
Wetherby Civic Society

Autumn Newsletter

www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk

October 2008

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS – NIC SHEPPARD

Looking through meeting notes, press cuttings, programme for tree-planting, the list of events and outings, planning proposal responses and even the financial accounts, I think it is fair to assess that the Civic Society has had a very busy year.

A major focus for the year was revisiting the Civic Society aims:

- **Promoting** civic pride and high standards of architecture & town planning.
- **Encouraging** improvements in public amenities.
- **Influencing** the development of the built environment and the culture of the town.

This proved a useful framework for members at last Autumn's Annual Meeting to explore the varying individual and collective perceptions & expectations we have of our town.

Pavements being dug up, temporary bus-stops and traffic diversions inevitably inconvenience our daily routines and often raise the

blood pressure. However, they are all part and parcel of a thriving, changing and much loved town in which we have every reason to take great pride. Revisiting the aims has helped us and others in the town appreciate just how effective we can be in influencing change and development, whilst taking care to protect those aspects of the town we value.

Jubilee Gardens June 2008



In December the erection of the Bath House information board in Jubilee Gardens was a tangible mark of groups working together to preserve and celebrate part of our heritage. I have chatted with many visitors and local residents who have enjoyed the riverside haven that has been created and who appreciate the

opportunity to know a little more about its past.

Its future use is important too. To this end it was a joy in June to be able to entertain and meet with representatives from some of the town's many community and voluntary groups for an evening reception at the Bath House. It proved an ideal opportunity for groups to informally share ideas and build valuable links.

The publication of a Blue Plaque Trail on the Civic Society website and the availability of a photocopy version in Wetherby Library, has enthused some in the town to approach the Society to consider the erection of further plaques. Costing in excess of £700 each the Society does not have the means to finance this. However, we have in the past been successful in approaching and working with the owners and developers of buildings where a plaque may be appropriate.

The Civic Society depends on working with others and this busy year has seen members joining in

discussion with regard to developing future community use of the Methodist Church. We have contributed to the Leeds City Council Conservation Area review. Our advice has been sought by neighbourhood groups in

response to planning proposals.

The Society provided a guided tour of the town centre to visitors from our twin town of Privas and willingly given talks to local groups about our aims and concerns.

These are some of the many activities within a busy year that has clearly promoted pride, encouraged improvement and influenced development.

EVENTS –RUTH WHEELER

We have reported in our Spring Newsletter on the excellent response from members to the “brain storming” session led by our Chairman following last year’s AGM.

said of our first visit of the year which was to Ribston Hall in Little Ribston for which nearly a hundred members expressed an interest! Unfortunately the owners had stipulated a maximum of 25 people

a medieval chapel, beautiful china and Chippendale furniture. Members also walked around the grounds and stables on a perfect Spring evening.

We invited Phil Ward a Leeds City Conservation Officer to give us our Spring talk. Some of the points he put over were quite controversial but members present went away having to think again about the aims and purposes of conservation in a historic town such as Wetherby.



The good news, I hope you will agree, is that I have secured further visits for 2009 when those who were disappointed this year should be able to visit.

There has been a mixed response to this year’s outings though the slightly smaller parties who attended some of the destinations said they had enjoyed them enormously.

for the evening visit. I did

Ribston Hall April 2008

manage to negotiate for two separate evenings but many members were still unable to go.

The owners, Mr & Mrs Dent, showed us around their delightful and very interesting house which has

In May we went to Marton Mill at Pool-in-Wharfedale, one of only six working textile mills remaining in the U.K. We were divided into small groups and shown all the processes of manufacturing tartans for Commonwealth countries, school uniforms for the home market and many other fabrics. The owner Duncan Watts and his

However this could not be

Workforce made us feel very welcome. Afterwards we retired to The Wharfedale at Artington for tea, scones and delicious cakes.

June saw us at the George Smith Gardens in Heslington where we had a feast of his truly beautiful flowers, shrubs, water features and trees followed by a very professional slide show and commentary by the maestro himself. A delightful summer evening.

A relatively small party went to the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle in July. We had a private guided tour of this magnificent house or rather French Chateau built overlooking a valley in the Dales - a fascinating place.

It also boasts an extremely good cafe and restaurant. Over an hour's drive but well worth the journey. If you haven't been it is a splendid day out.

Finally members visited Fairfax House in York; an old favourite with something fresh to catch the eye especially on a guided tour in the evening.

One or two members have very kindly forwarded suggestions for further visits for the Society; thank you to them. Do call or drop me a line if you have any good ideas for social outings. And so until next year!!

PLANNING – DEREK GULLAND

In recent months your planning sub-committee has not had to

respond to any proposed major development. Is this a sign of the times that in the present

economic climate speculative developers are reluctant to enter into new commitments?

However, applications for extensions and improvements continue undiminished and it may well be that these will increase as people decide to extend and improve rather than move to something

bigger or newer. Of course, this may have the perverse effect of

restricting the housing market and people seeking to downsize or make a start on the housing ladder may find it difficult to find what they want.

The Society was pleased to be asked to participate in the consultative process which is required under legislation relating to the appraisal of Conservation Areas. At the time of writing we do not know the outcome of this appraisal. The committee was much impressed by the work

the Appraisal Officer was putting into her task and those of you who attended the public display in the Town Hall will have had the opportunity to gain an insight into what is involved in such an appraisal.

We have had occasion in the past months to take up with planning enforcement a number of unauthorised shop signs appearing in the Conservation Area and on listed buildings. The rules on shop signs and outdoor advertising are not over restrictive and it is a pity that in some cases even these are flouted to the detriment of the appearance of the town to gain some short term market advantage.

*Annual General Meeting
Ramada Hotel, Leeds Road
Wetherby
7.30pm Monday 17th
November
Following the meeting Geoff
Humble will give an
illustrated talk on the work of
Wetherby in Bloom*

TREES - PETER MAUN

For some years now the Society has been planting native deciduous trees on the flood embankment at The Ings. The exact number being determined by donations we receive for this purpose. This year with donations and an improvement in the Society's finances we were able to plant five trees. Many thanks to the members and

others who enable us to continue with this programme. In the not too distant future planting space on The Ings will be at a premium. It would be great if we could find some other suitable land. The land must be accessible to the public. If you know of somewhere please let me know so that we may take it further.

Those of you who use the footpath across Hudson's Field will be pleased to have seen that the lime tree avenue is now well established. We are still plagued by petty vandalism from time to time but recently this has been confined to damage to the protective cages. John Tatterton's work repairing the cages on behalf of the Town Council is much appreciated.

WETHERBY CIVIC SOCIETY

FINANCIAL RESULTS YEAR ENDING 30TH SEPTEMBER 2008

	(Unaudited)				
	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>		<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
	£	£	<i>Payments</i>	£	£
<i>Receipts</i>					
Subscriptions	1574	1598	Administration	926	714
Tax Reclaim	394	395	Tree Planting Costs	1129	251
Donations Received	337	340	Donations Paid		
Tax Reclaim	113	34	St James Tower	100	---
Event Receipts	1491	1857	Wetherby Festival	40	40
Less Costs	(1537)	(1710)	Yorkshire C S	----	30
Interest	114	74	Subscriptions Paid	140	149
Awards for All grant	-----	<u>2300</u>	Jubilee Gardens	<u>2527</u>	<u>129</u>
Total Receipts	<u>2486</u>	<u>4888</u>	Total Payments	<u>4862</u>	<u>1313</u>
			Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>(2376)</u>	<u>3575</u>

SOCIETY FUNDS AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER

	2008	2007
	£	£
Lloyds TSB Current Account	443	722
Leeds Building Society	2752	4858
Cash due to Secretary	-----	(9)
	<u>3195</u>	<u>5571</u>

NB: The grant of £2300 received from Awards for All in 2007 was allocated to the purchase and erection of an interpretation board in the Jubilee Gardens in the year ending September 2008

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