



*Protecting and celebrating Whitby's rich heritage and promoting civic pride*

Charity Number 1055396

Since 1996 in its current form

President Barry Atkinson

# Annual Report 2020

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on

22 February 2021 via Zoom



Heritage  
Trust  
Network  
Member



## Officers

Chair	John Field
Vice Chair	Neil Swannick
Secretary	Carolyn Curr
Treasurer	Janet Kukk
Membership Secretary	Chris Whitlam
Minutes Secretary	Vacant
Events Secretary	Vacant

## Executive Committee Members

Joyce Stangoe  
Nick Fardon  
Fiona Clewlow  
Mike Dawson  
Rebecca Tucker  
Sue Boyce

## Newsletter

Pam Whitlam

Find us on



## **Welcome to Whitby Civic Society's Annual Report, 2020.**

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## **From the Chair**

Welcome to Whitby Civic Society's Annual Report 2020. We started the year in good spirits. We had a record number of members, we welcomed some fresh faces to the Executive, our AGM was lively and well-attended, and we had plans for a busy programme of lectures and fund-raisers, as well as many other events. It all seemed so promising.

You already know the rest of the story. In brief, we suddenly had to tackle the challenges of an unprecedented pandemic – both as individuals, trying our best to keep ourselves and the community healthy and safe, and as a Society. We decided to cancel our March lecture shortly before the government introduced the first lockdown, and we held our April Executive meeting by Zoom. We took both decisions very reluctantly, hoping that we would soon be back to normal. That optimism seems a long time ago!

Given the challenges what surprises me is how well we have held up. Our members are a remarkably loyal group of people, and the overwhelming majority have stuck with us through thick and thin. I know that Chris Whitlam, our Membership Secretary has remarkable powers of persuasion, but even so it is humbling to see the strength of our members' continuing support.

I also need to pay tribute to the Executive committee members. Meeting by Zoom is better by far than not meeting at all, but is not ideal. While a few colleagues had difficulty with the technology, most of us adapted well; even the old dogs among us showed that we can learn new tricks when we have to. As a result, the regular business side of our work continued almost unaffected. My particular thanks go to our Treasurer, Janet Kukk, who has quietly and efficiently looked after our finances while also playing a full role in several other areas.

We've been very aware that as we aren't able to chat over tea at the Coliseum, we would need to prioritise communication with our members. Our secretary, Carolyn Curr has been emailing members to keep them in touch with developments, as has Chris Whitlam. Carolyn has also kept updating our website and has opened an Instagram account for the Society to communicate with the wider community. Her efficiency has been spotted elsewhere and the Yorkshire and Humberside Association of Civic Societies has now 'grabbed' Carolyn for their committee. We also continue to be active on Facebook and Twitter, and Pam Whitlam has kindly and efficiently produced our members' newsletter. If there are other things we can do to keep you informed, please let us know.



Our wider activities have necessarily been curtailed by the restrictions however, we have been far from idle in seeking to protect our town's heritage and support desirable developments. Our Planning group has been particularly active, meeting by Zoom and considering a large number of planning and licensing applications, some of which we then decide to object to or support depending on their merits, as well as submitting comments on the Borough Council's draft Local Plan.

We continue to consider new Blue Plaques although the restrictions mean that we have not been able to award any in 2020. However, we have plaques ready to install marking the contributions of the Fortune family and the shipowner Christopher Marwood. We have plans to award plaques for Dora Walker and Francis Haydn Williams during 2021. We awarded two Certificates of Excellence during the summer relaxation, and although we were unable to hold our usual Heritage Open Days, we did manage – thanks to Carolyn and Rebecca Tucker – to run a very popular set of virtual tours.

We have been involved in several attempts to protect old churches. Neil Swannick, as well as being a very able and supportive Vice-Chair, has put a great deal of work into helping preserve Flowergate Chapel for public use. We were less successful in having St Ninian's church declared an asset of community value; the Borough Council judged our bid valid, but decided in the end that the church's main value was to the congregation rather than the wider community. Sadly, I find it hard to disagree. Thanks to Joyce Stangoe's persistence and commitment, we have managed to ensure that war memorials in St Bartholomew's church, Ruswarp will find suitable public homes.

The Society has also made a significant contribution to the work of the Whitby Town Deal Board. The town was able to bid for £25million for new infrastructure and the resulting investment could potentially be transformational. We still await the government's decision (due in January) and even if successful much work remains to be done. We travel in hope.

In short then, 2020 has been a strange year but not a quiet one. Many of us have had our first dose of the vaccine, and that must give us hope for the future. Whether we ever go back to the 'old normal' is still to be seen. Meanwhile, we have learned new skills and new ways of working, and we have managed to keep the ship afloat. We now look forward with confidence to 2021, which also happens to be the Society's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

***Dr John Field***

## **From the Secretary**

Who could have foreseen how my first year as Secretary of the Civic Society would have turned out? It seems an awfully long time since the start of 2020 and the marvellous presentation at our January lecture by George Layfield about the Little Yellow Cottage. This was followed by an equally enjoyable talk on Whitby Treasures by Peter Craggs at the well attended AGM. Since then it's been a long way from business as usual however, I am sure you will agree that given the circumstances and with your continued, unwavering support, we have still been able to get a great deal done.

### **What have we been up to?**

Many planned events such as Pannett Day, Winterfest, and of course our lecture programme, all had to be cancelled. However, wherever possible we kept (fairly) calm and carried on.

### **Heritage Open Days**

Our much loved Heritage Open Days took place virtually on our website and on social media. And while this could hardly compare to the 15 events and venues organised for 2019, the videos, images and stories posted were very well received. The Spa Well video attracted 3000 views and the Flowergate Chapel 1420. The video of Pannett House, Normanby Terrace attracted 770 views.

If you missed it, the virtual tours are all still available on the website alongside some beautiful images of the Saloon, with thanks to Elizabeth Cheyne.

### **Walking with Heritage Trail (wire sculptures)**

We assisted the local authority in providing information and photographs to accompany the sculptures by the artist Emma Stothard which have been installed around the town. In return, the council agreed to make a donation of £300 to the Society. Special thanks to Val Appleton, Mike Shaw, Natasha Smith of Cod Roe, Geoff Wilson, Peter Craggs, Dennis and Julia Buck, and Theresa Tomlinson, author.

### **Blue Plaques and Certificates of Excellence**

A detailed audit of the blue plaques was undertaken by the Treasurer. The audit highlighted a number of maintenance issues that will be incorporated into this year's work programme. We have a (long) shortlist of potential blue plaque recipients for consideration in due course and are aiming to award 1-2 each year.

We awarded three certificates of excellence during 2020 to:

- Wesley Hall, Church Street following its triumphant, sympathetic restoration
- Jepson Builders for the redevelopment of the frontage of Hoggarth's Yard, Church Street, in the style of the original
- E J Newton Building Services for restoration works of an excellent standard to an old stone wall by Dog Lane, Whitehall Landing.



Mr Chris Sellors receiving a Certificate of Excellence for Wesley Hall



Mr John Newton receiving a Certificate of Excellence for the old stone wall



Mr Dan Jepson receiving a Certificate of Excellence for Hoggarth's Yard frontage

Hoggarth's Yard and Dog Lane provided a focus on the Spital Bridge area and gave us some good coverage in the local press. You can find all the details and before and after images on our website.

## Whitby Buildings Preservation Trust

The new Trust was recently set up by the Society and is a Registered Charity. A Buildings Preservation Trust provides a potential means of acquiring buildings at risk. Various opportunities for funding may then be explored in order to secure a sustainable future for the building, often incorporating new uses. The Trust is led by Neil Swannick and Nick Fardon and will hold its inaugural meeting soon. More details will follow in due course.

## **Website Development and Social Media**

We are continuing to develop our website, building on work done previously by Mike Dawson, Peter Craggs and Chris and Pam Whitlam.

You will now find information on the work of the planning and conservation groups, including our comments on planning applications. There are new News and Resources pages; extensive information added to the stories behind the blue plaques; more details on our Certificate of Excellence awards; an expanding record of previous projects of the Society; and the virtual Heritage Open Days programme. It is now possible to join the Society on-line.

The Resources page includes extensive information and photographs about the magnificent restoration of Wesley Hall, highlighting good practice. With thanks to Rebecca Tucker.

Developing a comprehensive digital record of many years' activity of the Society is an important task. It reminds everyone of the work done over many years by many people and helps to ensure that nothing is lost. With thanks to Chris Whitlam, our man on the ground, Maureen Eves, Janet Kukk and Elizabeth Cheyne.

Our Facebook and Twitter accounts are well supported and have been active throughout the year. They are useful means of engagement with members and the wider community, particularly during lockdown. New for 2020 was Whitby Civic Society's Instagram account. Few civic societies are on Instagram and we were delighted to come to the attention of Civic Voice who invited us to speak at a Webinar to offer advice on how to get started. This was good publicity for Whitby and an opportunity to learn from what others were doing.

## **Ruswarp Church**

We liaised with the York Diocese in order to safeguard the war memorials and artefacts in Ruswarp Church following its sale to a developer. We have secured the future of the Bullet Cross and plaque with Whitby Museum and the marble plaque with Ruswarp village hall. The village hall will also store the Rood Beam until it can be housed permanently. This item is proving difficult to find a home for due to its size.

## **Battery Parade**

We wrote to the planning authorities detailing the general dissatisfaction with the state of the Parade and advocating a more strategic approach to its future management. Things were brought to a head by the unauthorised wooden fencing that appeared to be going unchallenged by Scarborough Borough Council.

Subsequently, we published an article in the Gazette and the fencing was removed. However, we highlighted many other issues such as the poor state of the Powder Houses, the metal fencing which provides a barrier to half of the Parade, and the blocked path to Khyber Pass, and these remain unresolved. Linked to this, we provided a detailed response to the local authority's consultation on the Draft Tourism Economy Strategy. This is available in full on the website.

Finally, thank you to all who have helped me in the role of Secretary during my first year. With special thanks to Val Appleton.

***Carolyn Curr***

## **Treasurer's Report**

We would like to present to the AGM the audited 2020 accounts. Despite the difficulties faced during the pandemic, the society has maintained a healthy balance. With little expenditure, the receipt of backdated Gift Aid and strong membership income, we ended the year with a profit of £613.

Our funds carried forward will allow budgets to be considered for 2021 to implement plans for the Blue Plaque scheme, to update and re-print some of the Society's publications, to work on new publications, and to consider various other potential projects in the pipe line.

We would like to extend our thanks to David Johnson for standing as Auditor for the society.

***Janet Kukk***

Registered Charity No: 1055396

**Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2020**

	2020 £	2020 £	2019 £	2019 £
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>				
* Membership inc Gift Aid	1,500		1,245	
Lecture income (attendees)	142		812	
Lecture income (raffle)	64		282	
Publication Sales	71		346	
Pannett Park Day (raffle)	-		-	
Armed Forces Day (raffle)	-		431	
Winterfest (raffle)	-		496	
Christmas Meal Bookings	-		554	
Donations	366		481	
Foresters Court donations (2019 only)			265	
	<u>2,142</u>	<u>2,142</u>	<u>4,912</u>	<u>4,912</u>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>				
Lecture costs (room hire/lecturer/raffle)	255		604	
Executive meetings - room hire	24		240	
Stationery/Copying	106		388	
Publication printing (2019 Conservation Area booklet)	-		425	
Insurance	285		285	
Pannett Park Day	-		100	
Armed Forces Day	-		193	
Heritage Open Day	-		492	
Winterfest	23		212	
Blue Plaque Scheme	468		192	
Subscriptions (YAHCS/Civic Voice/Heritage Trust)	267		250	
Christmas Meal venue	-		598	
Misc	101		281	
Foresters Court costs (2019 only)			650	
	<u>1,529</u>	<u>1,529</u>	<u>4,910</u>	<u>4,910</u>
Profit/Loss		<u>613</u>		<u>2</u>
Total funds brought forward	b/f	<u>5,302</u>		<u>5,299</u>
Profit/loss 2020		613		
Total funds carried forward	c/f	<u>5,915</u>		<u>5,302</u>
<hr/>				
Respresented by				
Funds carried forward		<u>5,914.86</u>		<u>5,301.76</u>
2021 pre-payments - membership		<u>230.00</u>		
Held at Yorkshire Bank(Whitby) 31st Dec 2020		<u><u>6,144.86</u></u>		

\* Gift aid receipts 2020 cover 2016-2019

2019 accounts - figures adjusted to meet new nominal codes

Accounts prepared by: Janet Kukk, 31st December 2020



## **Conservation Group**

Members of the group:

Joyce Stangoe (Convenor)  
David Green  
Neil Swannick  
Janet Kukk  
Beth Veitch

During 2020, the group submitted a detailed response to Scarborough Borough Council's consultation on Whitby Town Centre Pedestrian Signage & Wayfinding. The issues raised were incorporated into the Town Deal project and resulting Investment Plan. A review of the Spital Beck Character Area submitted to the local authority was rejected.

Despite lockdown the Conservation Group has continued with a number of projects:

- A draft Property Owners Conservation Maintenance leaflet is currently being prepared.
- The Shop Fronts audit; we had hoped to have volunteers walking around Whitby photographing and recording information on shop fronts, however this was not possible. Instead, a desk top review has been undertaken with some streets surveyed. This project continues and will help to identify changes to the high street pre and post pandemic.
- An outline document was produced on Whitby's Buildings at Risk identifying buildings that are not already listed or not in the Conservation Area and which may be at risk.
- An audit of Whitby's Street Furniture is underway which aims to update the 2013 SBC Conservation Area Character Appraisal – section 5 Street Furniture.



## **Planning Group**

Members of the group:

Joyce Stangoe (Convenor)  
John Field  
Janet Kukk  
Neil Swannick  
Ian Lawson  
Nick Fardon

The Planning Group continues as one of the great workhorses of the Society. During 2020 the group considered a total of 37 planning applications for Whitby Parish.

Total Applications	Approved	Rejected	Withdrawn	Pending
171	119	1	5	46

Applications reviewed by Whitby Civic Society	Objected	Withdrawn	Approved	Pending
37*	18	3	10	5

\*37 applications fully reviewed – listed buildings, conservation areas and major developments

Applications commented on by Whitby Civic Society	Objected	Withdrawn	Approved	Pending
18	n/a	n/a	15	3

The Planning group also commented on licensing applications for The Youth Shack, now Macy Brown's, and Flowergate Hall. All of our responses in full may be found on our website. The group also submitted a detailed response to Scarborough Borough Council's consultation on the Local Plan and circulated a housing survey to members for Yorkshire Coast and Ryedale Disability Forum.

Civic societies are not statutory consultees in the planning process and it is difficult to determine the extent of our influence. We pursued the issues around 21 St Hilda's Terrace as much as we were able and were very disappointed that retrospective planning permission was granted in December. We shall however keep a close eye on the conditions stipulated.



Despite this setback, we continue to develop a constructive relationship with the planning authorities and are extending our influence in other ways such as through the Town Deal process and in the media. We met with Robert Goodwill MP to discuss the Town Deal which also served to help raise the profile of the Society and its role in planning and conservation.

## **Looking Ahead**

We are all hopeful that some form of normality might return during the year. We still do not know how much of Whitby's usual packed programme might go ahead such as Pannett Day, which in 2019 was a good opportunity for us to attract new members, The Fish and Ships Festival, Yorkshire Day, and the first Literary Festival that was planned for October 2020.

## **Events**

The Society has existed in its current form since 1996 and therefore will celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. We are seeking ideas from members to help us mark this special occasion. One option may be Civic Day, a national celebration of civic pride which is likely to take place in the summer.

- Heritage Open Days are again planned for September. The theme this year is **Edible England**, providing a great opportunity to involve local business. We are looking for members to get involved in the HODs programme and are hoping to work more closely with Whitby Town Council to increase our capacity.

A top priority is of course re-instating our popular monthly lecture programme.

## **Website Development**

Work will continue on the website and developing our social media presence. There is lots of archived information still to edit. We have an idea to tell the history of Whitby through stories of local people, such as the Gansey knitters, fisher lassies, Dora Walker, etc, and we shall be developing this during the year. There is still some work to do on the blue plaques; one of our members has kindly agreed to collate some details on the Merchant House about which we have very little.

Recording previous projects of the Society will continue and members are welcome to submit information and photographs that are not currently on the website. Sources and photos are always credited.

## **Blue Plaques and Certificates of Excellence**

The blue plaque programme will continue. The two plaques already approved by the Executive committee, Francis Haydn Williams and Dora Walker will be our priority for 2021 along with refurbishment of existing plaques. The blue plaque booklet and walking trail will then be updated.

Likewise, we shall also continue with our Certificate of Excellence awards. A certificate has been agreed for Rooms, the interiors store, Flowergate and we shall be making the presentation as soon as we are able.

All members are welcome, and indeed encouraged to make such nominations that aim to signpost and celebrate good practice and inspire and encourage higher standards of work. The best part of the job is letting someone know they have been awarded a certificate. We are humbled by how important they are to recipients.

## **Spa Well**

Spa Well House is a very special building in the town and was always a big part of our Heritage Open Day celebrations. We became concerned about the lack of maintenance of the building and have been liaising with Whitby Town Council to ensure appropriate works are carried out and that there is no further deterioration. The Town Council is hoping to budget for the works this year and we shall continue to monitor this.

## **Publications**

The work programme for last year included renewing the Spa Well and the East Walk and West Walk leaflets which are out of date. This will be carried forward to 2021.

## **Whitby Hospital**

Joyce Stangoe is working with the Whitby Hospital Art Group to ensure the original purpose of the hospital is not forgotten. The public voted to keep the name, Memorial Ward, highlighting the importance of the origin of the hospital. We have suggested installing a new war memorial sculpture on the turning circle, perhaps linked to the present Covid pandemic. We are hoping to produce a booklet on the History of Whitby Hospital, perhaps for the launch of the newly refurbished buildings in July. If members have any information, stories or photographs of the hospital or people involved we would love to hear from you.

## Regional and National activity

The Secretary has this year joined the Executive Committee of the Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS). This will offer a good opportunity for Whitby to be kept informed and to have an input into regional and national civic society campaigns and activities.

We had to postpone meetings during the year with Scarborough Civic Society and we look forward to when we can at last meet with our colleagues.

We also remain active members of Civic Voice, the national association for civic societies.

## Engagement into the future

Our Planning group will continue to hold the planning authorities to account and will liaise on local and national planning consultations. This year we shall be paying particular attention to developing a local Design Code.

The Conservation group will be re-convened after lockdown and is looking for new members to continue and expand its work programme.

A priority for YHACS during this coming year is to consider how it can improve consultation and engagement with the public. This is something that we shall also be looking at, using technology more and more to reach further into local communities to determine how they want their town to develop – and how they don't want it to develop, for example when formulating the Design Code.

We shall continue to build close alliances with other groups and with business and will look for opportunities to work in collaboration, for example Heritage Open Days in partnership with Whitby Town Council. Like most similar organisations, we need to consider how we can better consult and engage younger people.

## Finally – Thank YOU



Lastly, we would once again like to thank all our members who continued to support the Society during 2020. 82% of the 2019 membership continued their support during the year, and to them, we offer a huge thank you. Add to this the 18 new members recruited during 2020 and the final membership figure for 2020 was 130, only 14 less than the same time, 2019. This is very pleasing considering the very difficult trading conditions!

It is only with a strong, supportive membership that the Society is able to carry on its work for the benefit of Whitby. Please continue your support, get involved and spread the word. Thank you!

**GET INVOLVED !**  
**- JOIN WHITBY CIVIC SOCIETY**

**Gentle Reminder. 2021 membership renewal due 1<sup>st</sup> January**

Payment (£10 per member) can be made by cheque payable to Whitby Civic Society to: The Membership Secretary, Whitby Civic Society, c/o 16 Carr Hall Gardens, The Carrs, Ruswarp YO21 1RW. Alternatively, payment can also be made by Bacs:

**Yorkshire Bank, Whitby Branch Sort code: 05-09-79 Account No: 28118870  
(Whitby Civic Soc) Ref: Memb/your name**

(Yorkshire bank do not subscribe to the 'safer payment scheme' so you may receive a warning to double check your request)

Renewal can be left with our Treasurer to save a stamp - post your membership through the letter box in the garage door to No. 10 St Hilda's Terrace (garage door at rear along Back St Hilda's Terrace)

Email: [whitby\\_civic\\_society@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:whitby_civic_society@yahoo.co.uk)

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