

# **YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES**

## **Minutes of the Meeting held via Zoom Video Conference on 26th September 2020.**

### **1. Present**

Around 50 members and guests were present, representing 22 YHACS member societies. A full list appears at Appendix 1.

#### **1a. Apologies for Absence**

See Appendix 1

### **1. Introduction - Kevin Trickett, YHACS Chair**

Kevin Trickett welcomed members to what would have been the Halifax meeting and explained how the meeting would work. He encouraged those present to look at the Halifax material on Vimeo if they hadn't already done so.

### **2. Welcome from Dr. John Hargreaves, Chair, Halifax Civic Trust**

John welcomed members and hoped that the Vimeo items would whet members' appetites and encourage them to visit in the future. He thanked YHACS, Alan Goodrum, and Sarah James for her item on the Piece Hall. He considered the pandemic as an opportunity to take stock. The Halifax Civic Trust core values were to celebrate, enhance and safeguard the built environment of Halifax – there is plenty to see.

### **3. Minutes of the YHACS meeting held on 25th July 2019**

These were agreed and proposed by Helen Kidman, seconded by Tony Leonard and approved by the meeting.

### **4. Matters arising**

None not on the agenda

### **5. Chairman's report**

Kevin was pleased to note an increased willingness to experiment with on-line technologies such as Zoom and Vimeo, the use of which can lead to new and broader audiences not constrained by geography. An example of this was the number of HODS on-line events, many arranged quite late. Wakefield Civic Society had spent a council grant on IT that had enabled a collection of films to be prepared and hosted for their own HODS programme and this had been well received with people in over a dozen countries watching the films on Vimeo.

Most societies by now would ordinarily be starting up their Autumn and Winter programmes of indoor meetings which current circumstances militate against. It was suggested that Zoom and Vimeo (or YouTube etc) could be used to broadcast webinars and/or recorded material in lieu of face-to-face meetings. The only drawback was the lack of immediate feedback that might be possible when people meet in person rather than over the internet.

Many societies are busy responding to the Planning White Paper and both Civic Voice and YHACS would be interested to hear views.

Historic England has announced 9 new Heritage Action Zones in Yorkshire and Humber, with a tenth one in Scarborough about to be added to the list.

Kevin said that Wakefield Civic Society and Wakefield Historical Society had been invited to work on the Wakefield Heritage Action Zone project and had secured funding from the money allocated to the project. He wondered what other civic societies with a HAZ were doing and if there was any opportunity for societies to share ideas and information, perhaps in a YHACS sub-group. He would be interested to hear views and make connections.

Covid 19 has brought big changes to the way we live and some of these changes might not be temporary. Examples include traffic management, pedestrianisation, provision of cycle routes, home working and changes to working patterns, the way universities might operate and so on. The provision of long-term dedicated space for home working on a permanent or part-time basis would have an impact of our town and city centres. There will be further changes as a result of these shifts which might impact how civic societies respond to development initiatives.

## **6. Treasurer's report.**

The balances were reported as follows:

YHACS	£7439.63
MWCS	£485.40
Bank	£7925.03

Most societies have now renewed with one society being followed up

## **7. Planning for the Future White Paper – presentation and discussion with Ian Harvey, Director, Civic Voice**

Ian asked Does 'Planning for the Future' mean radical reform or was it a developers' charter?

The White Paper is out for public consultation until 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020. Civic Voice is aiming to submit its comments during w/c 19<sup>th</sup> October. The work is being led by Sarah James.

The prime minister has described the white paper as 'Radical reform unlike anything we have seen since the world war'. The government is committed to tackle the housing crisis. House building has dropped since the 1960s with local authorities hardly building at all. Around 50% of local authorities still don't have a local plan. These take on average seven years to complete. Only 7% of the public trust their councils on local plans.

The government plans to reform the local planning system so that public consultation and involvement is at the front end of the process, at the stage where design codes are drawn up and the three proposed zones for growth, renewal and protection are established. The aim of these proposals is to speed up the planning system by removing perceived barriers to development.

The national model design code will be used to bring 'beauty' (work being led by Nicholas Boys Smith at the National Design Unit) into the system. The role of Neighbourhood Plans may be diminished but the design codes will bring a more focussed scope to design. CIL and S106 regulations will be revised. LAs will appoint 'Chief Placemakers' and there will be a flexible approach to heritage protection.

Civic Voice has been campaigning for reforms for some time but it was debatable as to whether the right problems were being addressed by these proposals. Civic Voice has been campaigning against certain permitted development rights, but these rights may, in fact, be extended.

So far, 130 societies had responded to Civic Voice's survey. Further webinars on this topic were coming up. The responses had been varied. In the south east many societies were against the proposals because of the high levels of development anticipated.

For more information please see Ian's slides in the on-line presentation.

A Q&A session followed.

Clive Woods (Aireborough) raised the subject of heritage buildings being allowed to deteriorate, often losing internal features as a consequence. There was a lack of input from planners and a lack of expertise. The future role of the planning inspectorate would need clarifying.

Kevin Swift (Wakefield) thought that the paper was full of uncertainties. The task force responsible for producing it lacked input from planning practitioners. Drafting design codes was time consuming for all involved and there was little information on how these would be prepared. The existing system was feasible for building more houses. In fact, the proposed system might have little effect on increasing housing numbers. 1m homes with planning permission granted were not being built.

Margaret Hicks Clarke (Goole) pointed out that councils lost money on building council houses because of right to buy legislation. Alan Goodrum (Halifax) added that their inability to borrow funding also inhibited development.

Paul Riley (Scarborough) cited the Building Better document on planning applications.

A discussion followed on civic societies becoming statutory consultees on planning (which has been followed up this week by a civic voice survey).

Barbara English (Beverley) pointed out that the white paper does not address sustainability issues nor wildlife protection.

Geoff Hughes (Huddersfield) recommended the Civic Voice webinars.

Kevin Trickett thanked Ian for his presentation explaining that Civic Voice had something that most societies could not achieve - a seat at the table for high level

discussions with ministers and at the APPG. He strongly recommended that societies should join Civic Voice if they were not members already.

#### **8. News from Civic Voice Regional Forum – Helen Kidman**

This item was deferred due to lack of time. Members are requested to pass any news items to Paul Cartwright by 31<sup>st</sup> October. Next full meeting 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

#### **9. Just a Minute – a round-up of news and views from local societies (where each society present gets to speak for just one minute!)**

You can see the Wakefield 2020 Design Awards on Vimeo on the Wakefield CS website.

Geoff Hughes advised that planning focus had moved to their town's periphery to comment on a 770-unit housing development.

Beverley's HODS 'Hidden Gardens' offer was very successful with 8214 visits.

Alan Nicholson (Grimsby & Cleethorpes) reported that welcome regeneration funding had been forthcoming for Minster Square and Garth Lane in the Docks. At Immingham, a booking system for guided walks had been put in place for walks to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mayflower 1620.

#### **10 AOB**

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11. Close (Next meeting will be our AGM on 30th January 2021 – most likely by Zoom; details later)

## Appendix 1

### List of participants

	<b>Society/Organisation</b>	<b>Surname</b>	<b>First Name</b>
1	Aireborough Civic Society	Woods	Clive
2	Beverley Civic Society/York Civic Trust	Burrows	Chris
3	Beverley Civic Society/York Civic Trust	Young	Sarah
4	Beverley Civic Society	English	Barbara
5	Beverley Civic Society	Payne	Jane
6	Civic Voice	Harvey	Ian
7	Doncaster Civic Trust	Coote	Peter
8	Doncaster Civic Trust	Mellows	Rowena
9	Dronfield Civic Society	Hinchcliffe	John
10	Goole Civic Society	Clarke	John
11	Goole Civic Society/Market Weighton CS/YHACS Committee	Hicks-Clarke	Margaret
12	Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust	Bassett	Graeme
13	Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust	Bassett	Teresa
14	Grimsby & Cleethorpes Civic Society	Nicholson	Alan
15	Halifax Civic Trust	Connolly	Eileen
16	Halifax Civic Trust	Crawley	Gwyneth
17	Halifax Civic Trust//Market Weighton CS/YHACS Committee	Goodrum	Alan
18	Halifax Civic Trust	Hanson	David
19	Halifax Civic Trust	Hargreaves	John
20	Halifax Civic Trust	Hargreaves	Susan
21	Halifax Civic Trust	Paxton-White	June
22	Halifax Civic Trust	Weaver	Dee
23	Halifax Civic Trust	Witcher	David
24	Harrogate Civic Society	Amaku	Susan
25	Harrogate Civic Society	Siddans	David
26	Horbury Civic Society	Roberts	Graham
27	Howden Civic Society	Mephram	Philip
28	Huddersfield Civic Society	Hughes	Geoff
29	Hull Civic Society/Scaborough Civic Society/Market Weighton CS/YHACS Committee	Sharman	Malcolm
30	Ilkley Civic Society	Blackburn	David
31	Ilkley Civic Society	Cockshott	Alex
32	Ilkley Civic Society/Market Weighton CS/YHACS Committee	Kidman	Helen
33	Leeds Civic Trust	Kitching	Lynda
34	Market Weighton Civic Society/YHACS Committee	Leonard	Tony
35	Pontefract Civic Society	Cartwright	Christine
36	Pontefract Civic Society/YHACS Committee	Cartwright	Paul

37	Ripon Civic Society	Hughes	Christopher
38	Ripon Civic Society	Taylor	Richard
39	Scarborough Civic Society	Bridgewood	Glen
40	Scarborough Civic Society	Bridgewood	Pete
41	Scarborough Civic Society/Market Weighton CS/YHACS Committee	Cooper	Peter
42	Scarborough Civic Society	Perry	Adrian
43	Scarborough Civic Society	Perry	Chris
44	Scarborough Civic Society	Riley	Paul
45	Selby Civic Society/YHACS/Market Weighton Civic Society	Moss	David
46	Skipton in Craven Civic Society	Clark	Sheila
47	Wakefield Civic Society	Flintoff	Vicky
48	Wakefield Civic Society	O'Donnell	Mike
49	Wakefield Civic Society	Spawforth	Peter
50	Wakefield Civic Society	Swift	Kevin
51	Wakefield Civic Society	Sykes	Alison
52	Wakefield Civic Society/Market Weighton CS/YHACS committee	Trickett	Kevin
	<b>Apologies</b>		
1	Addingham Civic Society/Market Weighton CS/YHACS Committee	Robinson	Jim
2	Barnsley Civic Trust	Barnes	Phyllis
3	Halifax Civic Trust	Glover	David
4	Leeds Civic Trust/YHACS Committee	Hamilton	Martin
5	Leeds Civic Trust	Taylor	Jane
6	North West Association of Civic Trusts and Societies	Spibey	Susan
7	Ossett Civic Trust	Fawcett	Anne-Marie
8	Wakefield Civic Society	Holwell	Margaret