

# Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies



## 2025 Annual Report and Accounts

Registered Charity No: 1112290

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



## Our Vision

**YHACS aims to be 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 in not only the protection of local heritage but also the promotion of sustainable economic development and urban renaissance. We aspire to being a regional force with which to be reckoned.**

## Our Mission

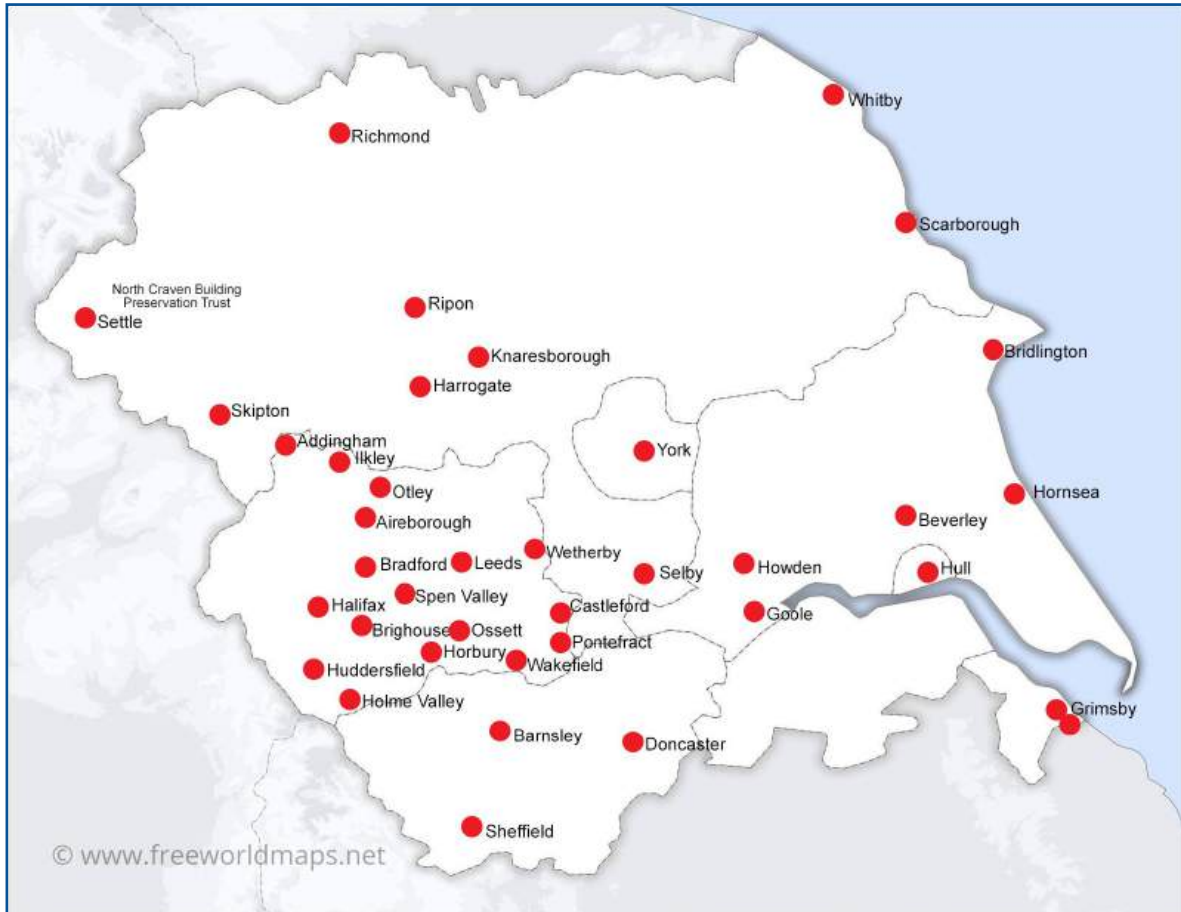
YHACS is the liaison point between local civic societies in the area as well as a regional focal point and resource for these societies.

Through the medium of our quarterly meetings, a regular newsletter, occasional campaigns and a regular exchange of ideas with member societies and other key local, regional and national contacts in the public, private and non-profit sectors, YHACS intends to achieve the promotion of the civic society movement in our region.

Ultimately, YHACS will be the regional force driving for a society in which the people of Yorkshire and Humber (and sometimes beyond) are connected with public policymaking and economic development in a way that will allow them to have a significant voice in the shaping of their cities, towns and rural communities.

**Registered Charity No: 1112290**

# Our Members



**Addingham Civic Society**

**Aireborough Civic Society**

**Barnsley Civic Trust**

**Beverley & District Civic Society**

**Bradford Civic Society**

**Brighouse Civic Trust**

**Castleford Civic Society**

**Doncaster Civic Trust**

**Goole Civic Society**

**Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust**

**Grimsby Cleethorpes & District Civic Society**

**Halifax Civic Trust**

**Harrogate Civic Society**

**Holme Valley Civic Society**

**Horbury Civic Society**

**Hornsea and District Civic Society**

**Howden Civic Society**

**Huddersfield Civic Society**

**Hull Civic Society**

**Ilkley Civic Society**

**Knaresborough Civic Society**

**Leeds Civic Trust**

**North Craven Building Preservation Trust**

**Ossett Civic Trust**

**Pontefract Civic Society**

**Richmond & District Civic Society**

**Ripon Civic Society**

**Scarborough & District Civic Society**

**Selby Civic Society**

**Sheffield Civic Trust**

**Skipton in Craven Civic Society**

**Spennings Valley Civic Society**

**Wakefield Civic Society**

**Wetherby Civic Society**

**Whitby Civic Society**

**York Civic Trust**

**Other Members:** Action for Yorkshire Transport; The Yorkshire Society; seven individual members.

# Our Places



# Chair's Report

2025 has been a year defined by challenge, change and opportunity. We have submitted an ambitious funding bid to help secure the future capacity and sustainability of YHACS and its member societies, taken our first steps into Artificial Intelligence and supported the national civic charity Civic Voice as it seeks to find a new way forward.

We have held four member meetings - in Harrogate, Hull, Addingham and York - and produced four informative and entertaining newsletters reflecting the activities and achievements of societies across our region. Thank you to our Editor David Moss, who pulls it all together.

In addition, I've visited member societies and events all over the YHACS region, as well as responding to scores of email queries and requests for help.

We conducted an in-depth survey of our membership in support of our funding application and I was heartened by just how strongly our members value YHACS - with one society capturing it perfectly when they told us we are "stronger together than apart".



Margaret Hicks-Clarke, Chair of YHACS.

## Annual General Meeting, Harrogate, January 2025



Richard Taylor

The year began with the YHACS agm and members' meeting at the Old Swan Hotel in Harrogate on 25<sup>th</sup> January, with 46 attendees representing more than 20 societies.

Richard Taylor was elected as a new YHACS trustee. Richard is Co-Chair of Ripon Civic Society and worked professionally in historic environment management for over 30 years. He served as Ripon Project Officer for the former Civic Trust. All serving trustees were re-elected, although George Eglise stepped down from the board later in the year. Welcome Richard and thank you to George for his service.



Away from the business the agm provided an opportunity for YHACS committee members and friends to socialise.

## Award-winning societies

At the agm we presented two awards for work carried out in 2024. The *Peter Spawforth/YHACS Award* for 2024 was won by Goole Civic Society for its Salt and Pepper Pot project to raise funds and awareness of Goole's Bicentenary in 2026.

The society commissioned a local potter to create replicas of town's 'Salt and Pepper Pot' water towers, with the first 200 selling out in 48 hours.

The society's Secretary Rachel Walker and Treasurer Stephen Walker are pictured receiving the Trophy and £200 cheque from YHACS Honorary President Kevin Trickett MBE.



Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Civic Society took second place for reclaiming, repairing and reinstating the Harold Gosney Family Group statue, a notable piece of public art in Immingham. Third place went to Pontefract Civic Society for its work on engaging different communities in a wide variety of events, forums and activities over the year.

We also awarded the *Richard Ward Memorial Prize*, in memory of a former YHACS trustee. This prize focuses on engagement with young people aged 18-30. It was awarded to Scarborough and District Civic Society for its partnership with a PhD student from York University on a Blue Plaque project to commemorate the women's suffrage movement in Scarborough. This was befitting as Richard Ward was a former trustee of the society.



## Yorkshire Society Annual Awards Dinner, Leeds



On 7th March I represented YHACS at the Yorkshire Society's annual awards dinner at the Queen's Hotel in Leeds.

Leeds-born chef Marco Pierre White received a Lifetime Achievement Award and other award winners included sports commentator Chris Kamara MBE and former Spice Girl Melanie Brown MBE.

Thank you to the Yorkshire Society, a reciprocal member of YHACS, for staging this star-studded occasion "recognising those who had an impact upon Yorkshire and its people, demonstrating their affection for, and real commitment to, the region".

## York and North Yorkshire Civic Societies' Workshop

On 26<sup>th</sup> March, I attended a Civic Workshop for York and North Yorkshire civic societies in collaboration with the University of York. The event, at the King's Manor at York University, was organised by new YHACS trustee Richard Taylor, who is Co-Chair of Ripon Civic Society, and the Chief Executive of York Civic Trust, Andrew Morrison. It provided a great chance to discuss issues with other North Yorkshire societies and



was attended by representatives from York, Ripon, Harrogate, Knaresborough, Scarborough, Whitby, Skipton and Richmond.

Prof Kate Giles, an expert in historic buildings from the Department of Archaeology at York University, explained about the National Civic Impact Accelerator (NCIA) programme, which brings together universities and civic partners. She opened our eyes to the way universities are being required by the Government to help create civic strategies and how civic societies could fit into this process.

## Spring Quarterly Members' Meeting, Hull

Our Spring Quarterly Meeting was held in Hull on 26th April, hosted by Hull Civic Society.

On the Friday night before the meeting a group of 20 gathered for a meal in the iconic Minerva pub at the top of the Marina overlooking the Humber Estuary. 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 bid.



Members gather for a meal and a drink at Hull's historic Minerva pub.



Enjoying a guided walk around the historic port city.



## Yorkshire Heritage Summit, Skipton

On May 13th, YHACS had a stall at the fourth Yorkshire Heritage Summit in Skipton, organised by the Yorkshire Society, a reciprocal member of YHACS. It was held at the refurbished old Town Hall in the High Street - a great example of a heritage building repurposed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

A number of our member societies were also there, including Pontefract, Skipton, Beverley, Addingham and Richmond, as well as other heritage groups. Members of Skipton Society hosted walks around the historic town.



## York Planning Club at 10



On 13th June, I was invited to a celebration the 10th anniversary of the York Planning Club.

This unique collaboration between York Civic Trust and the University of York provides students with real-world planning experience while giving the Trust the equivalent capacity of five full-time conservation staff members.

Former "Clubbers" are now working all over the world, with 92 of them employed within the Yorkshire and Humber region.

## Summer Quarterly Members' Meeting, Addingham

Addingham Civic Society welcomed us to their beautiful Wharfedale village for the Summer Members' Meeting on 26th July.

The previous night 30 of us enjoyed a meal at The Fleece pub and on Saturday morning members were offered a choice of two walks around the village - one



featuring Blue Plaques and the other focusing on management of green spaces.

Addingham provided a very generous buffet lunch before the main meeting began.

More than 50 representatives enjoyed presentations from Addingham Civic Society's Prof Rick Battarbee on environmental partnerships and Sue Wrathmell from Skipton Civic Society on mapping building history.



## Autumn Quarterly Members' Meeting, York



Our Autumn Meeting on 1st November was organised by York Civic Trust, whose Chief Executive Andrew Morrison gave us an insight into the early days and development of York Civic Trust over the last 80 years and also a glimpse into the future.

Members also had chance to debate the future of Civic Voice with CV trustees Martin Hamilton and Barry Goodchild.

In the morning before the meeting Andrew Morrison led members on a fascinating tour of the Snickelways of York, used by locals for centuries as shortcuts across the city.



## Heritage Lottery Fund Application



The YHACS executive committee worked throughout the year to build a compelling application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to help build the capacity and sustainability of the civic movement in Yorkshire and the Humber.

We began the year with an in-depth survey of our member societies. We asked them to address some searching questions. How is your civic society doing? Are you attracting enough volunteers? Have you some great examples of conserving heritage or perhaps protecting the environment?

Have you managed to broaden the range of participants? What projects have you been prevented from doing through lack of capacity – people or financially? What would make your organisation more sustainable?

We sent questionnaires to all our member societies and added it as a download to our website. Twenty-three societies responded in full with others giving feedback at our quarterly meetings and by email.

Finally, at the end of November, we submitted our application for £112,000 entitled ‘*Sustaining Heritage Champions*’.

Whatever the outcome, the process has provided us with a valuable insight into the challenges and opportunities facing our member societies and the state of the civic movement in our region. We will use this information to inform the YHACS strategy for 2026 and beyond.

## Innovation: Embracing Generative AI

Through information gathered from our survey we realised that many societies were suffering from lack of capacity and people to take on roles such as secretary.

Several of us started to experiment with using Generative AI for tasks such as taking meeting notes, generating policies, writing project briefs, media and communications, and designing heritage literature, video and audio.

This led to the formation of an AI Working Group, which will share some of its findings at a workshop preceding the 2026 agm.

## Member Societies

Throughout the year I have visited several member civic societies. Fellow YHACS trustee John Clarke and I offered support at an open meeting of Hornsea Civic Society in February which was seeking to attract new members and trustees following the retirement of the Chair and other key committee members.

Thanks to the efforts of acting chair Jenny Wright, the meeting attracted 40 attendees and it resulted in the successful recruitment of a new committee and a full programme of events, including participation in Heritage Open Days.

In March I was invited to a Ripon Civic Society meeting for a presentation by James Farrar, Chief Executive of the new York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. Mr Farrar, who works with the Mayor, David Skaith, spoke at length about his vision and how the new authority would operate.



In June I gave a talk to Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Civic Society.

A record number of our societies engaged with Heritage Open Days in September, organising hundreds of events that attracted locals and visitors to explore our region's rich heritage.



## Civic Voice



Civic Voice began the year on a positive note, with new Co-Chairs and a new Chief Executive, Rob Hattersley. We were delighted that Rob agreed to join us for our Spring Meeting in Hull, where he took us through his ideas for the future, which we received enthusiastically.

The national landscape shifted dramatically in August when Rob's resignation triggered a period of uncertainty over organisation's future.

Throughout the autumn and winter YHACS has supported Civic Voice in its efforts to carve out a new sustainable future. We value Civic Voice as a respected voice that promotes and advocates for the civic movement nationally. We shall continue to support the trustees as they rebuild in 2026.

## Behind the scenes

The YHACS Executive Committee works hard all year to help and support our member societies and organise our quarterly meetings. We have held four regular online meetings of the Executive Committee in 2025, plus an additional one to discuss our response to the Civic Voice options paper, which was attended by Civic Voice Co Chair Robert Osborne.

Trustee Paul Cartwright represented YHACS at the Civic Voice Annual General Meeting in Birmingham on 9th November.

A small working group of the Executive has met regularly online to hone our application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. An AI working group has met three times online.

Four editions of our newsletter, *Society Insight*, have been published. It is edited by David Moss, with articles are submitted from member societies across the region. I have also issued bulletins and regular email communications, keeping the membership up to date.

## Finances

YHACS finances remain strong, as displayed on the following pages. We have no liabilities and our member societies continue to support us with their annual subscriptions and by hosting quarterly members' meetings. Holding our Executive Committee meetings virtually helps to reduce both our costs and carbon footprint.

Thanks go to members of the Committee, who largely have waived their expenses. We have kept spending to a minimum during the year to ensure we have a pot of working capital to provide cashflow should we be successful in our National Lottery Heritage Fund bid.

We also have £1,800 remaining of the Richard Ward legacy, which was bequeathed to fund an annual memorial prize of £200 to encourage societies to engage with younger people. We paused this award in 2025 but will restart in 2026 after a review of assessment criteria.

We still hold £385.40 on behalf of the former Market Weighton Civic Society. The trustees have agreed to use this on leaflets about Hilda Lyon, commemorated with a Blue Plaque in the town.

**Thank you,**  
**Margaret Hicks-Clarke, Chair**

# Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet

## Income and Expenditure Account

	2024	2025
	£	£
<b>Income</b>		
Subscriptions	1,725.00	1,760.00
Sundry donations	100.00	144.40
AGM refreshments	67.90	75.00
Income from events	2,295.00	0.00
	<b><u>£4,187.90</u></b>	<b><u>£1,979.40</u></b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Sundries	0	59.49
Meeting expenses (incl 2026 agm)	625.00	1,235.00
Travel	125.40	124.05
Insurance	181.20	191.20
Annual Awards	350.00	550.00
- prizes		
- engraving & certificates	51.38	0.00
Yorkshire Society Donation	25.00	0.00
Event Costs -	2,340.00	0.00
Website	13.19	13.19
Awayday refreshments	109.27	0.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b><u>£3,820.45</u></b>	<b><u>£2,172.93</u></b>
<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b><u>£367.45</u></b>	<b><u>- £193.53</u></b>

## Balance Sheet

	31.12.24	31.12.25
	£	£
Balance of Accumulated Fund brought forward	10,194.98	10,562.43
Surplus/Deficit for year	367.45	- <u>£193.53</u>
<b><u>YHACS funds:</u></b>	<b><u>£10,562.43</u></b>	<b><u>£10,368.90</u></b>
<b>Additional funds:</b>		
Monies held for the former Market Weighton Civic Society	385.40	385.40
	<b><u>£10,947.83</u></b>	<b><u>£10,754.30</u></b>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
Cash with Co-operative Bank	10,947.83	10,754.30
	<b><u>£10,947.83</u></b>	<b><u>£10,754.30</u></b>

*Accounts prepared by Jane Lee, Treasurer, and agreed by Alan Goodrum, Deputy Chair*

### Reserves Policy:

In 2016, the YHACS committee agreed to hold reserves of £2,000. This money is a notional sum and represents the minimum level of unrestricted funds that the committee will endeavor to maintain in our accounts at all times. We have chosen this figure because it is equivalent to one year's funding and, should there ever be a sudden and unforeseen drop in our income, it would allow us to continue to operate and cover all potential liabilities for one year until such time as we had restored our income or made the decision to wind up the charity's affairs. Having a reserves policy does not mean that we will never allow our funds to drop below £2,000 but, in the event of that happening, the committee would make it a priority to raise sufficient income to bring the level of reserves back to the target amount.

This policy will be kept under annual review by the committee.



# Who We Are

**The Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS) is a registered charity (no. 1112290) and a membership organisation for civic and amenity societies around the Yorkshire and Humber region.**

We aim to be a distinctive voice for the civic society movement in the region and seek to strengthen and develop the movement by offering our members advice, support and networking opportunities. We also campaign on their behalf on matters of mutual concern and promote awareness of the work civic societies do through our website, in our quarterly newsletter and other publications, and through the issue of occasional press releases.

Civic societies are independent, grassroots groups of citizens who seek to enhance the quality of life in their communities. Mostly run by volunteers, civic societies have a particular focus on improving the public realm and built environment through helping to preserve the best of our built heritage while campaigning for the highest standards of architecture, design and town planning. They often act as public watchdogs or mediators between local authority planning officials, developers and the public on developments that impact on the quality of life for local people.

Civic societies can also be called upon to act as custodians of local history and heritage. As a result, they make an excellent springboard for fostering a sense of civic pride and community cohesion. Many societies celebrate the heritage of their locality through publishing literature, organising walks, talks and events and erecting commemorative plaques.

YHACS encourages member societies to see themselves as part of a wider movement and to share ideas and experiences. YHACS has been instrumental in establishing civic societies in Barnsley, Bradford and Sheffield and, in 2015, stepped in to prevent the closure of Horbury Civic Society.

While we still regard the protection of our built heritage as a key aim, we recognise that new development can be a necessary step in delivering vibrancy and prosperity in our communities. Where civic societies might once have viewed development sceptically, the civic society movement in our region looks to present development as an opportunity to create the heritage of tomorrow through good design.

At YHACS, we are driven by a desire to reconcile the past, present and future of our townscapes with a vision developed by communities in their local civic societies.

YHACS is a member of Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement in England, and collaborates with others, such as Historic England, on matters concerning the conservation and preservation of our built heritage.

## Our aims

Our aims are to promote and encourage:

- a high standard of architecture, building, and town and country planning;
- the preservation of beauty or amenity in cities, towns and villages or the countryside, and of land, buildings and features of beauty or interest in such cities, towns and villages or countryside;
- a sense of civic pride among members of the general public by the provision of support and advice to civic societies in the Yorkshire and Humber area.

## Membership

Membership of YHACS is open to any civic or amenity society that has aims in sympathy with our own. Membership is subject to an annual subscription (held again at £50 in 2025), payable each January. In 2018, the YHACS Committee agreed to open membership to individuals sympathetic to our aims for which the annual fee is £10. We also welcome and encourage donations from societies and individuals who can afford to make an additional payment.

## Statement of Public Benefit

The Charity Commission requires charities to provide a statement of public benefit. Having taken account of the guidance produced by the Charity Commission, the YHACS trustees (ie the Executive Committee) have prepared the following statement:

***Our vision is to enhance the quality of life for all citizens in the region by engaging people not only in the protection of local heritage but also in the promotion of sustainable economic development and urban renaissance. Through our campaigns and networking and through the provision of advice and support to civic and amenity societies, YHACS aims to help make Yorkshire and Humber a better place in which to live, work or relax. This is for the overall benefit of the general public, whether or not they are members of any particular civic society and whether they be residents or visitors to the area.***

## Governance

As an unincorporated registered charity, YHACS is managed by an Executive Committee of volunteer trustees in accordance with our written constitution, dated 24th September 2005 and amended in January 2008 and again in January 2017. The Constitution provides that the charity shall be managed and administered by a committee comprising Officers and other members duly elected at the Annual General Meeting held in January each year. Such persons are also the Trustees of the charity.

In addition to the Executive Committee, YHACS also has an elected President, whose role is honorary. The President is consulted for advice and is invited to attend meetings of the Committee to take part in discussion but does not vote.

YHACS encourages applications from anyone wishing to join the Committee and who can help us to run the association.

The officers and committee who held office during 2025 were as follows:

**Honorary President:** Kevin Trickett MBE

**Chair:** Margaret Hicks–Clarke

**Secretary:** Helen Kidman

**Vice Chair:** Alan Goodrum

**Treasurer:** Jane Lee

### **Executive Committee Members:**

Paul Cartwright

John Clarke

Ben Cowell

Simon Green

Martin Hamilton

David Moss

Alan Nicholson

Richard Taylor

Published by the

# Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies

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*Registered Charity No: 111229*