



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER  
Association of Civic Societies

Member of



# SOCIETY INSIGHT

## TURBULENT TIMES

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**The Conservatives have now been in power for over 12 years.** First, we had Cameron (and Clegg), then, in relatively short succession, we had May, then Johnson, and now Truss (although, given the current headlines, that might no longer hold true by the time you get to read this newsletter!).

Politicians come and go but their policies linger on....

One such example is our departure from the EU. Whether or not you were in favour of Brexit, the ramifications, for good or ill, will affect us all for many years to come.

The selection of a new Prime Minister just a few weeks ago, and the appointment of a new Cabinet, seems to have quickened the pace of policy announcements with a raft of proposals being put forward, even though they are clearly not yet fully developed, appearing in some cases to be thoroughly ill-conceived.

The Government's decision to reverse the moratorium of fracking subject to there being 'local consent' is a case in point. Anyone who recalls the degree of local opposition to fracking projects just a few years ago (and which led in turn to the decision to suspend *all* fracking), will know that being able to persuade any community to consent to fracking on their own doorstep is most unlikely.

When [interviewed recently on local radio](#) about what such local consent would look like, especially in the face of opposition from even her own party's MPs, the PM floundered and was unable to define a coherent policy. However, Business Secretary [Jacob Rees-Mogg has come to the rescue](#): apparently, he wants to have potential fracking sites designated as 'nationally important pieces of infrastructure' so that community concerns can be overridden, perhaps viewing them as unpatriotic!

Sometimes, new PMs are so keen to be seen to be doing something, anything, to hit the ground running, that policy statements are rushed out without the implications being thought through and without a clear communication strategy being agreed. While it gives the impression of momentum and leadership, it can backfire, sometimes spectacularly, if the media, and then the public at large, turn against the proposals and ministers have to go on the defensive.

In the face of opposition, government have two options. They can either back down (remember the 'pasty tax'?) or they can double down: re-trench, act tough and bluff it out. An experienced politician *might* get away with the latter because they will know all the angles and have weighed the risks; they will have listened to experts, talked to their Civil Servants and sounded out key stakeholders so that they are able to explain why they are pressing ahead

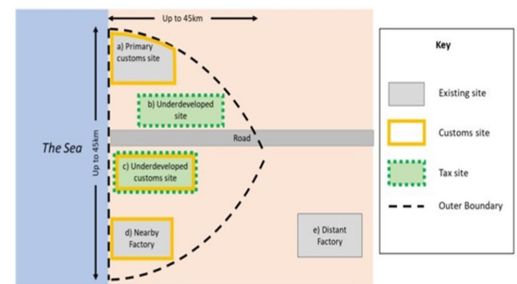
regardless and yet make a convincing case for why the public should trust them. But it seems the current PM and her Cabinet are willing to listen to no one but themselves – they have no time for experts and have sacked or moved out Civil Servants who could have proffered advice and guidance on their proposals. The result has been a series of blunders, unflattering and even hostile headlines, negative public reaction, an apparent collapse in support for the Government and, oh, they appear to have sunk the pound and destabilised financial markets in the process.

Perhaps, by the time you read this, things will have settled down. The Conservatives are holding their party conference in Birmingham at the beginning of October and this should provide an opportunity to demonstrate party unity and fill in some of background to new policies. We shall see.

One policy area that civic societies should be keen to know much more about is the one relating to freeports and ‘investment zones’. I think we all need to pay very close attention to what is being proposed here.

### Freeports

Let me start with freeports. First of all, they are not new. They exist around the world, including in the EU. We even had them here in the UK at one point – six were introduced under the Thatcher government in the 1980s (although none in our region). They proved to be of limited benefit and the Cameron government phased them out in 2012 by refusing to renew their licences. ([See here](#) for more background.) This was not to be the end of freeports in the UK. In 2021, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak put forward 8 new freeports that the Government planned to create – including one in our region that encompassed the ports of Hull, Immingham, Grimsby and Goole.



According to the [gov.uk website](#):

*Freeports are special areas within the UK's borders where different economic regulations apply. By delivering investment on specific sites benefitting from tax and customs incentives, Freeports will create thousands of high-quality jobs in some of our most disadvantaged communities. These sites have been carefully selected for their suitability for development by local authorities and key private partners and sit within an outer boundary, which represents the geographical location within which the benefits of Freeports are targeted and does not in itself confer any special tax, customs or other status.*

The website continues:

- Our Freeports model will include a comprehensive package of measures, comprising tax reliefs, customs, business rates retention, planning, regeneration, innovation and trade and investment support.
- Eligible businesses in Freeports will enjoy a range of tax incentives, such as enhanced capital allowances, relief from stamp duty and employer national insurance contributions for additional employees. These tax reliefs are designed to encourage the maximum number of businesses to open, expand and invest in our Freeports which in turn will boost employment.

- Freeports will benefit from a range of customs measures, allowing imports to enter the Freeport custom sites with simplified customs documentation and delay paying tariffs. This means that businesses operating inside designated areas in and around the port may manufacture goods using these imports, before exporting them again without paying the tariffs and benefit from simplified customs procedures.
- Freeports will provide a supportive planning environment for the development of tax and customs sites through an extension of permitted development rights and incentivising use of local development orders.

While there has been much criticism of freeports as potential tax havens that could trigger an increase in smuggling and tax evasion, there are also concerns about the potential erosion of employment and other rights in what would be low-regulation environments created to stimulate economic growth above all else ([see this article by East Anglia Bylines, for example](#)). However, from a civic society perspective, it is perhaps that last sentence in the above extract from the gov.uk website that is most concerning – changes to the planning laws through “an extension of permitted development rights and the incentivisation of local development orders”. What opportunities will there be in these areas for local engagement in the planning process, for community involvement – including civic societies? Probably very little; possibly none at all.

**Investment Zones**

But that is not the end of the story. The Government has now announced its proposals for an unlimited number of investment zones – sites *where “a variety of tax, regulatory innovations and flexibilities, and planning simplifications will apply within those site’s boundaries”*. Investment zones are being offered to Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs) in England, *“who will work in partnership with their relevant constituent or district councils, that would like to introduce an Investment Zone in their area”*.

At first sight, the idea of investment zones looks appealing but civic societies will be concerned by the implications of ‘planning simplifications’, whatever they are, and whether there will be any opportunities for local communities to engage in what happens should an investment zone be created in their area. The emphasis in the proposals seems very much on speeding up development. (“Act in haste, repent at leisure” anyone?)



Possibly in reaction to concerns being expressed, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities tried to reassure through a Tweet on 29<sup>th</sup> September that the Government *“want to see Investment Zones across the country - putting people in charge of growth in their areas, helping businesses and growing local economies.”*



But such emollients haven’t worked. Rather like freeports, investment zones are being seen as areas where there will be a dilution not just of tax and planning legislation, but also employment protections, health and safety legislation and environmental protections. It is this latter threat in particular that has caused the largest outcry with organisations such as the [RSPB](#) and even the [National Trust](#) being galvanised to criticise the proposals (click on the links to read what they have said).



**The Sunday Times reported (25<sup>th</sup> September) that:**

*Tory MPs were also spooked by an outspoken attack by the RSPB, which accused the government of an “**attack on nature**” for proposing new enterprise zones where habitat regulations protecting endangered species will be suspended to encourage house building. They were backed up by the Woodland Trust and the Wildlife Trust.*

*However, a former cabinet minister said: “Because No 10 sacked everyone from No 10 who knows anything, the smart money is on the fact that No 10 knows nothing of the biodiversity protections in the bill. The Wildlife Trust are pussycats compared to those animal rights activists who will kick off regarding allowing the imports of foie gras and the live export of animals.”*

This ‘dash for cash’ that underlies the investment zones idea appears to be motivated by establishing the ‘benefits’ of Brexit. So far, the promised sunlit uplands have failed to appear (despite the best efforts of Jacob Rees-Moggs in his rather short-lived tenure as Minister of State for Brexit Opportunities – a post which is now presumably viewed as so hopeless a cause that it lies vacant). A new [Retained EU Law \(Revocation and Reform\) Bill](#) was laid before Parliament on 22<sup>nd</sup> September and looks set to consolidate the removal of environmental protections introduced while the UK was part of the EU. [The Wildlife Trusts](#) have offered further criticism on what they see as an attempt to “revoke hundreds of laws that protect wild places and ensure standards for water quality, pollution and the use of pesticides”. It takes many years to improve the quality of natural environments – but all that endeavour can be ruined in an instant ([see here](#) for a report on the possible impact of dredging in the Tees).



Has the Government really launched an attack on nature? Could it just be that a lack of experience has led to this almost accidental and unsought confrontation? *The Times* reported on 30<sup>th</sup> September that: *Ministers held an emergency meeting yesterday after a backlash from green groups fearful that the government plans to weaken environmental protections. The cross-party climate-action implementation committee — established by Boris Johnson and chaired by Alok Sharma — met to discuss “chaos” blamed by government sources on a lack of knowledge among politicians moved to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs under Liz Truss. “It seems to be genuine chaos. It wasn’t scheduled, it’s an emergency,” an insider said. In an introductory meeting with Defra officials, one minister said they had always loved gardening, and spent half an hour talking about their favourite Beatrix Potter characters. “There was no sense that they have any understanding at all of what it is they’re messing with,” a source said.*

All this is very worrying – but might just be room for hope provided the PM and her Cabinet Ministers now start to listen to the advice of others and act accordingly. If they don’t and decide to double down on their stated positions, then the fight is on. Community and environmental groups across the land will have to work together to challenge the proposals at every possible opportunity unless we want to see years and years of environmental protections, some tied into planning legislation, being undone.

In its ‘attack on nature’, the Government could be about to go to war with the people. With any luck, though, Ministers will see the error of their ways. Perhaps it will ‘all be over by Christmas’?

## VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

### A new monarch

**I am, I suppose, and like many of us, an Elizabethan – born during the reign of HM Queen Elizabeth II.**

Like many of our members (but by no means all), the late Queen was, until now, the only UK monarch I had known in my lifetime. And I use the word 'knew' deliberately.

I'd never actually met her in person, although I had seen her close up a number of times – on her occasional visits to Wakefield and once, memorably, when I was in London and she went past me in a horse-drawn coach on her way to the state opening of Parliament. But she was frequently on television and in the press, of course, and, over the years, she had become such an established part of the nation's life, that it felt very much as if I did 'know' her. Unlike here today, gone tomorrow politicians, the Queen represented continuity, which many found reassuring, and not just people in the UK judging by the international reaction to the news of her passing.

Of course, I didn't really 'know' her at all. No one outside her circle could claim to do so. Famously enigmatic, she tended to keep her thoughts and opinions very much to herself, as expected of a constitutional monarch. She came to the throne as a young woman in the days before mass TV and rampant social media, so she never really developed a back catalogue of stated positions and recorded opinions. Many of her public speeches would have been prepared in agreement with the Government of the day – so it was hard to know whether she was saying what she really thought or just expressing the official government position – as rather expected of a constitutional, rather than an 'absolute', monarch. The 'Queen's Speech' read out at the state opening of Parliament, was certainly *not* written by the monarch! Nor did it express her views.

The new King is, however, in a different position. As Prince of Wales, he has served a long apprenticeship as 'king in waiting' and has had much freer rein to express his thoughts publicly. He has an established track record of speaking and writing about both the built and natural environments – two topics close to the hearts of the civic movement. Indeed, he was the patron of the Civic Trust up to the point where the latter had to be wound up in 2009.

On the built environment, Prince Charles was (and no doubt still is as King) a traditionalist – think of his comments back in 1984, for example, when he described a proposed extension to the National Gallery, the Sainsbury Wing, as "*a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend*". In 1989, he set out his thoughts on architecture in a book - '**A Vision of Britain – A Personal View of Architecture**' and, of course, at Poundbury, he put his ideas into action. At first, Poundbury was derided by many as fake and pastiche but, over time, as the development continued and lessons were learned, the Prince's critics have since started to reassess their original opposition and Poundbury's reputation is now being consolidated; whether or not you like the aesthetics of 'traditional' architecture, it has succeeded as an example of how to make mixed use development work.



On the other hand, when it comes to the environment, the Prince was something of a trailblazer (if only more people had listened to him back in the day!). He was still criticised by some – as people often are when they challenge the status quo. It is, perhaps, a shame that, now he is King, Charles will find himself constrained by his role and that he will be limited in what he can say publicly. (As I write this, news has just broken that King Charles III will not be speaking at COP27 even though [he did speak at COP26](#) in Glasgow.)

The King is recognised around the world as someone with a passionate and knowledgeable concern for the environment. Let us hope that he will still be able to offer wise counsel to ministers in the coming years, even if it has to be behind closed doors.

## Civic Voice Matters

*On p15 there is a message from Civic Voice's Acting Chair re this subject.....  
.....Editor*

**News of the problems at Civic Voice broke shortly after the YHACS summer meeting in Scarborough.** (I thought it odd back then when, expecting to announce an update from Civic Voice as a regular agenda item at the meeting, I was told there was no update!) It is, of course, most unfortunate that Civic Voice finds itself the victim of theft of a significant sum of money – some £87K, which is a sizeable amount of money in anyone's book but, for what is a relatively small charity, it could have proved fatal. It might yet do so.

The problems at Civic Voice have seen the resignation of a number of trustees, including the Chair, Joan Humble, and Deputy Chair, our own Helen Kidman, as well as YHACS member Gill Battarbee. However, Martin Hamilton, Director of Leeds Civic Trust and a YHACS committee member, has stepped in to act as Civic Voice Chair at least until the Civic Voice AGM which has been confirmed for 22<sup>nd</sup> October in Birmingham when a full update will be provided. As the theft is now a police matter, everyone at Civic Voice is limited in what they can say about how the theft occurred, which isn't helpful to inspiring confidence in the membership and an appeal for a cash injection – be it by donation, advance payment of 2023 subs or even loans – is hampered somewhat by the fear from prospective supporters that money paid to Civic Voice now could be lost should Civic Voice have to fold.

That is why the YHACS committee decided that YHACS would offer to act as banker for any Society or individual who wants to show support for Civic Voice by donating money to the appeal but who wanted some assurance that the money would be 'safe' and used wisely. The intention is that the YHACS committee will only release funds raised to Civic Voice once we know for certain that Civic Voice remains a viable entity. However, knowing that the money is available when needed should enable the Civic Voice board to map a course going forward. If they are confident the funds being raised will secure the organisation's future, then YHACS will start to release the money that has been collected. If no such assurance can be given, or Civic Voice is successful in raising money from elsewhere, so that the money held by YHACS isn't needed, then the money held by YHACS on behalf of donors will be returned, either in full if nothing has been paid out, or pro rata if some of the money has been used.

At the time of writing, the money donated to the Civic Voice appeal and held by YHACS amounts to around £4,600 with more promised. The money has come from our own members but also from others outside our region. (YHACS

made the decision to offer the 'banking' facility to others outside our area). It has come from regional associations, civic societies and also individuals. The total raised includes £1,000 set aside by YHACS and £1,000 from KFAS – the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies. On behalf of the YHACS committee, I would like to express our thanks to all who have made a payment.

Sadly, £4,600, while a very useful sum, won't go very far on its own to fund a national organisation like Civic Voice and I urge anyone who hasn't yet made a payment to consider doing so and to make it known as soon as possible. If I go back to my time as a trustee of the Civic Trust, I know how important it is to know how much money is going to be available. At Civic Trust, where I was a trustee from 2004 to the point it fell into administration in 2009, it wasn't the theft of money that was the problem but the loss of contract income. A particularly big contract (for Green Flag) which had been administered by the Civic Trust for years, was awarded, when it came up for re-tendering, to Keep Britain Tidy instead. Meanwhile, contracts with local authorities were being pulled because of the financial crisis that started circa 2008. Although the Trust had a six-figure sum in the bank, the Trust's accountants pointed out that, because of liabilities, including the cost of around 30 staff employed by the Trust at the time, the organisation was no longer a going concern. An appeal to civic societies across the country had resulted in a rather small sum being raised and, with no other sources of income available, the trustees made the difficult but unavoidable decision to put the Trust into administration. That news became public very quickly of course – and as soon as it did, some very generous offers of support came in that would have been sufficient (probably) to save Civic Trust, at least in the short term while it re-grouped. But by then it was too late. The administration was already underway and could not be reversed.

What happened next of course, was that a small group of trustees, myself included, and others such as Ian Harvey and Tony Burton (the latter on loan from the National Trust who paid his salary) worked under the umbrella of the North of England Civic Trust (actually a building preservation trust) to create a new national body for the movement which we launched in April 2010 as Civic Voice.

If Civic Voice were to fail, I am sure there would be a call from the movement to create a new national body – something that will be costly in time, money and effort. I know that there are some among the movement who doubt the need for a national body – but how does the movement engage effectively with policy makers – ministers and civil servants – to influence policies if there's no national body to represent us? Do we all do it individually rather than collectively? Do we take it in turns? And who co-ordinates the work? And what about working with other national organisations in our field of interest? How on earth would the movement do that without a national body?

Having been a trustee of the Civic Trust and having seen and experienced at first-hand what was required to establish Civic Voice, you can take it from me, that last thing we want to do as a movement right now, with all that is going on, is to be distracted by taking time out to set up a new body.

It is essential in my view that Civic Voice be saved and I call on all members to help where they can.

**Kevin Trickett MBE**

## HALIFAX CIVIC TRUST CELEBRATES A NIGHT OF AWARDS AT ITS ANNUAL

Halifax Civic Trust held their AGM at Halifax Town Hall for the first time in person since the pandemic, in the presence of the new Mayor, Cllr. Angie Gallagher.

There were guest speakers and presentations of awards by the Mayor. Phil Fearnley of Halo Vue Aerial Photography was presented with an Honorary Life Membership for his outstanding work on delivering a film of Halifax for the Civic Trust in its 60th Year.

Nick Kershaw was presented with an Honorary Life Membership for his outstanding work on repairing the damage on the Wakefield Gate medieval route and sharing his knowledge of traditional skills to a new audience (photo below.)



Dr John A Hargreaves, Halifax Civic Trust previous Chairman was made Vice President in recognition of his significant contribution to Halifax and the Trust. Highstone Housing were Awarded a Halifax Civic Trust Award for the outstanding and sympathetic restoration and conversion of the County Court in Halifax to Apartments. This beautiful building is once more in use, and again providing an essential service to the people of Halifax. The façade is as impressive as it was in 1873, and the interior has been modernized and adapted to a very high specification, from the room layouts to the décor. The judging Panel felt this scheme was of a very high standard of high-quality design and craftsmanship and a worthy winner of the annual Halifax Civic Trust Award.



*Pictured left — Joanne Hawley, CEO of Highstone Housing with the Mayor Cllr. Angie Gallagher*



*Images of the restored County Court and interior staircase sympathetically increased in height to meet new standards.*

Halifax Civic Trust proudly announced their new Logo and new image that will create a more visible presence raising their profile and supporting their work in the Town. Its inspiration is the arched colonnade of the Piece Hall, the rivers and streams that allowed the wool industry to develop, the many mill windows that brought prosperity to the town and the railway that connected Halifax to the wider world creating the magnificent town we know today.

There was also a presentation by Cllr. Scott Patient, Cabinet member for Climate Change and Resilience about the changes being planned by the council to meet the climate emergency and the projects and work that are currently taking place to meet the zero-carbon challenge. Halifax Civic Trust stated their commitment to support the council and work in partnership to meet this challenge.



### **About Halifax Civic Trust**

Celebrating, enhancing and safeguarding Halifax's built and natural environment. Founded in 1962. Registered Charity no. 508817. An entirely voluntary organisation which aims to improve the quality of Halifax townscape and celebrate, enhance and safeguard the outstanding built and natural environment of the Town – famously described by John Betjeman as a town of hidden beauty. By raising public awareness, carrying out projects to improve the environment, keeping a close eye on heritage at risk, influencing major projects and planning decisions the aim is to make and keep Halifax an attractive place to live, work and visit. There is an annual awards ceremony to recognise outstanding local projects which have included the restoration of the Piece Hall, local community gardens and the Duke of Wellington's Regimental Memorial. You will also see plaques commemorating notable local residents around the town.

### **Contact Details**

For further information or to arrange a photo opportunity please contact:  
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Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TrustCivic>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/241127785949760>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC94v8Zd-FS9cz-W9QYJW8oA>

## THREE RECENT SCARBOROUGH PROJECTS

Sometime ago one of our members who is a generous donor to our Society commissioned statues depicting smugglers and it was installed in a spectacular site overlooking the south bay.

This year she asked us for help with the intricacies of producing an interpretation board for the sculpture and obtaining the required permission for its placement. It took many months to see the project through to completion but now people viewing the sculpture will now be able to make the connection between the work and Scarborough's heritage. Pictured is the new interpretation board for the Smuggler & Apprentice statue on Merchants Row, and the statues.



Like many Scarborough people I never tire of my delight in a drive or walk along the beautiful "corniche" of the north, our Marine Drive.

Back in 2008 I remember a beautiful sunny day when the Marine Drive Centenary boards were officially unveiled. The project was masterminded by Scarborough Council and the story of Marine Drive was researched and written by local historian Keith Johnston one of our members. However, after fourteen years many of the boards had become very difficult to read. This was discussed in our Executive Committee meetings and we decided to update and renew the signs. There are nine in total and little change to the text was required. The display boards were very difficult to access due to the harsh marine environment but as they were mainly stainless steel much was reusable. We were extremely lucky to find that the graphic designer still had the files required for the reprint and was able make some minor updates. The refreshed boards will now be available for the thousands of people who enjoy the beautiful walk.



**Rusty old cast iron streets signs are too often removed and replaced with a “nice” new plastic sign.**

We want people to be aware that this loss of our heritage should be avoided and the signs restored. Anyone who frequents the South Cliff area of Scarborough will have noticed the outcrop of repainted cast iron street signs.

Pictured are a couple of before and after pictures of cast iron signs recently restored by two volunteers who must be congratulated on the fantastic quality of their work. They have completed 30 signs around South Cliff! We stress that this work is only done with the agreement and guidance of the local Council. In Scarborough the Council have supplied all the materials, and the volunteers have provided the correct level of expertise.



Back in 2005 when our Society set up a working group to protect shelters in Scarborough’s South Cliff Gardens, who could have foreseen that we would achieve the dream of getting the shelters valued for their important contribution to Scarborough’s heritage. The National Lottery Heritage Fund granted £5 million towards the restoration of the gardens, which included money lavished on the shelters so that we now have structures which are as good as “new” but respect the original design.



The shelter pictured above is listed grade II, and when you consider that the structure is more than one hundred years old it is not surprising that extensive work was required to produce such a stunning appearance.

**Adrian Perry**

## ADDINGHAM CIVIC SOCIETY (ACS) WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



Many of you may recall at the YHACS Annual General Meeting back in Jan 2020, we were delighted to be presented with the Peter Spawforth Award for the work we were doing with our local young people. Our entry was entitled '**Young People are the future....**'

So, almost 3 years on, we thought you might like to know how things have been going with the activities involving our young people.

It goes without saying that we are fully committed to supporting the young and for some years now, members Peter Miller and Gill Battarbee (Society Secretary) have been the "liaison team" between the Civic Society, the youth groups and the school. We have moved on from simply providing the odd history or heritage talk and are delighted that we are now in a position to respond to a range of requests. So, to illustrate the sorts of things we do, here's an outline of our 2021 – 2022 calendar.

### ***Addingham Primary School***

The school invites and organises a wide range of visitors and opportunities for the children and we are delighted to contribute to this "Enrichment Programme". These sessions build on the children's curriculum and give them an insight into the knowledge, work and interests of different residents. It is with enormous thanks, mainly to ACS members, for the sessions that they provide for the children. One session is arranged for each class during the spring term and a different session in summer term. These range from, music, art, history, personal stories, IT, our very own Photo Archive, bird watching, the film industry, WWII, wild life, gardening, making music with a lithophone (musical rocks), saving energy and health and the human body.... to name but a few!



As a separate programme our Environment Group provides a session for each class during National Science Week and our theme is Water. Some of these sessions are run by our volunteers and for others we invite local organisations. So, this year, between 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March, the various classes were introduced to, the Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) House, the Microscopic Life of the School Pond, Miss Connections, the invertebrates of the school beck, the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust Mobile Classroom, Measuring infiltration of water into the ground, the electronic measurement of water flow and "The Sandbox", provided by JBA Consulting, with which the children explore the local landscape and flood management.

### ***Addingham Youth Groups***

The Society was delighted to be able to support the Scouts with an ACS Community Award of £600 towards their much-postponed trip to the Scouts' Jamboree in Switzerland. The money paid for an additional adult to make the trip to enable two young people with special needs to attend an adventure of a lifetime.



Both Addingham Scouts and Guides have been out helping our Environment Group to keep the invasive species, Himalayan Balsam, at bay. Their help is much appreciated. Members, Peter Miller and Pam Morgan led a creative environment session for the Brownies and Gill Battarbee introduced the Brownies to one of our Environment Group Wormeries. The worms went down so well they were invited to a joint Brownie session in Ben Rhydding!



We also provide volunteering opportunities for secondary school students. This is largely with our Environment Group and, as you may imagine, we benefit enormously from their energy, ideas and company. For example, we regularly host Duke of Edinburgh Awards students who are completing the "volunteering" element of their course.

### ***The Saplings***

Our Civic Society Environment Group also runs the children's environment group, called the Saplings. This group takes part in a variety of environmentally themed activities. Here is a snapshot of some of this year's activities: astronomy, bird flight, following the migration of our adopted Cuckoo which we christened *Ellis Sapling!* finding invertebrates in water, the microscopic world of the school pond, hedgehogs, bird feeders, frogs, bats and fungi.



If any Society would like to learn more about our many links with the local young people do get in touch with Gill Battarbee:

[secretary@addinghamcivicsociety.co.uk](mailto:secretary@addinghamcivicsociety.co.uk)

**Jim Robinson**

## A MESSAGE TO YHACS FROM CIVIC VOICE

**As members will know, Civic Voice was the victim of a theft from our bank account earlier in the year.**

This has had a serious impact on our ability to function as an organization. We have done what you would expect – a report was made to the police and the Charity Commission have been informed. We have shored up our financial processes. We are also attempting to recover the money stolen, but even if this money eventually returns, we should assume that this will not be in the near future. The near future is the issue – a significant cashflow problem.

This has meant that our focus has been on raising funding to plug the gap. As I write, we have had pledges of around £24K from the Civic Voice membership. Together with other funding pledged, we are approximately half way toward meeting our funding target. YHACS members have been particularly generous. Thank you!

Our AGM is on 22 October in Birmingham (all Civic Voice members are welcome to attend) – we will be presenting a recovery plan to the membership as well as saying as much as we possibly can about the theft. I am very keen that we are as transparent as possible.

If YHACS members are interested in supporting the appeal and have not yet done so, please do contact me and I am happy to discuss.

**Martin Hamilton**  
Acting Chair, Civic Voice

[martin.hamilton@leedscivictrust.org.uk](mailto:martin.hamilton@leedscivictrust.org.uk)



## MAJOR UK INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING CHANGES CONCERN CIVIC VOICE

**According to UK chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng, legislation to fix the "slow" and "fragmented" planning system in the UK will be introduced in the following months to facilitate the quick completion of "important big infrastructure projects."**

Published Friday 23rd September 2022, [The Growth Plan 2022](#) includes some important announcements that civic societies need to be aware of.

### **The Growth Plan includes:**

- New planning reform legislation will be forthcoming to accelerate priority major infrastructure projects across England by: minimising the burden of environmental assessments, making consultation requirements more proportionate, reforming habitats and species regulation, and increasing flexibility to make changes to a Development Consent Order once it has been submitted.
- It also announces sector-specific changes to accelerate infrastructure delivery, including bringing onshore wind planning policy in line with other infrastructure to



## The 38 Areas

### Red - in YHACS area

Blackpool Council  
 Bedford Borough Council  
 Central Bedfordshire Council  
 Cheshire West and Chester Council  
 Cornwall Council  
 Cumbria County Council  
 Derbyshire County Council  
 Dorset Council  
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council  
 Essex County Council  
 Greater London Authority  
 Gloucestershire County Council  
 Greater Manchester Combined Authority  
**Hull City Council**  
 Kent County Council  
 Lancashire County Council  
 Leicestershire County Council  
 Liverpool City Region  
**North East Lincolnshire Council**  
**North Lincolnshire Council**  
 Norfolk County Council  
 North of Tyne Combined Authority  
**North Yorkshire County Council**  
 Nottinghamshire County Council  
 Plymouth City Council  
 Somerset County Council  
 Southampton City Council  
 Southend-on-Sea City Council  
 Staffordshire County Council  
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
 Suffolk County Council  
 Sunderland City Council  
**South Yorkshire Combined Authority**  
 Tees Valley Combined Authority  
 Warwickshire County Council  
 West of England Combined Authority  
 West Midlands Combined Authority  
**West Yorkshire Combined Authority**

allow it to be deployed more readily in England; reforms to accelerate road delivery through more streamlined consent processes; giving telecoms operators more accessible access to telegraph poles on private land.

The government believes that these reforms will mean energy infrastructure, including renewables, gets built more quickly. The government will work with the devolved administrations in relation to devolved planning responsibilities.

The Plan also confirms that the government will work with the devolved administrations and local partners to introduce [Investment Zones](#) across the UK. Such areas will be a focus for "accelerated development" and will benefit from "tax incentives, planning liberalisation and wider support for the local economy".

38 local areas (see list on left) have been announced, with more to come, but no detail is provided yet on exactly what the "liberalised planning offer for Investment Zones" will be. The [government factsheet](#), however, provides a clue, "There will be designated development sites to both release more land for housing and commercial development, and to support accelerated development. The need for planning applications will be minimised and where planning applications remain necessary, they will be radically streamlined."

The Treasury has supplied high-level information about what will be in the legislation and which individual infrastructure projects will benefit from the reforms; a non-exhaustive list of 138 projects in transportation, energy, local growth, and digital has been provided. These projects, according to the Treasury, "have a particularly high potential to move to construction at an accelerated pace." However, the Treasury cautioned that inclusion on the list does not guarantee funding, planning approval, or other regulatory or permitting process approval for a project.

***"To be clear, we will resist these major announcements. The government wants to put growth at any cost by attempting to remove environmental safeguards, deregulate planning, and diminish citizen input in the system."***

Ian Harvey said: "We seem to have the same old announcements that the planning system is the problem. To be clear, we will resist these major announcements. The government wants to put growth at any cost by attempting to remove environmental safeguards, deregulate planning, and diminish citizen input in the system. I've already discussed this with a number of civic societies and partners, and we are aware of the emotions it is provoking. We are awaiting the specifics, but we are really concerned about what this proposal would imply for the built and natural environments. We urge civic societies to get in touch with your MP and express their opinions."

## HALIFAX CIVIC TRUST CELEBRATES 60 YEARS



### **Anniversary Lunch - Saturday 5th November 2022 – 12.30 for 1.00 pm**

We are pleased to invite you to our Celebratory Lunch in La Vedetta, the private terrace-room at Pollino's restaurant, Warley Road, Halifax with the mayor, Angie Gallagher and her Consort. David Cant, former chair of the Yorkshire vernacular buildings study group will give an illustrated talk after lunch.

We will begin at 12.30 for a 1pm start on Saturday 5 November. Our guest speaker, David Cant, well-known local historian and authority on the traditional buildings of our area, will give an illustrated talk after we have eaten. It promises to be an interesting afternoon with good food and good company. David's talk has the title: "**HALIFAX BUILDINGS AND HISTORY**" and will last between 30 and 40 minutes.

Pollino's have put together a menu for the fixed price of £25, as follows: Garlic Bread and water will be on the table, and tea and filter coffee will be served at the end of the meal. These items are included in the price of £25. Drinks (wine etc.) will be available for purchase at the integral bar.

Any queries please email: [mark.halifaxcivictrust@gmail.com](mailto:mark.halifaxcivictrust@gmail.com)

**Come and join us in celebrating 60 years of working for Halifax!**

Booking via Eventbrite link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/halifax-civic-trust-celebrates-60-years-of-working-for-halifaxtickets-384730207>



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER  
Association of Civic Societies

Reg. Charity No. 1112290

[www.yhacs.org.uk](http://www.yhacs.org.uk)

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

David Moss

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.

Sat 22nd October - Civic Voice AGM, Blrmingham

Sat 28th January - YHACS AGM and Members Meeting,  
Old Swan Hotel, Harrogate

## NEXT YHACS MEETING

SATURDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 1:00 - 3:45 PM

MEMBERS MEETING AT

THE DANUM GALLERY AND LIBRARY, DONCASTER, DN1 3BZ

GUEST SPEAKERS :

TARIQ SHAH OBE - VIGO GROUP

MARTIN HAMILTON - ACTING CHAIR, CIVIC VOICE

CONTACT: KEVIN TRICKETT ON [INFO@YHACS.ORG.UK](mailto:INFO@YHACS.ORG.UK)

### Executive Officers, Committee Members and Portfolios

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