



YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

Member of



SOCIETY INSIGHT

CONCEALMENT OF PUBLIC COMMENTS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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QUESTION – Does your Local Planning Authority publish all comments made by members of the public and organisations on their planning application portals as they should or do they hide them on the grounds of data protection and what should be done if that is the case?

In Wakefield district the Council has for many years published online all documents relating to planning applications from the applicant and consultations arising from services within the council and from statutory bodies, the planning officer report with recommendations and the final decision notice, together with appeal documents when involved. Comments made by members of the public and interested third party organisations like Civic Societies have also been published. That did enable transparency and the ability for collaboration between the like-minded, although in practice we did sometimes need to send a reminder if our comments had not been entered.

Recently however Wakefield Council decided to stop making public representations visible on the portal and it did this without consultation and without even publishing a notice on the portal. This concealment of public representations did not only apply to new planning applications received after the date the new policy was implemented; it was applied retrospectively and previous comments were removed from the portal.

There were various possible reasons for the concealment of public comments - for example to reduce the cost of editing out inappropriate language and to simplify the task of protecting the online privacy of individuals in terms of data protection and potential neighbour disputes. Whatever the reason, all public comments were removed. The statements of developers and statutory agencies were retained. At first, the comments of Civic Societies, Parish Councils and other non-statutory organisations were also removed, but following representation from ourselves this aspect of the policy was reversed.

The concealment of online comments was welcomed by some, we were told. Some individual objectors preferred confidentiality and this might have, in turn, encouraged more objectors to come forward. However, the overwhelming



reaction from local groups was negative. Reading public comments can help to expose concerns across a number of issues and allow people commenting, whether objecting or supporting, to get a better understanding of the implications of a planning application, especially when an application is of a complex nature with many facets to be considered. As importantly, it also allows light in, providing greater transparency and accountability to the decision-making process. After receiving a delegation representing around 700 public objections to a controversial large housing and employment application on former green belt land, the Council's cabinet reversed the earlier decision and all public comments will now be published once more.

....we are aware that public comments are now concealed on planning portals in some other YHACS members' local authority areas (and elsewhere in England).....

The concealment of online public comments is of doubtful legality under the 'The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, UK Statutory Instruments, 2014 No. 2095 PART 3 Regulation 8 (as currently amended) <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/2095/regulation/8>.

This states that:

'The written record, together with any background papers, must as soon as reasonably practicable after the record is made, be made available for inspection by members of the public —

- (a) at all reasonable hours, at the offices of the relevant local government body;*
- (b) on the website of the relevant local government body, if it has one; and,*
- (c) by such other means that the relevant local government body considers appropriate.'*

The regulations do not distinguish between online publication and the availability of comments for inspection at an office. Both forms of availability are required. The legal aspects were not tested, however. The main consideration in reversing the earlier decision was the apparent political priority of demonstrating transparency.

In the opinion of Wakefield district's civic societies the continued online publication of comments is most welcome when national legislation is seeking to restrict opposition to new development.

At the same time we are aware that public comments are now concealed on planning portals in some other YHACS members' local authority areas (and elsewhere in England) and we wonder whether there is sufficient consensus to seek the reversal in those areas too. If so, should the matter be raised at a national level through YHACS to Civic Voice?

**John Ramsden,
Horbury Civic Society**

**Barry Goodchild,
Wakefield Civic Society
and Civic Voice trustee**

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

Why are we here? This is a question I've been thinking about a lot as we prepare the application for National Lottery Heritage funding.

In a nutshell, the project we are proposing aims to equip YHACS and our member societies with the skills, capacity and resources to build resilience and sustainability, increasing our appeal to a broader section of our communities. The advice I was given at an NLHF workshop was: Explain to someone who knows nothing about your organisation *why* your project needs to happen, *why* it needs to happen now and *why* you are best placed to deliver it.

As this is a Heritage Lottery project, we also need to explain what heritage would be at risk if we do not proceed with our project, which brings me back to the question "Why are we here?" and – equally importantly – "What would happen if we weren't here?"

Sometimes, as we get bogged down with the day-to-day – struggling to get people to volunteer on our committees, finding speakers, organising meetings and excursions, wading through planning applications – it's good to look up and think about our purpose and vision.

Why are we here?

Civic societies play a vital role in protecting and celebrating the heritage and character of our communities while also promoting sustainable development for the future. We fight to protect heritage buildings and influence planning decisions. We promote heritage in our communities through heritage events and trails, newsletters, books and literature, talks and walks, Blue Plaques, design awards and a variety of other heritage-based activities.



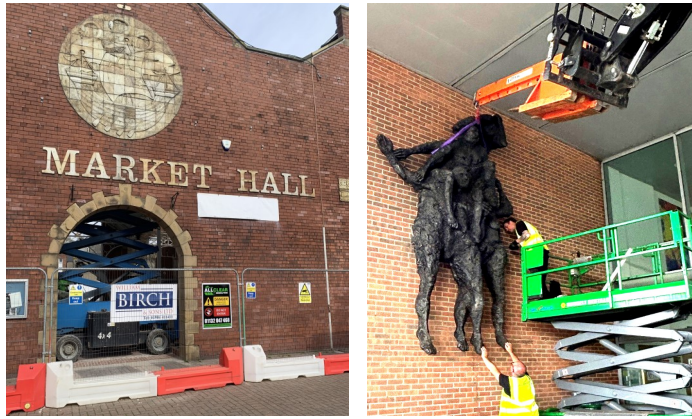
Some of our societies are involved in strategic partnerships such as Town Deal Boards, BIDs, collaboration with universities, Heritage Action Zones and community networks. Others such as Addingham, where we are holding our Summer Members' Meeting, are involved in environmental partnerships and projects.

No other grassroots movement can offer what civic societies do in terms of the breadth of our activities and depth of knowledge of local heritage. That's quite a list and I'm sure our societies could add to that. Congratulations and thank you for everything you do.

What would happen if we weren't here?

There are approximately 40,000 nationally listed buildings in the YHACS area of benefit, including 330 historic sites at risk across Yorkshire. Our societies monitor these buildings and sites and campaign to protect them. We also collate and preserve valuable heritage assets in our communities.





Recent examples of societies successfully saving heritage at risk are a Victorian Market Hall in Goole (*above, left*), a notable piece of public sculpture by artist Harold Gosney in Immingham (*above, right*), and the digitisation of a collection of over 500 35mm slides taken by Leeds Development Corporation from 1988 to 1995. These are just three examples from across the region – there are many more.

Member societies who responded to our recent survey identified other at-risk heritage they would like to save but lack the capacity and resources to do so. These include a Grade II-listed theatre, an old cinema and a village collection of historic photographs. In total £2.15m of unfulfilled heritage projects were identified through the survey.

With increasing pressures on funding, local authorities are being squeezed in the heritage support they are able to provide. For example, there are only three Conservation Officers covering the whole of North Yorkshire. It often falls to the voluntary sector to fill the gaps. A number of societies carry out their own Conservation Area appraisals and Richmond and District Civic Society undertook condition surveys of all 346 listed buildings in the town, as a pilot with Historic England.

Civic societies also engage in activities that educate people about their local heritage – telling the stories of our communities and promoting pride in place. Many YHACS member societies take part in Heritage Open Days, collectively organising more than 1,000 events in 2024.

The average age of societies in YHACS is approximately 50 years, which represents a huge bank of heritage knowledge and experience. Without civic societies this valuable knowledge would disappear, many at-risk heritage assets would be lost, inappropriate development would go unchallenged and communities would lose their heritage champions and sense of pride in place. So we know why we are here and what would happen if we weren't here, the next question is 'how do we assure our future?' To continue the valuable work we do, societies need the skills, capacity and resources to build resilience and sustainability, increasing our appeal to a broader section of our communities and ensuring that the baton is passed to future heritage champions.

Our funding application is focused on improving the organisational stability of YHACS and our member societies. Hopefully our bid will be successful but, whether it is or not, we can continue to support and learn from each other. As one respondent to our survey commented, we're 'stronger together than apart'.



Thank you to Hull for a great Spring Meeting

A big thanks to Hull Civic Society for hosting such an enjoyable Spring Meeting in their historic maritime city.



Spring Meeting – dinner at the Minerva, Hull.

On the Friday night a group of 20 gathered for a meal in the iconic Minerva pub at the top of the marina overlooking the Humber. Established in 1829, the pub has played a part in Hull's history for the last 200 years.

On Saturday morning a very knowledgeable White Badge guide led a group of about 30 of us walk around the Old Town, condensing hundreds of years of Hull's fascinating history into under two hours. I've visited Hull many times but I always learn something new!

Hull Civic Society kindly treated us to a buffet lunch at the Sailmakers' Arms in the Old Town before we moved down cobbled high street to Wilberforce House Museum for our meeting. Wilberforce House was the birthplace of one of Hull's most famous sons, William Wilberforce, who was a key figure in the successful campaign to abolish the slave trade.

The new Chief Executive Officer of Civic Voice, Rob Hattersley, travelled up from Dorset for the whole event, which gave us chance to have some conversations over dinner as well as during the more formal proceedings. Rob gave a presentation at the meeting, introducing himself and giving an outline of Civic Voice's priorities.

The Chair of Hull Civic Society, John Scotney, gave us a fascinating talk on the historic buildings of Hull – what an encyclopaedic knowledge John has! We were also grateful to receive people's comments on our membership survey and proposed National Lottery Heritage Fund bit.

It was great to see such a lot of conversations going on in the meeting and during the break when we spilled out into the sunny – but breezy – gardens. We were pleased to welcome members from Bridlington Civic Society, who gave up their membership of YHACS a few years ago.

They took part in our 'Just A Minute' slot, along with Addingham, Pontefract, Ilkley and Grimsby societies. This is always one of my favourite parts of the meeting – it's great to hear what all our societies are involved with and is a chance for us all to learn from each other. Don't forget to book your 'Just A Minute' slot for Addingham.

For a view of the meeting from a Hull Civic Society member and organiser see the article on pages 10-12

Yorkshire Society Heritage Summit

It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces – and some new ones – in Skipton at the fourth Yorkshire Heritage Summit organised by the Yorkshire Society, a YHACS reciprocal member.

The beautifully restored Skipton Town Hall was the perfect venue for the event on 13th May and its prime position on the high street ensured plenty of footfall throughout the day. YHACS and several other civic societies had stalls at the main Heritage Exhibition and my husband and fellow YHACS executive committee member John Clarke jumped ship to man the Yorkshire Coast 1779 Heritage Group stall, telling the tale of the Battle of Flamborough Head. This was when John Paul Jones and the American revolutionaries took on the Royal Navy (if you've never heard of it we do a talk!)

YHACS volunteers were kept busy throughout the day explaining to visitors what the civic movement is all about and signposting them to their local civic societies. This included a couple trying to sell their Arts and Crafts house in the North East to move to Wakefield. You should be getting two new members Kevin!



Yorkshire Society Heritage Summit - YHACS Vice Chair Alan Goodrum, Treasurer Jane Lee and Chair Margaret Hicks-Clarke meeting the Mayor of Skipton, Coun Claire Nash.

Alongside the exhibition was a Heritage Symposium with speakers and discussions. I was so busy on our stall I missed most of it but YHACS treasurer Jane Lee and I managed to join in some interesting discussions on engaging with younger people.

Our friends at Skipton Civic Society led walks that looked at various aspects of Skipton's long history as a market town and industrial centre. I managed to catch one of those the following morning, led by Sue Wrathmell, who I invited to speak at the Summer Members' Meeting in Addingham.

Thanks to our YHACS executive committee member and Chair of Pontefract Civic Society Paul Cartwright, who played a key role in organising the event for the Yorkshire Society. Does this man never sleep?

**Margaret Hicks-Clarke
YHACS Chair**

GHOST SIGNS

Whitby Civic Society aims to protect and promote the heritage of the town and Ghost Signs are an important part of the history and heritage of a place, providing fascinating echoes of the past.



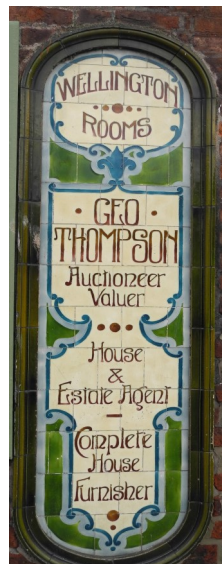
Ghost Signs can include adverts painted on gable ends, the names of long-ago lost traders in the form of painted letters, illustrations, tiles or beautifully carved stonework. Many such signs are gradually disappearing and eventually fade away completely, destroying the link to the past.



We are lucky in Whitby to have many examples of Ghost Signs. They include the old Whitby/Ruswarp Parish boundary stone clearly visible on Flowergate, stone steps that once led to the original Wesleyan Chapel off Church Street and which now remain in glorious isolation, and splendid examples of beautiful, original glazed tiles which, despite many changes over many years, remain to betray the names of long-ago trades.



A wonderful Ghost Sign is seen high up on the Wellington Road side of the building currently occupied by Brown & Kidson solicitors. Fading letters show the business named ARTHUR SAWDON once occupied these premises and a glance up at the New Quay Road side of the building shows Mr Sawdon dealt with CARPETS and BEDDING. On either side of the entrance to the same building, you can see beautiful, colourful tiles speaking of the WELLINGTON ROOMS and an even earlier business, a MR GEORGE THOMPSON who appears particularly versatile dealing in tuning and repairing organs and pianos and who was also an auctioneer and valuer.



Whitby Civic Society member, Peter Craggs, has so far identified and documented over 36 Ghost Signs and the Civic Society audit and monitor the condition and retention, as well as having a Ghost Sign Quiz to see if you can locate some of the 36 now identified.



If you are aware of any signs in Whitby that you feel the Civic Society are not aware of please contact them directly so they can investigate further and add them to their Ghost Signs collection.

Does your town or village have Ghost Signs to the past?

Kat Norrby

SCARBOROUGH'S VICTORIAN CLIFF LIFT CELEBRATES 150TH BIRTHDAY



It's always special when Scarborough makes the BBC news bulletin and especially when the Civic Society has a particular interest in the subject. Peter Cooper of Scarborough Civic Society was instrumental in getting the lift listed Grade II in 2013.

Below is an extract from Peter's detailed research which revealed the difficulties in getting this pioneering project approved.

'Born in York, Richard Hunt was, by 1859, the landlord of the newly-opened Princess Royal Hotel in Scarborough and by 1861 proprietor of the Prince of Wales Hotel on Esplanade. Hunt became a Town Councillor and, in 1867, presented plans for a tramway to join Esplanade, near his hotel, to the sands. Neither Scarborough Corporation nor the Cliff Bridge Company, proprietors of the Spa through whose land the tram would run, agreed to the idea. A similar proposal in 1870 by Peter Penn Gaskell with a route from Belmont Road was also rejected. In 1871, South Cliff residents petitioned for a cliff tramway and in 1872 Hunt again submitted plans which were approved. The South Cliff Tramway Co. Ltd was formed with its head office at the Prince of Wales Hotel and a prospectus was issued in 1873. The tramway was opened on Tuesday 6 July 1875 charging one penny per journey and within 2 years was carrying 3,500 passengers a day. Richard Hunt died 25 February 1877 in his 65th year, having seen the completion of his ambitions.'



We had a stand at the event celebrating the 150th anniversary held at the Spa and used our SumUp card reader for the first time. This was recommended by Rachel Walker from Goole Civic Society and sales of our publication were split 50% cash / 50% card reader so it demonstrates the demand for cashless transactions.

Adrian Perry

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF PLANNING CLUB

I was pleased to attend an event in York last month to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Planning Club - a unique and award-winning collaboration between York Civic Trust and the University of York.

Formally known as The Heritage Planning Studio, the club is a groundbreaking model of hands-on planning and heritage education which benefits the university, the civic trust and the quality of life in York. Over 10 years it has provided 350 postgraduate students of the Department of Archaeology with real-life experience of the planning process, helping them secure their future careers. In return, postgraduates collectively volunteer up to 10,000 hours each year, providing York Civic Trust with an equivalent capacity of five full-time members of conservation-focused staff.



Margaret Hicks-Clarke looking at a map showing all the places 'Clubbers' are now working.



YHACS committee member John Clarke discusses the planning application with 'Clubbers'.

Working with professional mentors, 'Clubbers', as they are known, critically appraise live York-based planning applications. Each year, they review in detail more than 100 applications, mostly those with a heritage focus, helping to enhance the quality of urban life in York while safeguarding its historic buildings. With the training provided, they submit detailed recommendations to City of York Council through York Civic Trust in its role as a local planning consultee. Over 10 years this collaboration has produced more than 1,000 written comments, totalling over half a million words – longer than 'War and Peace'!



'Clubbers' past and present gather for the event at the Hospitium in the Museum Gardens, York.



Planning Club founder Dr Jane Grenville, left, with some of the current 'Clubbers'.

As part of the 10th anniversary event, participants were provided with a planning application to review in advance, which we were able to discuss with some of the current 'Clubbers' on the day. It was refreshing to hear their cogently argued views both for and against the application but in the end we all agreed to object.

Dr Jane Grenville, an archaeologist and heritage specialist who established Planning Club with the Civic Trust, explained how the idea came about and its progress over the years. One of her original 'Clubbers', Dr Duncan Marks, is now Planning and Heritage Manager at York Civic Trust and helps to run the club with Dr Grenville and conservation architect Dr Peter Gouldsbrough. Duncan shared a review of York's recent planning landscape through 10 years of applications.

Former Planning Club participants shared how their experience at York had shaped their work in planning, heritage, and related fields. Planning Club alumni are working in heritage and planning across the world and one of those we heard from was Daniela Formosa, now a senior planning officer in Malta.

The success of Planning Club in improving employability is clear, with 82% of 'Clubbers' staying in the heritage or planning industries, employed across the private (41%), public (40%), charity (12%) and academic (7%) sectors. Planning Club graduates can be found across the world – from Harrogate to Hawaii, Scunthorpe to Seoul and Belfast to Bangalore. I'm happy to say that 92 of them are currently employed in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Other speakers included Delma Tomlin, Chair of York Civic Trust; Councillor Claire Douglas, Leader of City of York Council; Professor Kate Giles and Dr Lu Cooke, from the University of York; Max Reeves, a director of property development company The Helmsley Group; and Mark Andrews, design director with architects Vincent & Partners.

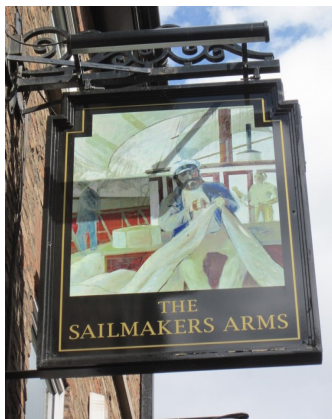
Thank you to York Civic Trust, the University of York and Planning Club members past and present for a great event. So next time you hear about students going 'clubbing', they might not be doing what you expect!

**Margaret Hicks-Clarke,
YHACS Chair**



REPORT ON YHACS MEETING IN HULL, APRIL 2025

Last December, in the course of the online committee meeting, it was suggested that perhaps Hull Civic Society might like to host the spring 2025 meeting. We agreed to do so, and the committee then spent the next few months making plans for the whole event.



*Photo by Ian S © Ian S
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Britain and Ireland*

On the evening of Friday 25th April, we invited all those who had arrived during the day to an evening meal at the Minerva in Nelson Street. As well as being a welcoming pub, this is also a very attractive late Georgian building, so was clearly a most suitable choice of venue.

On the morning of Saturday 26th, we arranged a guided walk round the Old Town, led by Captain John Tindall, a Master Mariner and White Badge tour guide. On account of John's background, his walk had a maritime emphasis, as was appropriate for a part of the city with such strong nautical connections. We were most fortunate with the weather, and the walk was a great success.

For lunch, we organised a buffet at the Sailmakers Arms in High Street. I have attended several previous YHACS meetings, and usually delegates are left to their own devices at lunchtime on the Saturday. However, we felt that it would

be nice if delegates could all socialise together over lunch, and Ian Pearson further suggested that we should provide the buffet without charge to the delegates, which our visitors clearly appreciated. The Sailmakers Arms was a convenient choice from a geographical point of view, because it was the endpoint of the guided walk, and very close to Wilberforce House (right), the venue for the afternoon meeting. Leftover sandwiches were taken to Wilberforce House, and food uneaten after the meeting was taken to Emmaus Hull & East Riding, the homelessness charity on Lockwood Street. Donations taken for the buffet were given to Hull Maritime Foundation, which Captain Tindall recommended, and they were received with many thanks.



In the first part of the afternoon, John Scotney, our Chairman, gave a presentation on the buildings of Joseph Hirst. I must confess to not having known that much about this architect beforehand, but it turns out that, in his capacity as the City Architect from 1900 to 1926, he designed a very wide range of buildings, for example the City Hall, the Carnegie Heritage Centre (originally a branch library), the East and West Park Lodges, Newland School for Girls, and the Pickering Almshouses.

For our guest speaker, we were most fortunate to welcome Rob Hattersley (right), the Chief Executive Officer of Civic Voice. Rob had only been in this post for a couple of months, and moreover, he had come all the way from Dorchester in Dorset, where he lives, so we were very privileged that he should address us. He began by mentioning that Civic Trust, the predecessor to Civic Voice, had as many as thirty staff at one time, whereas Civic Voice just has him. He is hoping that he will be able to recruit an assistant in the near future.



Until the last general election, there was an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the civic society movement, but this has not met since the election. Hopefully, the APPG will be revived. Rob has set himself numerous objectives, some quite short-term, and some on a rather longer timescale. One of his top priorities is to update the membership database. He hopes to encourage more local societies to join, by simplifying this process. There will be a new partnership with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Although he had praise for YHACS as a regional grouping, he made the point that civic societies could form groupings in ways other than the purely geographical. For example, small societies might wish to form a sub-group of their own. There could be some form of accreditation, based on the member societies' achievements in their own right, rather than in improving the local townscape. Rob acknowledged that the role of Chair was not an easy one, and he advocated the establishment of a Chairs' Support Network.

Within the 'business' part of the meeting, members of various societies made interesting contributions. In addition, Margaret Hicks-Clarke, gave us some information about the YHACS bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for the sum of £170,000. This would be used, at least in part, to pay for the employment of a part-time project coordinator for two years.



When we started planning this event, we did not know how many visitors we would attract from all parts of Yorkshire. In the event, the numbers of attendees were surprisingly high—twenty for the meal at the Minerva, over thirty on the guided walk, and forty-five for the lunch at the Sailmakers and the afternoon meeting. I would like to express my thanks to Ian Pearson and John Scotney for their major contributions towards the organisation of the whole event.

Simon Green

HALIFAX CIVIC TRUST AWARDS

Halifax Civic Trust Awards have been made since 1992 to encourage high-quality design and craftsmanship in schemes in Halifax and the surrounding countryside.

Winning projects have included restored mills, the Peoples Park, houses, shops and warehouses, new schools, medical centres and housing, everything from a walled garden to a restored 240-year-old sundial. Awards are given for high-quality new building, the reuse and restoration of old buildings, landscaping or any other work of a high standard which makes a significant improvement to the fabric of the town or countryside of Halifax and largely carried out or completed in the previous calendar year. Winners receive a certificate and a green plaque.

Recent winners have been the Former Magistrates Court and Police Station, Trinity Academy, Duke of Wellington's completed in the previous calendar year. Winners receive a certificate and a Regimental Memorial, the former County Court converted to 14 much needed supported living apartments and the conversion of the former Magistrates Court to a Music Trust and Wellbeing Centre.

Lister Horsfall, Jewellery and Watch Showroom

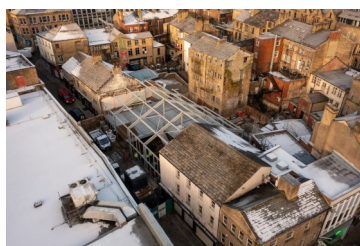
Lister Horsfall was founded in 1902 by Lister Horsfall, the great-grandfather of the current Managing Director, Nick Horsfall. Originally known as "The Little Diamond Shop," the business began on the present site. Lister's father, Walter Horsfall, was his very first customer, arriving at the shop by horse and carriage down Corn Market Street, an event recreated to mark the 100th anniversary of the store.



Now, over 120 years later, the company ethos remains "Moments in Time," helping our clients celebrate life's most treasured milestones.

While Lister Horsfall have preserved their historic location, the Halifax showroom has evolved significantly.

Following a substantial investment in 2024, the company unveiled a newly refurbished and extended showroom, enhancing the experience for customers. This transformation includes an in-house Rolex Service Centre and dedicated spaces for our luxury jewellery and watch brands, ensuring a welcoming and immersive experience for both new and returning clients.



The Innovare Design team took inspiration from such buildings as the Grade 1 listed Piece Hall, Yorkshire's most important secular building. Portland stone now dominates the façade of the new extension which is styled to celebrate the grandeur of the local architecture. Working closely with the local authority team, the traditional stained timber shop front was repainted in a smart dark grey and the original gold leaf signage has been retained and replicated on the new building. The existing green marble stall risers from



the original shop have also been extended to tie the new and old buildings together.

The Award

Alan Goodrum chair of Halifax Civic Trust stated that “*Lister Horsfall should be commended on an*

imaginative interior design, high standard of workmanship, retention of the original facade and sympathetic development of the new extension and a family business bringing investment to the town.”

Presenting the award to Gemma Moody MD (right), was the new Mayor Cllr. Steven Leigh MBE. They were presented with a certificate of the award and Halifax Civic Trust will present Lister Horsfall with a green plaque at a future unveiling event in the presence of the Mayor at their premises in the Town. Gemma Moody MD at Lister Horsfall stated, “*We’re absolutely delighted to receive this Halifax Civic Trust Award. It’s a real honour to have our work recognised in this way, especially for a project that celebrates and preserves our shared history. This kind of recognition means a lot to the whole team.*”



Halifax Bus Station

This year a new category was introduced for an award – the Environment Award.

The additional criteria were:

- Meet the objectives of Calderdale Council Climate Action Plan.
- Reduce CO2 or to be Carbon Neutral.
- Increase walking or cycling or use of public transport.
- An innovative use of new green technology.
- A significant reduction in local air or river pollution.
- An increase in local Biodiversity.
- Significant greening of an area.
- Improvement in the physical and built environment that has a positive impact on the environment.
- Improvement in flood management.
- Increase Active Travel.

Halifax Bus station (HBS), is a £20.7 million redevelopment of an existing, steeply sloping bus station, providing a modern passenger concourse, enhanced facilities and integrated public realm design with a strong focus on accessibility/inclusion, safety, comfort and sustainability. Incorporating an innovative fully green roof, sensitive use of materials and the Grade II Listed Sion Chapel, retaining a key heritage asset as a focal town centre concourse gateway. The design team were led by Aecon and SGP.

Funded through ‘Transforming Cities Fund’, HBS was a partnership between West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Calderdale Council, and the design/construction team to deliver transport enhancements from inception, business case approval, design and delivery.

The building incorporates clear signage and real time information. There are three help points and extensive CCTV coverage. A high standard maintenance regime has been introduced. The project involved the retention, repurposing





and restoration of the Grade II listed Assets – with an imaginatively designed connection to link the contemporary concourse with the listed Sion Chapel (left). The bus station is a modern addition to the historic town centre, enhancing passenger facilities, comfort, inclusion and user safety.

Integral to the brief were environmental considerations: Reduced carbon emissions through energy, water and waste consumption and boost environmental resilience through measures such as LED lighting, a fully green roof and heat pump technology.

The new bus station has additional operational bus and 15m coach stands, and layover bays, allowing more services to use the bus station, and a wider passenger concourse to allow for more bus passengers with increased seating capacity.

The panel were particularly impressed by the scheme’s strong environmental credentials and the integrated nature of the design An appropriate public facility for a sustainable form of transport, with capacity to grow.

The panel felt this was a worthy winner of our first environmental award. Alan Goodrum Chair of Halifax Civic Trust stated that, *“The WYCA should be commended on an imaginative design, high standard of workmanship, carbon & energy reduction initiatives, inclusive design approach, safe and welcoming asset to Halifax.”*



Presenting the award (left) to Colette Taylor from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority was the new Mayor Cllr. Steven Leigh MBE who was presented with a certificate and Halifax Civic Trust will present the WYCA with a green plaque at a future unveiling event at Halifax Bus Station in the presence of the Mayor.

Beech Hill Housing Development - Together Housing Highly Commended

Work commenced on the planning of Phase 2 in July 2020 when Calderdale MBC secured funding through West Yorkshire Combined Authority – Get Britain Building Fund for new windows, render, pitched roofs and boundary treatments. The time scales for delivery and spend were very tight with funds needing to be spent by the summer of 2020. This was a very complex scheme to put together. Although we focussed on phase 2 we also considered the site as a whole.

Before, left
After, Right



In the September of 2020 Calderdale with Together Housing (THG) support and Efficiency North had put out an expression of interest for design consultants to come forward to say if they

would like to be involved with the project. The contract was awarded to AHR, a consultancy based in Huddersfield.

Together Housing formed a partnership Calderdale, AHR and Equans the contractor, together they worked up a design which could be delivered in the timeframe, could be afforded and would meet the aspirations they had for the estate.

Throughout the design and the delivery of this project Together Housing worked closely with the residents, they had resident reps, a residents liaison officer was employed by THG to work with every resident, they did communication events (when allowed after Covid) - this included litter picking, and Ramadan/Eid events. Every resident was treated the same whether they were THG tenant, private owner or the tenant of a private landlord; for the project they were all residents of Beech Hill. The days the crane came to site they were out making sure that people did not park on the road so the crane could get onto site. It was a real community approach.



New Family Housing

The Awards Panel felt Together Housing should be commended on putting this very complex scheme together. The site is mixed tenure and needed a great deal of liaison with landlords, owner occupiers and tenants and had a strong community element.

In design terms it represented a huge challenge to integrate existing and new and balance the needs of an attractive environment with providing defensible space for residents. Some 70 houses were involved in phase 2 with the end result a great improvement with pitched roofs and greater energy efficiency. The scheme is a great improvement and provides attractive convenient energy efficient family housing in a safe environment close to the City Centre. The awards panel felt the scheme should be highly commended.

Alan Goodrum Chair of Halifax Civic Trust stated that, *"Together Housing should be Highly commended for their scheme and project to safely remove asbestos and 1960's tower blocks into social housing, regenerating the area. For purposeful creative engagement with local stakeholders and delivering much needed affordable housing with close proximity to Halifax."*



Pictured with the Mayor Cllr Steven Leigh MBE Together Housing: Chris Smith, Assistant Director of Property Investments. Patrick Berry, Executive Director of Property; Elaine Armitage, Assistant Director of People + Property Safety.

Patrick Berry, Executive Director of Property at Together Housing said: *"It's great to see Beech Hill has been recognised and awarded by the Halifax Civic Trust. Since the beginning, we've enjoyed working with our partners Calderdale Council and Esh Construction on this development. Collectively, we shared a goal to put residents at the forefront of this development and it's been a pleasure to see Beech Hill become a community of it's own where people have made the houses their homes."*

Mark Fennelly



GRESLEY PLAQUE AND INFORMATION BOARD UNVEILING

Sir Nigel Gresley, the Chief mechanical engineer to the London and North Eastern Railway, has a strong connection to Doncaster.



Among the locomotives the works produced were the Gresley Pacifics, including the world-famous Flying Scotsman, the first locomotive to achieve 100 mph and also run from London King's Cross to Edinburgh Waverley non-stop; and Mallard which achieved the top speed of 126 mph, a record which still stands today.

A project to commemorate Sir Nigel Gresley in Doncaster was originally suggested by the Doncaster and District Family History Society who approached the Doncaster Civic Trust for support. A committee was formed to include representatives of Doncaster and District Family History Society, Doncaster Civic Trust, Doncaster City Council, The Gresley Trust and LNER.

Steve Kimber (executive member) has been our representative at these meetings and volunteered Doncaster Civic Trust to take on the responsibility for the plaque, as the Trust, specifically our Treasurer Archie Sinclair, has considerable experience in this area. A large information board designed to sit below the plaque was funded by the Gresley Trust and other costs were covered by LNER. It was planned these would be installed outside Doncaster Railway Station. However, it still took 10 months of planning, meetings and discussions about everything from the colour of the boards to the exact wording.



Unveiling of the plaque and information board took place on 19th June 2025. On the day, representing Doncaster Civic Trust, were Tony Wrigglesworth (Acting Chairman), Archie Sinclair (DCT Treasurer) and Steve Kimber.

Approximately 60 people from the various other societies attended including the Mayor, Ros Jones.



Following speeches, Ros Jones, assisted by Matthew Delaney, the great grandson of Mallard driver Joe Duddington unveiled the plaque and information board to a round of applause.

A great day for Doncaster to celebrate a man whose genius contributed greatly to putting Doncaster literally on the map and a great day for Doncaster Civic Trust to become involved in a major heritage event.

Rowena Mellows

INSURANCE DEAL FOR CIVIC SOCIETIES..... ...FEEDBACK NEEDED

Several years ago, Civic Voice ran a competitive insurance deal for member civic societies. Sadly, this ended and was not replaced.

We are now in discussions with several brokers on setting up a new scheme, and need to understand what the likely take up would be before insurers can decide if it is worth them setting up a new offer.

It is recognised that until societies see the details of a package it is impossible to say for sure, and of course there is a wide range of activities undertaken by civic societies, but your best guess as to whether or not you would take up such a deal would be most helpful. **Without enough feedback, it is unlikely we will be able to negotiate a new deal.**

It is likely that the core of the scheme would include: –

- Employers liability (most schemes seem to include volunteer cover in this)
- Public liability (for meetings, events etc)
- Products liability (this appears to be standard, but could cover a freebie you gave out which injured someone! Some insurers include this in public)
- Professional indemnity
- Trustee and officers indemnity
- Personal accident

For societies running public buildings and venues like museums, you would obviously need additional cover to this main scheme.

If you are responsible for insurance in your local society, please complete the survey [here](#).





YORKSHIRE & HUMBER
Association of Civic Societies

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www.yhacs.org.uk

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

David Moss

Tel: 01757 268 418

Email:

damos43@yahoo.co.uk

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.

Date (TBC) - YHACS Autumn Meeting in York

NEXT YHACS MEETING

SATURDAY 26TH JULY 1:00 - 4:00 PM
IN ADDINGHAM, MEMORIAL HALL, MAIN ST., LS29 0PD

GUEST SPEAKERS

PROF. RICK BATTEBEE - 'WORRYING ABOUT WATER....'

SUE WRATHMELL - 'SKIPTON HIGH STREET'

CONTACT: [INFO@YHACS.ORG.UK](mailto:info@yhacs.org.uk)

Executive Officers, Committee Members and Portfolios

- **Chair**, Margaret Hicks-Clarke (Civic Pride & Engagement)
margarethicksclarke@gmail.com 07841802030
- **Vice Chairman** Alan Goodrum
alangoodrum.hct@gmail.com
- **Treasurer**, Jane Lee
janeleewomack67@gmail.com
- **Secretary**, Helen Kidman (Planning)
helen.kidman3@btinternet.com 01943 609154
- **Exec Committee Member**, David Moss (Newsletter and Communications)
damos43@yahoo.co.uk 01757 268418
- **Exec Committee Member**, Paul Cartwright
chairman@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk 01977 708658
- **Exec Committee Member**, Martin Hamilton (Housing)
Martin.Hamilton@leedscivictrust.org.uk
- **Exec Committee Member**, Alan Nicholson
adnicmarklew@aol.com
- **Exec Committee Member**, John Clarke
johnclarkeatpa@gmail.com
- **Exec Committee Member**, Ben Cowell
bencowell1985@gmail.com
- **Exec Committee Member**, Simon Green
simgreen@gmail.com
- **Exec Committee Member**, Richard Taylor
rict.ripon@btinternet.com
- **President**, Kevin Trickett
kevintrickett@msn.com 01924 361180