic tribute to Jo. She loved nature and the outdoors and the idea of such a beautiful place where people from all backgrounds can come together is something she would have loved. I would like to thank everyone from Spen Valley Civic Society, the funders and all the amazing volunteers who have worked so hard to make this project happen, and I look forward to seeing many people enjoying spending time in Jo’s wood in the future.”*

Max Rathmell, Chairman of Spen Valley Civic Society said: *“Thank you to our funders and the hundreds of people from all sections of the community, who’ve come together to create this wood, our biggest-ever project. We now ask local people to visit regularly, enjoy the outdoors, and help share the responsibility for looking after the wood, so that humans and wildlife can benefit from it for many years to come.”*

Maidment, Biffa Award Grants Manager, said: *“It is a privilege to have been able to play a part in the creation of the Jo Cox Community Wood. It is important that Biffa Award continues to support projects like this, which enhance recreation facilities and hold such significance for all members of the community. You can clearly see the difference that Biffa Award funding has made to the community. We look forward to seeing the wood develop and grow over the years.”*

Since the opening ceremony, the wood has provided a welcome respite from lock-down, as locals forsake the car and gym, take a daily walk from their home, and discover a new natural resource on their doorstep.



Sign on the adjacent Spen Valley Greenway, National Cycle Route 66



Two views of the wood



Erica Amende

Photos courtesy of Erica Amende



SELBY HIT BY MYSTERY EPIDEMIC

A mystery illness is sweeping through parts of Selby and dozens of its residents have already died. Essential supplies are being donated to the hardest hit.

Other parts of Yorkshire are also stricken, and London has been particularly badly affected.

If that sounds familiar today, it's a reflection that disease often strikes when we least expect it. What the headline refers to, though, is not COVID-19; we are actually talking about an epidemic in the mid-19th century, when a devastating disease struck Selby and many other parts of Great Britain

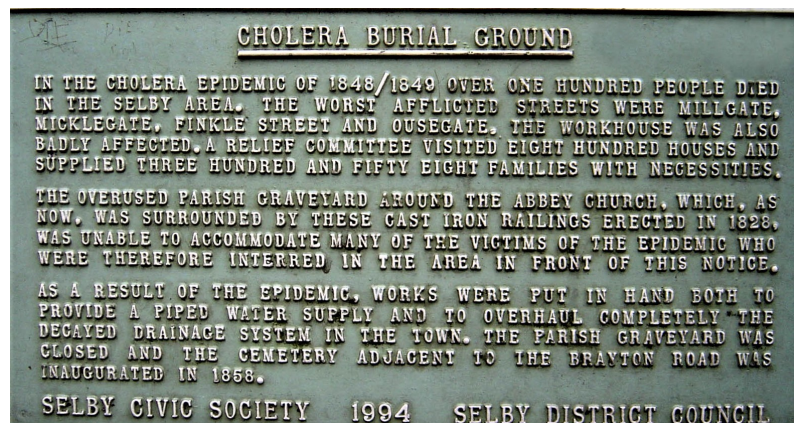
A two-year outbreak of cholera, originating it is thought in India, had spread to England, Wales and Scotland in 1848. In 1849 London was hit with the worst outbreak in its history, claiming over 14,000 lives - and nearer to home around 2,000 died in Hull. Altogether, some 55,000 people died in England and Wales.



Much later, in 1884, water-borne bacteria, *Vibrio cholerae* (left), were shown to be the causative agent by Robert Koch, a German microbiologist.

A vaccine developed in 1884 was the first widely used vaccine to be made in a laboratory. Isolated from cholera patients in Marseilles, it was used to treat over 30,000 individuals in Valencia during that year's epidemic. A vaccine with less severe side effects was tested on more than 40,000 people in the Calcutta area from 1893 to 1896. Finally, in 1896 a more easily prepared heat-attenuated vaccine was used on a large scale in Japan in 1902. But oral cholera vaccines were only introduced much later in the 1990s.

Selby did not escape the disease - more than 100 people died in the Selby area in those two outbreaks, with Millgate, Micklegate, Ousegate, Finkle Street and the residents of the workhouse in Brook Street being particularly hard-hit. These areas housed the poorest of the town living in cramped conditions. A relief committee at the time visited hundreds of houses and provided essential supplies to 358 families.



Information plaque alongside the Cholera burial Ground in Selby

Unable to bury the victims in the overused Selby Abbey graveyard, many were interred in land to the north of the Abbey – now known locally as the “Cholera Burial Ground” (photo below).



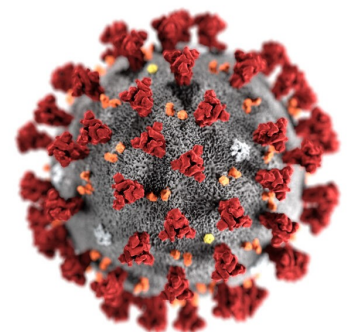
Following this devastating outbreak, a committee, including local benefactor Thomas Hawdon, was formed and they put into place measures to provide piped water to houses. Additionally, decaying sewage and drainage systems in the town were extensively renovated.



In 1995 Selby Civic Society commissioned and installed a memorial stone to mark the burial place, and when this later was damaged a new stone (above) was designed by Selby Civic Society, installed with financial aid from Selby Central Community Engagement Forum and re-dedicated in 2018 by Rev Canon John Weetman, vicar of Selby Abbey. It now stands proudly on the burial site, surrounded by flowers, as a continuing memorial to those who perished from this appalling epidemic.

Of course it's not yet known how many people in the Selby area will regrettably succumb to coronavirus in this awful 2020 pandemic. Hopefully scientific and medical expertise, together with better public health control measures, will keep loss of life below that suffered in Selby in 1848/49.

David Moss





YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

Reg. Charity No. 1112290

www.yhacs.org.uk

Please send any articles,
comments, letters or
questions to the editor:

David Moss

Sat June 20th "Civic Day" is postponed until a later date in the year

Sat 25th July YHACS Summer Meeting in Addingham is postponed

NEXT YHACS MEETING

**SATURDAY 25TH JULY 1:00 - 4:00 PM
MEMBERS' MEETING AT ADDINGHAM
CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 EMERGENCY**

*Other options for this meeting are being considered
Details to be confirmed*

CONTACT: KEVIN TRICKETT OR INFO@YHACS.ORG.UK

Executive Officers, Committee Members and Portfolios

The Yorkshire and
Humber Association of
Civic Societies (YHACS)
is the distinct voice of the
civic society
movement in the
Yorkshire and Humber
region, and our vision is
to enhance the quality of
life for all citizens in the
region by engaging
citizens not only in the
protection of local
heritage but also in the
promotion of sustainable
economic development
and urban renaissance.

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