RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

May 2025

SUMMER EDITION

RIPON CATHEDRAL ANNEXE APPLICATION IS WITHDRAWN - WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?



Ripon Cathedral surrounded by trees, seen from the Ripon Big Wheel in April

SINCE OUR LAST Newsletter in January, in which we noted that Ripon Cathedral's application for an annexe on Kirkgate Park was due to be determined in the following few weeks, we have entered a different scenario. In February the Cathedral withdrew its application.

The position of the Society has not changed because of this. We have always supported the Cathedral in its aspirations for improved facilities; we know it needs them. We regret that so much time and money has been expended in a failed attempt which, in our view – and, it seems, in the view of planning officers at Harrogate Borough Council and then at North Yorkshire Council – was unlikely to succeed.

It is now time for everyone to move on, both to support the Cathedral in finding a solution to its problems that will not divide the city as it has been divided, and to heal those divisions.

Speaking to Ripon City Council at its full meeting on 4 March, the Society's Co-Chair Richard Taylor said, 'We believe that the withdrawal of the application provides the City with an opportunity to make an entirely fresh start by going back to first principles to create a twenty-first century development of which everyone can be proud.

'We call upon the City Council on behalf of the City as a whole to work with the Cathedral and key organisations in the City including the Civic Society to carry out a 'Planning for Real' exercise. This would be best done by bringing in someone from outside to run a session with everyone round the table. The aim would be to come up with a shared vision and realistic plan for the Cathedral Quarter flowing from the Neighbourhood Plan.'

Ripon has an opportunity to come together to solve what has seemed an intractable problem. Now the Cathedral has cut the Gordian Knot, a way forward needs to be found. Ripon Civic Society will aim to play a constructive part in all discussions about future plans.

OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

As well as noting the withdrawal of the Cathedral's plans, we have commented on a number of planning applications, including:

■ Work at Grade II listed **Green Royd, Studley Road**, where we supported objections from Historic England and the Georgian Group to plans for work on the early 19th century house. We also objected to demolition and extension work on the former coach house to provide a large garage. The applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent have been refused by the planners.

■ We also commented on planned work to the upper floors of **37 Market Place**, the former Halifax Bank, which has one of the Society's plaques on its wall (*below*). We were particularly concerned about the treatment of the roof at the rear, which would have meant losing the original structure. We recommended that the design of the conversion should retain the lay-out of the original roof. This application has not yet been determined.



■ In our comments on work proposed at 23 Kirkgate we agreed that the rear wings of the building need re-roofing but we noted that they did follow the historic form of the building, so their replacement with a single pitched roof would affect this. We also objected to the removal of a staircase and the replacement and alteration of windows. No decision has yet been made on this application.

■ The Rotary Club of Ripon Rowels has applied to site a wishing well to receive charity donations in the **Spa Gardens**. While, of course, we support the idea of raising money for charity, we felt that the proposed location, near the statue of the Marquess of Ripon (*above*) and in the wider historic setting of the gardens, was not acceptable on heritage grounds. The generic design of the well we believed was also not appropriate. We have suggested that a less-sensitive location should be looked for and a design appropriate to Ripon should be commissioned. This application awaits determination.



■ Conversion of a garage and store to form a house at **Fisher's Court**, High Skellgate, is proposed. We wrote to point out the lack of an assessment of the new structure's impact on the surrounding listed buildings and the Conservation Area, and the lack of evidence of the age of the buildings to be converted. There is also no assessment of whether the existing structure can take the weight of an additional storey. We pointed out that the proposed new dwelling was unlikely to meet minimum standards for space. Though we did not object to a new dwelling in this location, we believe this application would not provide the high quality, locally distinctive housing that we could support. We await determination of this application.

■ An application for a Certificate of Lawfulness for four electric vehicle charging bays at **Saint Wilfrid's Place**, adjacent to Marshall Way, has been permitted. We had asked for the colour of the chargers, specified as white and pale blue, to be changed for something darker, and questioned the proximity of the installation to Marshall Way.



The members of the Planning Team are Rachel Wigginton (Lead), Ed Jagger, Nigel Rawlinson, Richard Taylor, Mandy Whitehead and David Winpenny.

THIRTY YEARS ON, PHOTO SURVEY IS BEING REPEATED



The former Granada shop at 19 Market Place North (Ripon ReViewed)

WE ARE CARRYING out a photographic survey of the city's historic buildings to establish their condition and use. A similar survey was done thirty years ago in 1995 and today's results will show what changes there have been.

A team of volunteers will aim to visit each of the listed historic buildings and re-photograph them where possible from the same angle. However, all photography will be done from public viewpoints and private property will not be entered without invitation.

As in 1995, the team will be using the national record of buildings listed for their 'special architectural or historic interest'. Descriptions of listed buildings are often very brief and sometimes inaccurate and the survey will give an opportunity to suggest updates to improve the listed building record.

The Society is planning to produce a display of selected images of historic buildings and structures showing the latest photographs alongside those from 1995 and in some case earlier ones too from the Ripon Re-Viewed collection. The display will feature in this year's Heritage Open Days event in September.

■ **If you have any questions about the photographic survey please contact us at info@riponcivicsociety.org.uk**

PAST AND PRESENT AT THE SPA BATHS - AND THE BUS STATION



AS THE SPA BATHS are restored and developed, wooden hoardings have been put around them - and that has provided the opportunity, with North Yorkshire Council and Ripon BID, to display some of the photographs from our Ripon ReViewed project.

With the kind agreement of Sterne Properties, images of the Spa in its heyday have been printed on boards under the title 'Looking forward - Looking to the future'.

They include the original architect's perspective drawing, photographs from the official opening in 1905, and of the interior at the time. There are modern pictures taken by local photographer Helen Tabor of details of the decoration and drawings of future plans for the site.

The opening of the Baths is also shown on one of two new boards at Ripon Bus Station.

It highlights the development of tourism in Ripon, accelerated by the opening of the railway in 1848. Visitors were supplied with horses and carriages to take them onward to attractions like Fountains Abbey and Hackfall, while shops offered picnics and guidebooks, and hotels accommodation for visitors staying awhile amid Ripon's 'Ancient Charms'.



The boards were organised by the BID, working with the National Trust and the Nidderdale National Landscape.

THE TEMPLE - A GARDEN MYSTERY: DO YOU HAVE AN IMAGE?



MEMBERS MAY RECALL that our Membership Secretary Alison emailed to let you know that Ripon In Bloom, with the support of the Skell Valley Ranger team and funded through a Community Safety Grant, have been doing some improvements to the Temple Garden(s).

The Civic Society had been invited to help with devising some information for an interpretation board and we were seeking help from members to find an image of the Temple chapel which once stood on the north end of the site until 1871 when the Congregationalists moved to a new church on North Road.



The site of The Temple (highlighted in red) from the six-inch Ordnance Survey map published in 1856

Although we lack an image of the chapel, we have been looking into the relatively brief history of the site as a place of worship and the people involved with it.

The *Ripon Millenary Record* reports under the year 1818, 'The Temple was built in Allhallowgate, this year. In 1816 the West Riding Home Mission Society turned attention to Ripon. Preaching commenced in James Foxton's house, in Allhallowgate, which being well filled, shortly afterwards a house in Agnesgate was taken, where services were held until the new chapel was opened'.

The foundation stone was laid in May 1818 and work progressed quickly enough for the sanctuary to be ready for service on 22 September the same year. The ministry of the first pastor, Reverend R Martin, lasted from 1823 until 1827 when he 'removed' to Heckmondwike and was replaced by the Reverend Joseph Croft. He lived on Skellbank in 1841 and then at 11 High Skellgate until at least 1871. 11 High Skellgate has been rebuilt since he lived there but it's the property between the Ripon Convenience Store and the Lamb & Flag.

The Sunday school of the Temple chapel became the first of any denomination in the city with 40 teachers teaching 180 children two nights a week in the vestry during the winter of 1835.

The Rev. Mr Croft received a testimonial in 1862 in the Temple chapel at which he received a purse containing 50 guineas and a 'chastely designed' silver inkstand. He retired as pastor in 1868 due to ill health after over forty years of service shortly before the new chapel was opened. He purchased the land at Town End Close on North Street on behalf of others for the new Congregational chapel which was itself demolished in 1968. Croft also owned land on Harrogate Road on which the Methodist Church was constructed in the twentieth century.



North Street with the spire of the now-demolished Congregational church. The church replaced The Temple in 1871.

Thank you to a number of members who kindly got in touch with information or leads which were very helpful. Alas, no image yet of the Temple Chapel has emerged yet but we journey in hope……

Mandy Whitehead and Ed Jagger

LOOKING BEYOND RIPON - IN PARTNERSHIP



RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY is a member of the Uredale Community Partnership, which brings together public, private, community and voluntary sectors to identify local issues and to influence the decisions and service delivery of the council and other bodies. Its aim is to mobilise the energy, resources and relationships in the Partnership to deliver the most appropriate local solutions across the Uredale Community.

The Partnership covers not only Ripon but also the neighbouring County Divisions of Masham & Fountains and Wathvale & Bishop Monkton. It marks a return to the old understanding that Ripon and the surrounding towns and villages need each other and need to work together. It covers a population of nearly 33,000 and an area 30 times the size of Ripon.

Six priority areas have been identified, based on a comprehensive review of the research and data that already exists. Working Groups have been created to identify a pipeline of priority projects and are now making progress on these priority areas:

- transport
- access to services
- housing
- youth and community cohesion
- digital connectivity
- culture and green space

All of the groups have reported good progress and continue actively to assess needs, register demand and identify funding opportunities; for example, a youth council has been organised, along with funding for extremely valuable Children and Young People's workshops, with the next step being to secure a suitable regular meeting space for young people in Ripon, and a requirement for a grant for work on footpaths in the Burton Leonard area has been able to get advice from successful grant recipients in the partnership.

Investigations have also been instigated into other inconveniences faced by residents, such as a lack of local transport.

The group will reconvene in June, driving further with the practical, community-led changes that are so important to improving the Ripon area.

Mandy Whitehead represents the Civic Society on the Uredale Partnership

SOCIETIES MEET IN YORK

A MEETING IN YORK saw representatives of all the North Yorkshire Civic Societies and York Civic Trust meeting with academics from the University of York to explore how best we can all work together.

The University is keen to develop links with civic societies that can increase understanding of how people view the place in which they live. For the North Yorkshire Civic Societies, working with the University can provide resources that may not be available otherwise.

We are hoping to bring the Societies together again in the near future so that we can discuss a common strategy for working with North Yorkshire Council.

IT'S TIME FOR OUR VISITS - BOOK NOW!



22 May : Visit to Swinton Gardens and Park
with Dame Susan Cunliffe-Lister

The evening will begin at 6.00pm in the four-acre Walled Garden, which Dame Susan has restored to a working kitchen garden supplying the hotel. It has a vast array of produce, fruit, herbs and vegetables for the restaurant kitchens and cutting flowers for use throughout the hotel. This is followed by a walk in the parkland where we should see some of the deer herd, the rhododendrons and azaleas in full bloom, and many blossoming flowers and plants, as well as the lakes and follies

Those of us who visited the North Yorkshire Archives (*see below*) recently will remember the lovely estate map of 1820 that we were shown, a plan of the gardens, deer park and pleasure grounds of William Danby.

Please register your interest by emailing Alison at *membership@riponcivicsociety.org.uk*

Dame Susan generously giving her time but asks each of us to make **a donation to Yorkshire Air Ambulance and a minimum of £10 per person is suggested**. There is normally an entrance fee for the gardens.

No refreshments are offered but the Terrace Restaurant and Bar and the Hotel Castle Bar and Samuel's Restaurant are open for (self-funded) drinks and meals.

20 June : Tour of the Commonwealth War Graves in Ripon Cemetery

IF YOU HAVE ever walked through Ripon Cemetery you can't fail to have noticed the distinctive rows of Commonwealth War Grave headstones. Did it leave you wanting to know more?

COMMONWEALTH WAR GRAVES

80 VE | VJ DAY

On **Friday 20th June** at 1**0.00 a.m**. Geoff Dickson of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) - who addressed us last September - will be leading a visit to the War Graves in Ripon Cemetery and enlightening us on some of the stories behind the members of the Armed Forces commemorated by the headstones.

If you would like to sign up to this please notify David Hall of your interest by email - *david@highfieldhalls.co.uk* - as soon as possible.

There will be a small charge of £5 per person which will be donated to the CWGC.

'TOWNE BOOK' ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF VISIT TO THE ARCHIVES



IN APRIL WE had a fascinating visit to North Yorkshire Archives in Northallerton, arranged by our committee member Rachel Greenwood, who works there.

Rachel and her colleagues had kindly put out a host of Ripon material from the Archives, including 'The Town Booke of Rippon' of 1598, which set out the rules of corporation. We saw, too, maps, newspapers and photographs.

We are very grateful to everyone at the Archive for making us so welcome and showing the range of their Ripon material.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS TO . . . . . OUR WEBSITE!



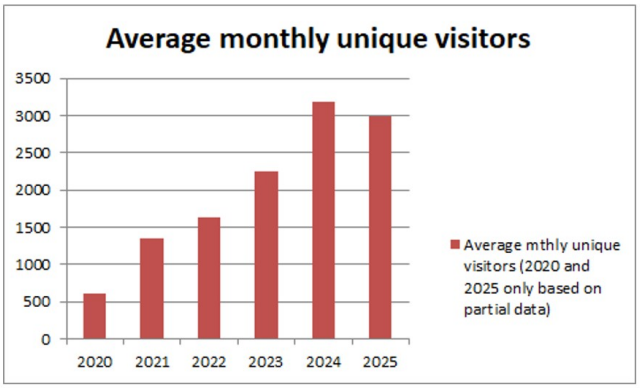
AT THE END of July our revised website will be five years old and we very much hope that it continues to be a useful facility for our member-ship.

As it has grown from infancy to primary school age it has seen a steady increase in monthly viewing figures as the graph below demonstrates - note that we still have three months to run until the actual birthday in 2025 so the 2024 figures will more than likely be exceeded, continuing the year-by-year trend.

For your further information …… more than 92 per cent of 'hits' on the site come from either a link in an email, a saved bookmark or from someone typing the address in manually. A further (almost) 7 per cent come from search engine results (mainly Google) and the final, nominal 0.2 per cent comes through links to other sites, principally *RiponTogether.com*.

Whilst the majority of our traffic is from the UK we still appear to have 'international appeal' - principally US followed by Russia (probably bots!) and then a variety of mainly European countries. (Lower down the list Iran seems to have displaced Israel!)

In terms of pages being looked at, newsletters and planning correspondence unsurprisingly generate most interest, as well as our Contact form and the Ripon-Reviewed page; but it is also gratifying to see that there is still significant interest in the Heritage Hub archived articles, penned over many years by our co-Chair for the Ripon Gazette!



As a footnote, how much do you think the website costs us each year? The answer is, virtu-ally nothing. Since we designed it ourselves using WordPress and administer it 'in house' there is no charge. Similarly, as a registered Charity we have benefitted from the generosity of HostPresto's free hosting service. Our only expense then is the nominal fee for registration of the domain name.

David Hall

WE'RE ON THE MOVE! NEW VENUE FOR TALKS

OUR HOME FOR the last few years, the Dining Hall of the Workhouse, will be out of action for some time as our friends at Ripon Museum Trust develop the buildings with the help of a generous Lottery grant.

From September, therefore, we shall move across the road to Allhallowgate Methodist Church - in the church itself, rather than the hall where, some of you may recall, we had our meetings in earlier years.

This will mean some changes, of course, but not to the high quality of our talks (*see page 8*) or to our ability to serve cups of tea and coffee. And the seats are padded!

We hope to see you in our new home for our first talk of the season on 4 September, and regularly after that.



OUR PROGRAMME

Here's the programme of talks and events until December 2025.

- **September 4th - *LITTLE KINGDOMS: placing Ripon in an early medieval realm*** – Alex Harvey

- **September 12th – 21st - Heritage Open Days – details to follow in the next Newsletter**

- **October 2nd – *REDESIGNING THE NORTHERN LANDSCAPE: Thomas White (c.1736-1811), landscape designer and tree planter*** – Louise Wickham



Newby Hall - a landscape worked on by Thomas White

- **November 6th – AGM – plus *an update on the MILITARY HERITAGE TRUST*** – *Jane Furse / Guy Wilson*



- **December 4th - *SCIENCE AND SAND – the remarkable life and career of Ripon resident Charles Piazzi Smyth*** – David Winpenny

Left: Piazzi Smyth

- **All our talks take place in our NEW VENUE (see page 7), Allhallowgate Methodist Church, Allhallowgate, Ripon HG4 1LG, starting at 7.30pm; tea, coffee and biscuits from 7.00pm. Everyone is welcome; non-members pay £5.00.**

HODs HERE AGAIN



HERITAGE OPEN DAYS this year run from 12 to 21 September, and provide a special opportunity to visit places in Ripon and the surrounding area that are usually not so accessible.

Among the highlights will be the annual opening of the 18th-century Gazebo, off Blossomgate, which will be open for two days.

We also plan a new guided walk that looks at places of entertainment in Ripon. There will be more information in the next Newsletter.

RIPON CIVIC SOCIETY

Registered Charity No: 517434

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THIS YEAR'S COMMITTEE

President - Nigel Rawlinson
Co-Chairs - Richard Taylor and David Winpenny
Treasurer - David Wilson
Membership - Alison Brayshaw
Planning Lead - Rachel Wigginton
Website, Talks & Visits, Awards - David Hall
Heritage Open Days - Andrew Curtis
Uredale Community Partnership, Ripon ReViewed, Ripon Together - Mandy Whitehead
Plaques - Richard Willis
Members - Rachel Greenwood and Ed Jagger
Communications - David Winpenny
Newsletters and External Relations - Richard Taylor and David Winpenny