
Wetherby Civic Society

Spring Newsletter

April 2001

Change but not for Change's sake

Winter 2000/2001 has been a busy time for the Society's Executive Committee. One of its first tasks was to give some thought to how best organise the time and talents of our members.

The founders of the Society were convinced that every member should be given the opportunity to contribute something to the Society's aims and objectives. To this end they devised a system of working parties each of which had a specific role to play.

There is no doubt that this has proved successful. The general improvement in the look of the town has much to do with the

work of the street furniture, lighting and signing group. Pressure from the footpaths group has seen Leeds City Council adopt its recommendations regarding footpath improvements in the town centre and we hope to see this continuing with more work this year particularly in Victoria Street and Westgate.

And if it were not for the work of the Society's trees working party there would be 300 less trees in the town than there are now.

Consolidation

But times and organisations change. Some of our working

parties have become overburdened whilst others have seen their need diminish. So six years after the formation of the Society it seemed a sensible time to look at what was needed and how best to achieve this. The committee was agreed that the system of working parties ought to be retained. These give all members the chance to play their part if they so wish. It was also agreed that some consolidation of activities was required to allow for more specialisation in other areas.

Accordingly it was agreed to establish four working parties. These are:

Buildings & Environment

Initial Terms of Reference are:

Buildings & Environment: To monitor all aspects of the built and urban environment and to make recommendations as required for improvements inter alia in respect of street signs and furniture, footpaths, traffic

Planning Applications

management, strategic planning and land use.

Planning Applications: To monitor and to respond as appropriate to significant and relevant planning applications.

Publicity & Recruitment: To publicise the activities of the

Publicity & Recruitment

Society and to encourage the recruitment of new members.

Trees: To investigate, recommend and supervise new planting opportunities and to monitor existing stock. To support and encourage the extension of the tree warden organisation within Wetherby.

Trees

If you would like to help with any of the above activities please contact the convenor of the appropriate working party whose name is given at the end of this Newsletter.

In addition two small specialist groups were set up. One to look after liaison with local schools and the other to be responsible for the Society's programme of activities and events. If you are involved with a local school and would like it to share the Society's aims and objectives please contact either Elizabeth Johnson or Adrian White. If you have an idea for an event or activity which will interest Society members then either Liz Stretton or the Secretary should be informed.

A Busy Winter

During the winter the Society was asked for its views on a strategy document affecting developments

within the town centre. This brought together many of the questions facing the town centre.

All Wetherby residents must want to see a thriving town centre operating in a safe and clean

environment and the Society will support any initiative with this end in view. This is something of which we shall hear more as time goes on.

The Community Involvement programme now being introduced throughout Leeds promises to lead to a greater degree of local input into solving local difficulties. Again the Society will wish to put its own point of view where it feels it has a part to play.

Planning Applications

The Society has continued to monitor planning applications.

Recently a proposal to redevelop the disused cattle market site has been submitted. The Society

welcomes the substantial residential element included in the proposal since the comings and goings of people living in a town centre must make it a friendlier and more welcoming place particularly in the evening.

Metal Roofs

But there are certain features which give some cause for concern - metal roofs seem out of place within our Conservation Area - and alternating bands of stone and render on the Victoria Street elevation are not attractive neighbours for one of the town's oldest and best examples of domestic architecture. These points have been put to the planners and we await the outcome with interest.

Two other major concerns have taken up the Executive Committee's time during the winter.

The continuing dereliction of the Micklethwaite farm site has prompted an approach to the Leeds City Conservation Officer.

Bathhouse

There appears to be some progress towards bringing into public use the Georgian bathhouse and grounds at Wharfedale Lawn. When made available this will be an attractive civic amenity. The Society is anxious that completion will not be unduly delayed.

And now for Summer

Finally, we look forward to an interesting programme of summer events starting with our May visit to the newly renovated Abbey House Museum in Leeds. Our thanks to Liz Stretton for her hard work in making all the arrangements for our summer programme.

Her choice of venues is as imaginative as the two successful winter events which she organised - the visit to the largest rhubarb forcing shed in Britain, if not the world, and the fascinating talk given by Stephen Burt on the history of Roundhay Park.

A very pleasant summer to you all.

WETHERBY CIVIC SOCIETY
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