RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2020

"R" is an interesting letter. At the moment, significantly, it defines the reproduction number of Covid-19 virus cases. Obviously, it capitalises the name of our City, and it makes for charming alliteration, our own *Ripon ReViewed* being a prime example.

Now we have the latest progress of the Cathedral's *Ripon Renewed* project. The proposals are on show to the public in the Cathedral throughout September making the case for the additional space that is so sorely needed and where and how it can be realised. Do go and visit if you are able and let me know what you think. This is an important occasion for the Society's voice to be heard.

I do try not to weigh down this newsletter with Planning concerns. I'm sure we can agree that Clotherholme warrants our attention and there is a little more on this in the following item.

Coincidentally this comes at a time when the Government has published proposals to speed up and simplify what, under successive governments, has become an exhaustive and, for some, a daunting regulatory process. The White Paper *Planning for the Future* (when did we ever plan for the past?) can be read at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907647/MHCLG-Planning-Consultation.pdf

And there are several changes being made to current Planning arrangements generally removing the need for planning permission for change of use and redevelopment in town centres and house extensions. I wonder what impact this will have on Ripon, and how far it does stimulate worthwhile investment.

I trust there's something of interest here for you. If you would like other topics, do tell me.

Christopher Hughes

Clotherholme - next steps

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (IDO), with Homes England, is seeking outline planning permission for the redevelopment of Ripon Barracks, current home to 21 and 38 Engineers. Members should by now have received information by letter and email on where to view the application online. The link to the application is https://uniformonline.harrogate.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=QEOYO5HY0B000

Looking through the documents there are at least the following parts to interest us:

- planning statement
- planning summary
- environmental impact statement
- transport assessment / travel plan
- lots of supporting information including various assessments, including character, open space, utilities
- biodiversity net gain assessment
- planning obligations heads of terms
- design and access statement
- design guide
- existing details
- proposed details (including road junctions)
- tree survey
- statement of community involvement

Please share your thoughts and concerns to help us produce the Society's response by email to info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk or writing to the Society c/o Ripon Workhouse, Allhallowgate, Ripon HG4 1LE by 25 September, please..

What we need to do is assess how far the proposals meet the expectations made in the Ripon Neighbourhood Plan on design, jobs, movement, impact on Ripon's environment, green, blue and social infrastructure, movement, the city centre and of course the housing itself.

We have until early October to make our representations.

Bondgate Green - a Ripon Regeneration Area

We read about redevelopment of Ripon Barracks elsewhere in this newsletter. It's worth remembering that Clotherholme, as the barracks is called in the Ripon Neighbourhood Plan, is one of three regeneration areas. Whilst the largest by far, the two others in the Plan, Bondgate Green and Ure Bank, should not be overlooked.

What these areas have in common is the likelihood that, along with the city centre, they could be seeing changes more than other parts of Ripon. The Plan foresaw that there would be advantages by showing that these areas deserved to be treated comprehensively. This would encourage good quality design throughout. It would also seek wider enhancement of public realm and neglected buildings.

Let's look at what's happened recently in Bondgate Green. When the Plan was being written the area included several derelict sites and vacant premises, notably the large Wolseley warehouse. Although there had been successful projects in the past, the most impressive of which were restoration of the canal and riverside environmental improvements, neglect was returning.

Remarkably in 2020, the area is receiving investment. A new owner and occupation of the Wolseley warehousing for the Farmison meat company and expansion of Ripon Interiors has brought new business to the area. The *Water Rat* has rebuilt its riverside restaurant and the *Navigation* has had a make-over. Two new housing projects are being completed. New owners have renovated the former mill-owner's house for their private occupation. The footbridge at the ford has been replaced.









The question could be asked if the Plan's regeneration area had anything to do with these decisions. At one level perhaps not. It's no secret that the Wolseley site was seen as a good location for a new 3* hotel. It was seen also as having potential for riverside housing. However, growth of two local companies is to be welcomed, especially with the substantial investment in the property providing a more positive entrance to the city. Overall, the Plan's design aspirations have been recognised.

Is anything left to be done? Perhaps the riverside industrial elevation could be improved. The principal building at the canal basin still deserves better use. The riverside footpath in places remains neglected. Visitors may search for a Bondgate green without success. There is surely scope for better public realm at the road junction.

So perhaps the role of the regeneration area is to acknowledge success when deserved and to keep encouraging change and enhancement that will finish the job.

We'll take a look at Ure Bank regeneration area soon.





Movement, for whom?

"Sustainable transport" may read as just another of those clichés spoken between experts but without having a clear popular understanding. It's something that will be heard more frequently as the Clotherholme development proposals advance. As a term it appeared around two decades or so ago with the objective of addressing congestion and road safety by seeking alternatives to use of the private car. These are travel by walking, cycling and public transport.

The focus on these by Homes England for Clotherholme has drawn criticism. There is disbelief that the dispersed employment of Ripon residents can be met other than by use of the private car. Furthermore, there appears to be no confidence that travel from surrounding villages and the wider rural hinterland with and through Ripon can be by any realistic means other than private vehicles.These arguments will be well rehearsed by objectors.

Advice to Ripon City Council was critical of Homes England's approach without providing evidence to refute its transport assessment. It was clear that this was weak on sustainable transport and recommended that Ripon deserved a comprehensive movement study which should pay particular attention to the city centre and its public realm owing to the harmful impacts of vehicular traffic.

Whether or not this advice bears fruit remains to be seen but it might be timely to find out the strength of the Society's feelings about traffic. How might we find out?









Meanwhile some related topical items.

Firstly, the Highway Code is being reviewed. It's proposed that *sustainable transport* will be embedded through a hierarchy of road users. Top would be walkers, then cyclists, and then vehicles. Give way. We've been warned.

Secondly, cycling. I should imagine that this brings out a range of opinion from Society members. However it's important movement and deserves support for better provision.

Ripon Neighbourhood Plan supports a cycling strategy for the city. This should identify possible on-road and off-road routes. A key idea is how to link Studley Royal with Newby Hall. This recreational route would attract visitors as well as providing local health opportunities. Linking key community facilities, secondary schools, employment areas and the city centre would make the city more generally accessible.

Funds for cycling initiatives are hard to come by when Ripon is competing with larger towns where there is more of a focus on sustainable transport. Some progress is being made through developer contributions from s106 Planning Agreements but more needs to done. An imperative is to deliver projects that can demonstrate benefits from cycling. Reports run the risk gathering dust on shelves. Interested parties are actively encouraging Harrogate Borough Council to host a public consultation - with help from Ripon Together - to gather further ideas.

Finally, Government is placing a deadline on claiming public rights of way. Help is needed to research the many miles of lost public rights of way in and around Ripon. The Ramblers are actively involved - also with help from Ripon Together - in identifying these lost ways. Help is needed in particularly by researching historic archives, such as 1910 Finance Act, enclosure and tithes records, which is required when submitting applications to NYCC. Are Ripon Civic Society members interested in this? Please let me know.

Reorganisation and Devolution

Future local government arrangements in North Yorkshire and York

The pages of this newsletter are not the place for political comment. But the shape of government in North Yorkshire is a live topic and one that does have relevance for the Society.

Our constitution sets out our purposes and powers, key in which is *to act as a co-ordinating body and to co-operate with the local authorities, planning committees, and all other statutory authorities, voluntary organisations, charities and persons having aims similar to those of the Society.*

We seek to do this in consultation with the regulatory bodies, currently and principally the district council. We then have the county council in its various roles and also Ripon City Council.

Government is seeking to complete unitary local government throughout Yorkshire. This means fewer councils, perhaps just one. How would this affect public access to services? Would a single unitary council be too remote? Would there be fewer councillors to represent residents, businesses and local organisations? This is a remote rural area in parts, could physical access be satisfactorily replaced by digital communication? Are resources spread too thinly across current arrangements? Would specialist teams be more effective if they operated at a unitary level?

What role would there be for parish councils? Might they be too remote from the unitary tier? Would they have the ambition and the capacity to carry out the functions that they have the right to do at the moment? Would they want to do more? There are 99 parish councils in North Yorkshire with more than 1,000 residents, 16 with more than 5,000 and 5 with more than 10,000 including Ripon. Could this be the time for Harrogate and Scarborough towns to have an explicit local role, not just be the focus of their district, especially fo the district has been subsumed into a bigger unitary council?

The Society will have to liaise with whatever arrangements are put in place, or retained. Combined Authorities are the current way to secure some devolution from central government. How interested should this Society be? Please share your thoughts.

Where's the Cabmen's Shelter?

You will have noticed that the shelter has not been gracing the Market Place for some time. This is because it is away for repair and repainting.
Ripon City Council recognised their responsibility for the listed shelter and set about assessing what needed to be done to return it to good condition. This turned out to be more than a simple coat of paint. ….*more on condition*
But as the shelter is a listed building the Council, in 2017, checked with Harrogate Borough Council what could be needed by way of an application. An application was indeed required, the content of which took many months to resolve before it was accepted in 2018. The principal problem was whether the shelter could be removed to the contractor's workshop or the work would have to be done in situ. At this point the Conservation Officer left and the then contractor withdrew.

It was only in the middle of 2019 following the arrival of a replacement Conservation Officer that agreement was reached that the shelter could be removed by the contractor. Even this required a road closure. Once in the workshop a full assessment of its condition was completed and the final discharge of the listed building consent conditions fulfilled.

All along the project has been managed by the City Council's Clerk. It's been a pleasure to assist her at various stages. The latest news is that the final paint scheme is agreed and we now await return of the Cabmen's Shelter to its rightful and prominent position to be appreciated by Ripon residents and visitors alike.

Programme update

Our next meeting will be on the earlier date of **Thursday 1st October** at 7.30 pm when Richard Taylor will present online by Zoom his illustrated talk

In the footsteps of the Marquess

Details on how to join this event will follow shortly.
Our following meeting on 5th November will be ***"How do we Build Beautiful"*** and we'll hold our AGM on 3rd December, hopefully with some seasonal entertainment.