YORKSHIRE & HUMBER ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES

YHACS

Member of CIVIC VOICE talking civic sense

Annual Report And Accounts 2021

YHACS Member Societies in 2021

1. Addingham Civic Society
2. Aireborough Civic Society
3. Barnsley Civic Trust
4. Beverley & District Civic Society
5. Bradford Civic Society
6. Brighouse Civic Trust
7. Castleford Heritage Trust
8. Doncaster Civic Trust
9. Dronfield Civic Society
10. Goole Civic Society
11. Great Grimsby Ice Factory Trust
12. Grimsby Cleethorpes & District Civic Society
13. Halifax Civic Trust
14. Harrogate Civic Society
15. Horbury Civic Society
16. Hornsea and District Civic Society
17. Horsforth Civic Society
18. Howden Civic Society
19. Huddersfield Civic Society
20. Hull Civic Society
21. Ilkley Civic Society
22. Knaresborough Civic Society
23. Leeds Civic Trust
24. Market Weighton Civic Society
25. The Oulton Society
26. Ossett Civic Trust
27. Pontefract Civic Society
28. Richmond & District Civic Society
29. Ripon Civic Society
30. Saddleworth Civic Trust
31. Scarborough & District Civic Society
32. Selby Civic Society
33. Sheffield Civic Trust
34. Skipton in Craven Civic Society
35. Spen Valley Civic Society
36. Thorne & District Civic Society
37. Wakefield Civic Society
38. Wetherby Civic Society
39. Whitby Civic Society
40. York Civic Trust

Cover photograph of setts by Kevin Trickett

Chair's Report

A Virtual Existence....

Virtual: (adj.) existing or occurring on computers or on the Internet

The word 'virtual' has a number of meanings, of course – the one given above is obviously a rather modern one. An earlier definition, one which I found on the internet using my computer, suggests that, back in the 14th Century, the word meant 'influencing by physical virtues or capabilities, effective with respect to inherent natural qualities'. The word is from the same etymological route as 'virtue' – meaning 'excellence' amongst other things.

However you define 'virtual', it's a word that has been used with increasing frequency over the last two years as organisations have tried to keep things going on-line with little or no scope for the physical, face-to-face meetings and events of yore. YHACS, like many others, has existed almost entirely on-line since lockdown was first declared in March 2020.

A virtual existence is not without its problems: it takes time to organise an on-line event and technical glitches can create havoc – but there are huge advantages. Using the internet and video conferencing removes the geographical constraints – organisations can operate across county and even nation borders with ease, opening up the potential for larger audiences. There is also a huge cost and time saving when travel is removed from the equation. It is far more convenient as an organiser to run an event from my dining table than it is to travel umpteen miles and perhaps have to stay overnight to make sure I'm in the right place at the right time.

It's not all sunshine and roses though: people do miss the physical contact of meeting others in person and, for our YHACS events specifically, they miss the opportunity to explore towns and cities across the region. This presents a dilemma for us in the future. Assuming (and assume we must) that a return to normality is possible, do we revert to our usual pattern of operation – four meetings a year held at venues across the region



Kevin Trickett MBE

It's never too late to become what you might have been.

Anon

Straight roads do not make skilful drivers.

Paulo Coelho

for members interspersed with face-to-face meetings of the committee – or do we stick with our new way of working – everything done on Zoom? Perhaps a hybrid solution will be the way forward – some events held on-line and some face to face? This is a quandary with which we are still struggling – not made any easier by the ongoing uncertainty over the impact of the Omicron variant.

This isn't something which just affects YHACS; it's an ongoing problem for our member societies as well. At what point do we switch back to physical events – and, if and when we do, what happens t o the following we might have built up from people who can only follow us on-line, perhaps because of disability, lack of transport or because they don't live locally? (I doubt the audience members in Australia, Canada and the US who have tuned in for Wakefield Civic Society events on Zoom will be turning up in person for our events any time soon!) Recording of live events, or broadcasting them live as they happen, is possible of course, but would take a potentially costly upgrade to our IT inventory.

For now, though, we are where we are. The YHACS AGM will be on-line for the second year running. Beyond that, things are still open for discussion. I'll keep you posted.

2021 in focus

We started 2021 as we ended 2020 – on-line. Our AGM, held on 30th January 2021 via Zoom attracted around 75 people, which was a really good result – one of the biggest audiences we've had and that's not counting the 30 or so who watched the recording (another benefit of video conferencing!).

As this was the first time we had run an AGM on-line, it had a certain experimental feeling but it worked well – we did everything that was necessary and quite a bit more besides. Including a presentation about the Yorkshire Society by their Deputy Chair, Geoff Walsh.

For our spring meeting, held on 24th April 2021, we teamed up with Beverley Civic Society for another Zoom event. Over 50 people 'attended' and heard a fascinating presentation on housing developments given by Henry Wootton, Senior Architect at Mikhail Riches.

In the summer, we were 'off' to Leeds (another Zoom meeting) on 17th July 2021. Audience numbers dropped off somewhat with just 45 people in attendance (although nearly 60 people have since watched the recording on Vimeo). Our guest speaker was Joe Barratt of the national High Street Task Force who looked at ways of reinvigorating our town and city centres through a focus on the high street.

Our final meeting of 2021 saw us working with Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Civic Society. This time, we had three guest speakers: Dawn Brown of Engie, Gail Graham of Heritage Lincolnshire, and Tom Kitchen of Lincolnshire Heritage Student Forum. The theme was heritage and how civic societies can work in partnership with others to achieve mutually desired outcomes. Again, 45 people tuned in for the meeting with 40 watching the recording.

As can be seen from the above, we have covered some ground over the year in terms of topics, if not in terms of actual mileage. In addition to the key guest speakers, each of our meetings has also included updates on Civic Voice activity, reports from individual societies and, of course, my own overview of whatever is topical at the time. I think that our quarterly events, whether held on-line or in person, offer great opportunities for the movement in our region to hear good speakers and to share information on a wide range of subjects that are very pertinent to the interests of our members.

Our Newsletter – Society Insight

Our quarterly meetings have been accompanied by our quarterly newsletters, put together for us by our editor, David Moss. Over the years, and since we moved away from printed editions, these have grown in pagination – it's not uncommon now to reach 20 or more pages. We couldn't do this without articles, of course, and many of those articles come from our members. Long may that continue. Our thanks to David and to all our contributors.

Civic Voice Regional Forum

The Forum continues to be chaired by Helen Kidman in her capacity of Civic Voice Trustee. To enable Helen to remain objective and impartial, YHACS committee member Paul Cartwright represents us and gives a report on our activities to colleagues on the Forum.

Civic Voice

YHACS is a member of and works in partnership with Civic Voice. There are many benefits for the movement in having a national body that can campaign and lobby on our behalf – they are much better placed to speak to government and Civil Service departments than are individual member societies. As ever, we maintain our position that all societies should be members of Civic Voice!

Our Area of Benefit

The principle focus of YHACS will always be Yorkshire and the Humber – as a registered charity, that is our 'area of benefit'. What exactly we mean by Yorkshire and the Humber remains something of a moot point, however. Over the years, borders have shifted, usually on the whim of national government, which means the definition has changed over time and we mustn't forget that the very existence of what we today recognise as counties is no more than an

Managing Market Weighton Civic Society

Although the YHACS committee has continued to ensure that things tick over at Market Weighton Civic Society, during 2021 there was nothing of significance to report.

The Society is managed by a sub-set of the YHACS committee who decided that 2021 was not the time to try to re-launch the Society.

We are getting to the point where the future of the Society will have to be decided – one last push, perhaps to recruit new members from the local population – but if there's no interest, there seems little point in continuing to keep the Society going.

The Society's only members are members of the YHACS committee.

administrative and social construct that comes down to use from when England was ruled by Anglo-Saxons, Danes and then Normans.

As an active regional association, YHACS has for some time counted Saddleworth Civic Society as a member, based on an older alignment of county boundaries when Saddleworth was very much part of Yorkshire (rather than Greater Manchester as now). And a few years ago, Dronfield Civic Society (in Derbyshire) also joined the membership.

With the decline of some of the other regional associations in recent years, the YHACS committee decided that we would throw open our doors to membership and extend an invitation to other societies and individuals beyond our county boundaries. No one has taken us up on the offer yet, but the invitation remains open.

Support for Members

As well as running our quarterly events and producing the newsletter, YHACS also offers support to member societies. Sometimes, this is done through offering special one-off events; at others, the support is offered through practical help – replying to emails and phone enquiries and occasionally through meetings with committee members.

In 2021, support and advice were offered to around half a dozen civic societies that sought our help. There has to be a cap on the amount of time we can offer to any one society during the year – the YHACS committee are, after all, also involved in their own societies, but we are here to help when we can.

The YHACS Committee

At our AGM in 2021, we welcomed three new members to the YHACS committee – Alan Nicholson from Grimsby, Cleethorpes and District Civic Society, Carolyn Curr from Whitby Civic Society and Judith Blackburn, an independent member. Unfortunately, Judith decided it wasn't really for her and stood down at the end of July. Now, as we approach the AGM in 2022, Carolyn has said that she too is to stand down as she is moving out of the area. We still have Alan though!

Although I don't like to lose committee members, I'm always pleased when people put themselves forward to at least try what is involved, so my thanks to both Judith and Carolyn for the contributions each made in the time they were committee members.

We did see one other change to the committee. At the AGM in January 2021, our long-serving Vice Chair, David Moss, decided that it was time to retire from the post although he continues to serve as a committee member and, as already mentioned, continues to edit the newsletter.

In his place, Margaret Hicks-Clarke stepped up from committee member to officer class and is now our Vice Chair.

All committee members apart from the Chair stand for re-election each year. The Chair is elected for a three-year term (and I was re-elected for my second – and final – term at the January AGM.

Time to say Goodbye

Back in 1999, the Civic Trust was keen to set up regional associations to map onto the new government regions and to work with the regional offices. In our region, they asked Kevin Grady, then Director of Leeds Civic Trust, to set one up. The result was YHASA – The Yorkshire and Humber Amenities Societies Association. Kevin chaired the association in its infancy but then looked for a new chair to take over from him. That lucky person was Peter Cooper who became chair in 2001.

Peter remained chair until 2011 when I took over. By this time, we had changed the name to YHACS and had become a registered charity in the process. Peter had also done a two-year stint as a trustee of the Civic Trust. On his retirement as chair of YHACS, the committee invited Peter to take on the role of President, taking over from Peter Spawforth. Now, 11 years later, Peter has decided to call it a day and will be stepping down at the AGM.

We all owe a great deal to Peter. Had he not agreed to become chair over 20 years ago, who knows where YHACS would be today. Assisted by fellow committee members over the years, Peter built YHACS into a strong and resilient regional association – something I am proud to have been a ble to continue. Since 2011, when Peter became President, he has been a constant source of advice an d expertise for the committee and his input is going to be much missed.

Peter won't be leaving the scene entirely – he'll continue to pursue his local interests and will, I am sure, make an appearance at our meetings. I am sure members across the region and beyond will want to wish Peter well for the future. We might be losing a President, but Peter's wife Alison will be getting her husband back!

Our Finances

As the accounts show, YHACS is in a good position financially. On the whole, member societies have been very supportive over the last two years. There are a few societies that we have lost touch with and we need to re-establish contact to find out what is going on and whether or not they wish to continue their membership. This is something we will deal with during 2022. (The committee made a decision not to expel anyone from membership during lockdown as we knew some societies were experiencing difficulties – but that is something we now need to revisit.)

On top of this, we suspended our annual YHACS/Peter Spawforth Award last year which has saved us some expenditure. Then in 2019 we received a donation of £2,000 in memory of Richard Ward. Not travelling around the region has been an additional source of saved revenue and we have had no room hire and refreshment costs.

So, we start 2022 in a good economic health. As we move back into full gear, we have plans to spend some of that money – not least through the re-introduction of our annual awards and also through the launch of a new prize in honour of the Richard Ward legacy. I'll be saying more about that at the AGM.

Looking ahead

2022 will bring its challenges, both for YHACS and the wider civic society movement. On the political front, we are still waiting to see the long-awaited planning bill. Will the government have heeded the comments we fed into the consultation exercise in 2020? That the new bill has taken so long already is perhaps an indication that there is some reworking going on of the original proposals. Also, we know that the new Secretary of State for planning, Michael Gove, has suggested a re-think is necessary. Meanwhile, Mr Gove is also working on the government's Levelling Up proposals, also somewhat delayed.

Looking inwards, Civic Voice is undertaking a review on the future of the movement – do we have a long-term future or shall we just dwindle away?

The YHACS committee will, of course, continue to run the annual programme – whether on-line or in person will depend on circumstances, but we need help from our member societies to help co-host our events. All offers gladly received!

And Finally

It goes without saying, but I'll say it anyway, that running YHACS is a team effort and I am very grateful to my fellow committee members for their continued backing and encouragement throughout another year.

More than this though, a regional association exists for its members. Without your continued membership, there would be no YHACS.

Thank you for your support.

Kevin Trickett MBE, Chair.

Income and Expenditure Account
Balance Sheet
as at 31st December 2021

Income and Expenditure Account

		2020	2021
		£	£
Income			
Subscriptions	- 2020	1,860.00	0.00
	- 2021	60.00	1,740.00
Sundry donations		160.00	155.00
AGM refreshments		65.84	0.00
		£2,145.84	**£1,895.00**
Expenditure			
Meeting expenses		362.80	0.00
Travel (*)		328.80	0.00
Insurance		285.36	285.36
YHACS/Spawforth Awards	- prizes	350.00	0.00
	- certificates	18.00	0.00
Marketing (replacement pop-up banners)		64.99	0.00
Website		234.12	86.12
Vimeo account		0.00	82.80
		£1,644.07	**£454.28**
Surplus/Deficit		**£501.77**	**£1,440.72**

Balance Sheet

	31.12.20	31.12.21
	£	£
Balance of Accumulated Fund brought forward	6,875.74	7,377.51
Surplus/Deficit for year	501.77	1,440.72
	£7,377.51	£8,818.23
Monies held for Market Weighton Civic Society	£485.40	£435.40
	£7,862.91	**£9,253.63**
Represented by:		
Cash with Co-operative Bank	7,862.91	9,253.63
	£7,862.91	**£9,253.63**

Accounts prepared by Alan Goodrum, Treasurer, and agreed by Kevin Trickett, 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 endeavour 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 off 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.

(*) Travel costs shown for 2020 include a delayed claim of £183 from 2019

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 Y&H 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.

At the end of 2021, there were 40 member societies within YHACS, representing around 4,000 members between them, and three individual members.

Civic societies are independent, grass roots 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 general 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, 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 has stepped in to prevent the closure of Horbury and Market Weighton Civic Societies.

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 society 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 amongst 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 2021), 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 require 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. The role of President is honorary. The President, who is elected at the Annual General Meeting each January, is consulted for advice and is invited to attend meetings of the Committee to take part in discussion but does not vote.

YHACS welcomes, and indeed 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 2021 were as follows:

President:
Peter Cooper

Chair:
Kevin Trickett

Vice Chair
Margaret Hicks-Clarke

Secretary:
Helen Kidman

Treasurer:
Alan Goodrum

Committee members:

Judith Blackburn (to 31st July 2021)
Paul Cartwright
Carolyn Curr
Martin Hamilton
Tony Leonard
David Moss
Alan Nicholson
Jim Robinson
Malcolm Sharman

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www.yhacs.org.uk

Email: info@yhacs.org.uk

Twitter: @YHACSChair

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