

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



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CHAIR'S REVIEW OF 2020

The year started in normal times when we could host events, meet people face to face for our 2019 Design Awards in January, soon followed by our Annual General Meeting, and I delivered a civic society presentation to St Giles Mothers Union. Christine and I supported Dave Hogg by planting seeds and bulbs at Monkhill Station in a small bed alongside the footpath and I went on to plant hundreds of daffodil bulbs at St Giles CofE Academy with pupils. We hope as projects go, these initiatives are the small acorns for future community-led planting at all our three rail stations.

For the whole world, 2020 has to have been the strangest and most disruptive year for generations, and this was certainly true for our activities in Pontefract Civic Society. Before the world changed, we were able to have our monthly talks programme at the town hall, public events and activities some led by us and others where we participate with community groups and Wakefield MDC, plus planned meetings with elected members and officers from the council, though as examples of how things changed, I did manage to attend at least three rail stakeholder online meetings, and all our own internal meetings were online. Like every organisation, we had

to change tack after a month's pause from the end of March, after which we had to adapt, cancelling all face to face activity, shifting meetings and the talks programme to Zoom, and for other meetings we've participated on Microsoft Teams and Skype, with various levels of success.

Changing the way we work has been both a blessing and a curse, once we've got over the disappointment of not meeting people, and the aggravation of technology not always working perfectly plus for some members this was a steep learning curving. On a more positive note, I've never stopped, and I've attended more meetings, webinars, and conferences online than I would have been able to physically achieve. All our online talks in 2020 have been hosted on Zoom by me, ahead of which, all supporting online promotion and administration has also fallen to me, though in for the future, volunteers will be welcome to share the load. The talks programme has achieved healthy numbers of members and non-members attending, some in different parts of the UK which would not have been possible at the town hall. I have also been part of a small team which has checked, edited and shared our own virtual events on Facebook, the details

of which are in the Citizenship Group, with support from our Heritage Group. Our efforts in the latter had not gone unnoticed, having received a telephone call from Geoff Walsh, Deputy Chair of The Yorkshire Society, which resulted in our advice being given on running virtual events, for their consideration towards Yorkshire Day.

I attended the inaugural meeting of the Pontefract Bike & Skate Hub, and I continue to feel that the vision Chris Pennock set out is the right one for these two projects.

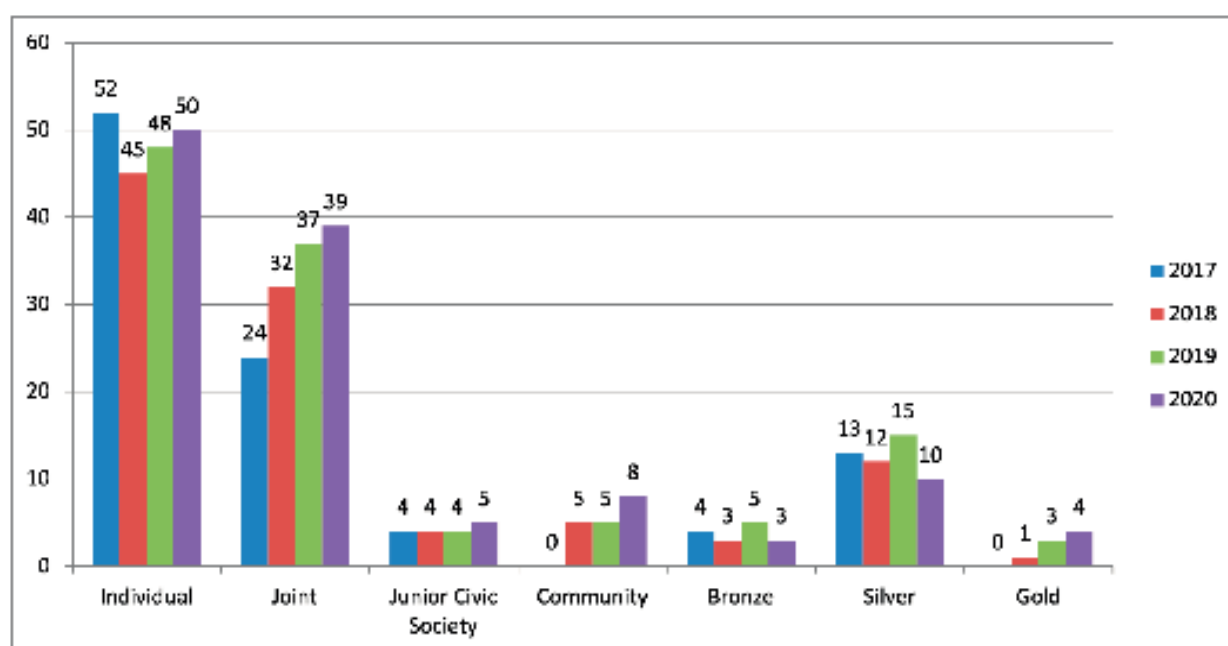
Working regionally but from the perspective of benefiting Pontefract as a destination town and the health of our business community, numerous webinars from Welcome to Yorkshire and Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce were added to my diary.

Working in partnership was never more important than in 2020, and our considerable efforts supported the Royal British Legion (Ackworth & Pontefract Branch) to stage a stripped back, socially distanced VJ Day ceremony at the War Memorial, though no parade.

Engagement commenced with a phone call and subsequent online meeting with Abi Leung, the new Marketing Manager at Pontefract Academies Trust, which was followed by a number of further online calls and exchange of emails in order to engage with more young people in our local schools.

In August, we received the unfortunate news that our Secretary, Karl Gilbert, would not be seeking re-election in 2021 due to the pressures of delivering The Pomfretian, though his diminishing involvement in the civic society had been evident for over a year, hence in this Annual Report, you will not see a Secretary's Report, but we can confirm that our membership has remained healthy, which we hope will continue in 2021.

In the autumn, we took the decision not to host a 2020 Design Awards ceremony, though the pandemic will have an impact on the completion or delay of suitable projects for our Planning Group to assess.



Pontefract Civic Society membership between 2017 and 2020.

Working for Pontefract with Wakefield MDC

As part of our Memorandum of Understanding with Wakefield MDC, together with our Vice Chair, Phil Cook, I've had an online meeting with Cllr Denise Jeffery (Leader), and Cllr Jack Hemingway (Deputy Leader), which was the first in a series of meetings under the Council's new leadership.

I've fully engaged in driving our input to the Pontefract Delivery Group action plan through seven meetings across the year and meetings of the Pontefract Steering Group with Tom Stannard, Corporate Director of Regeneration, and Cllr Darren Byford has been a leading voice replacing Cllr Jeffery in those meetings. One specific council project where we've steered early discussions to our benefit on also representing Pontefract's rich heritage is a wayfinding/interpretation board project, which is planned to be delivered in 2021.

Covid has impacted on the mixed fortunes of the Anti-Social Behaviour/Night Time Economy sub-group meetings, which were paused, and the Active & Inspired project for young people has had some though limited reach due to funding focused on Chequerfield.

I've worked with Wakefield MDC's Regeneration Team and Nash Partnership on the Pontefract Masterplan and the Streets for People consultation, workshops and update meetings through four sessions.

We've had three meetings with the Markets & Major Events, plus a Yorkshire Day planning meeting with other council colleagues, though as we know the physical event was cancelled.

There has only been one Transportation & Highways meeting and an autumn phone

call, which is disappointing, and much less than we've experienced in previous years.

A visit to the Country Park with elected members was hosted by Chris Davidson, Harworth Group

Working for Business

I started 2020 participating in the Marketing & Development Club, run by Enfield's for local businesses, which led me being a guinea pig for the first of their 'Five Towns Live' interviews on Facebook, where I explained what the civic society is all about, highlighting where there is synergy with the business community.

I was invited to visit the Old Taverne B&B, meeting the owner/manager, and being shown a number of rooms available to guests.

Ron Maycock (ActionCOACH) contacted me with an offer to local businesses of his support at the start of the first Lockdown, though strangely this webinar received no support from businesses.

Throughout the various stages of Lockdowns and temporary re-openings for some sectors, I've facilitated a number of business photoshoots with the Pontefract & Castleford Express and written supportive commentary on hospitality, retail, and general business resilience.

When asked by Wakefield MDC to increase local engagement from our hospitality businesses in the government's 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme, I managed to increase registrations from 17 to 29 in a couple of days.

Moving on from the summer to Christmas, I engaged with shops for our seasonal window display competition, judged by 11 pupils from

eight schools, which resulted in Jolly's Café on Ropergate being to the outright winner based on a hand-crafted display of produce.



Part of a bigger civic movement

Civic Voice Away Day physical event in Birmingham, and Regional Forum meetings

Within the region and in Harrogate at the AGM for the Yorkshire & Humber Association Civic Societies, Christine and I collected a Peter Spawforth Award 2nd place certificate and cheque for our annual programme of work throughout 2019. I went on to engage with YHACS quarterly online meeting hosted by Addingham Civic Society and Halifax Civic Society, I've participated fully in YHACS Executive Committee meetings online where I am a trustee, and also continued to represent YHACS on the Civic Voice Regional Forum.

Throughout 2020, Civic Voice delivered a plethora of webinars to get key messages out on some important subjects, and also to support the membership. I attended a series

of 18 fascinating and thought-provoking 'In Conversation' webinars hearing from leaders in government on planning policy, and leaders in place-making, nationally, internationally, and in other regions of the UK.

My interest extended to attend two Heritage Action Zone webinars, and I also had my first introduction to the High Streets Task Force through a series of webinars. My interest in such events extended to an organisation which was new to me, 3Fox - 'The Voice of the Authority' delivered a number of webinars on the planning system and place-making with a great mix of corporate directors and service directors from local authorities, architects, journalists and others.

Railfuture Y&H has remained active with online meetings and in writing, thus one such letter to the Secretary of State for Transport expressed concern about lack of support for Open Access operators, Grand Central Trains and Hull Trains, and I along with a number of rail action group leads were co-signatories.

Bringing 2020 to a close

We sadly cancelled our Christmas event with the Liquorice Singers, though they'll be back in 2021. However, we did manage to produce two additional Christmas tree banners thanks to St Giles CofE Academy and Larks Hill School, which were attached to the barriers around the tree along with those we designed in 2019. The new images were also printed and sent to Pinderfields Hospital for display on a ward at their request.

2021

In writing this report for the 2020 Annual Report, it is difficult to judge how our aspirations for 2021 will be delivered, though like many organisations we will continue to press on as best we can, seeking solutions, and new ways of delivering our work to ensure that we remain visible and relevant for everyone.

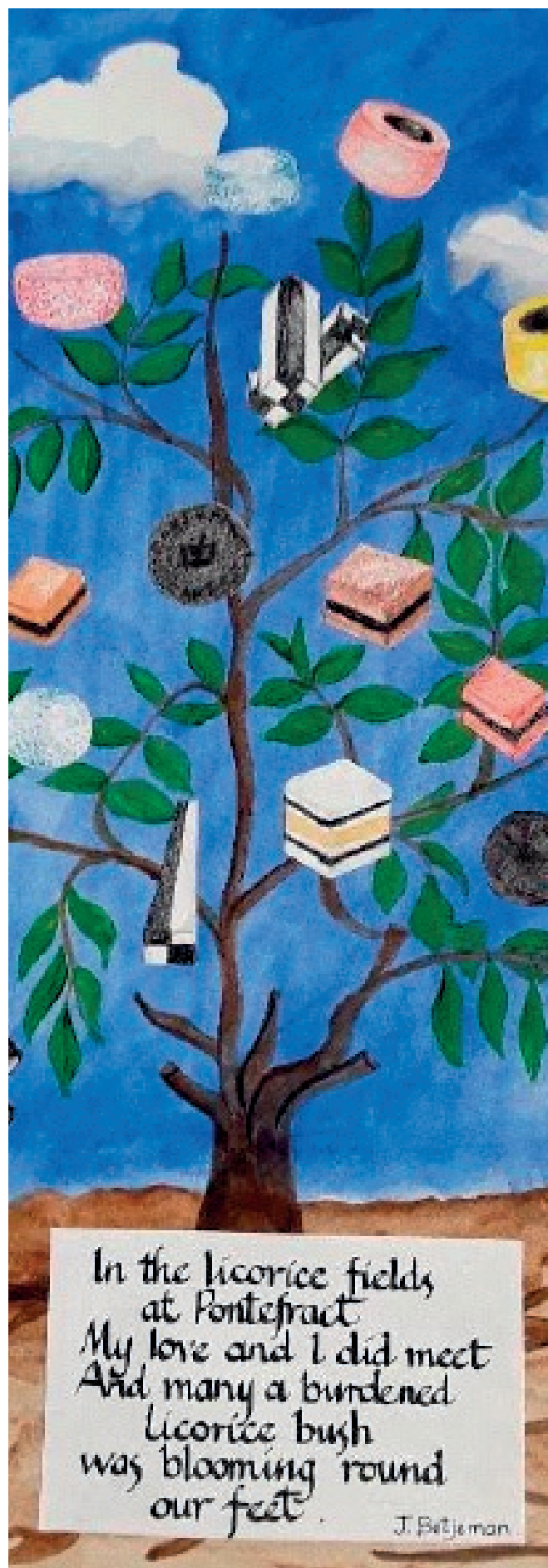
As our Secretary, Karl Gilbert, moves away from the systems, processes and marketing materials which he has developed over the years, there will be a gap in knowledge and skills which we'll need to fill, no matter how uncomfortable that may be. A similar unresolved opportunity is how we engage with Knottingley and Ferrybridge, as our initial engagement plans have been put on hold due to Covid, and that may still be the case in 2021.

However, we will continue to play an important part in areas of work similar to 2020, such as:

- Pontefract Masterplan and 'Streets for People' public realm improvement, working also with Nash Partnership urban planners
- Pontefract Steering Group, Pontefract Delivery Group and any additional opportunities which will benefit the town, such as the Markets & Majors Events team
- Meetings on highways and rail issues
- Maintaining and growing our membership, especially businesses and the Junior Civic Society

Paul Cartwright

Chair



PATRON'S ADDRESS

Who would have thought, as we celebrated the arrival of the New Year in 2020, that within a matter of weeks we would experience a pandemic on a scale not seen for over 100 years. Many of us, I am sure, would like to echo a comment once made by HM the Queen that it has been an 'annus horribilis'.

Despite the undoubted difficulties presented by the Covid19 virus, however, Pontefract Civic Society has more than risen to the challenge. What has particularly pleased me is that the Society continues its strategic role as a Civic Voice at local, regional and national level. A good example of the latter is how the Society, by working with others, has raised genuine concerns about Government proposals to make sweeping planning changes. These changes will have a direct bearing on reducing the voice of local communities and also have potential detrimental effects on the High Street and Conservation Areas.

The levelling up of the 'North Agenda' is something in which our civic society, through its involvement in the Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS), will give opportunities never dreamed of before. As our Chairman is an Executive Committee member of YHACS he is well placed to influence their thinking on road, rail and network infrastructure requirements and much more. The Society has already done much work on rail transport requirements in Pontefract and encouraged initiatives involving the public, private and voluntary sectors which will stand it in good stead for the future. Its links with Wakefield MDC will also be vitally important in ensuring that any plans being developed are owned and understood by the communities it is designed to serve.

Covid19 has presented particular challenges for local businesses, but the civic society has been quick to promote many new innovations and developments that have taken place in the town. That spirit of 'never despair' is strong within the Society which encourages others in Pontefract.

Finally, it has also been a great pleasure to listen in to the zoom talks given by academics and local historians. These have been amazing and I would encourage as many members as possible to participate in these sessions.

Michael S Fox DL

Patron





PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

It is now over a year since we began to be affected by the still - current Covid19 pandemic and it has become commonplace to talk of the way in which our lives have been changed. Much has been said about these changes in the way we live, interact, work and travel that point to new "normal" that differs from the old when the present emergency passes.

I have no doubt that most of us will want to return to something like the old norms but some of the changes to our life - patterns that the pandemic has forced upon us may well be long- lasting and by many, even welcomed. The Government has said that in the aftermath of the pandemic it wants to "Build back Better". If that is anything more than just an empty slogan, we have to see the current time as an opportunity to consider ways in which society at all levels will work better for the general good. This may well be in the way we view our priorities. Civic societies across the country

will be considering how such goals may be best achieved in their own localities.

I have been very pleased to see that Pontefract Civic Society has continued to do its work effectively throughout the current difficulties by making full use of modern technology to keep our programme of Executive and working group meetings, and public talks going.

But, however good that technology may be, it is not as good as personal face-to-face interaction and we all look forward to the time when we can meet in those circumstances. However, we are obliged to take things as they are and the civic society will continue to work for the good of our town in all ways possible in the hope we can, in fact, "Build back Better" here in Pontefract.

Peter Cookson
President

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Citizenship Group

2020 was to be a year of big plans for both the Citizenship Group and the wider community of the Decoration Squad, however as we are all aware other forces came into play. This resulted in having to work differently and initially making decisions in very different ways and to some very tight timescales. This resulted in a number of firsts for the civic society, as when the first lockdown was announced I was in Mexico and the Community Showcase was arranged for a few weeks after my return which would now be in Lockdown. The immediate effect was transatlantic discussions about how we would adapt the Community Showcase to be on online slideshow while still signposting to the community to 30 groups involved. The theme of virtual events carried on for the remainder of 2020 with all our meetings being online, and again another first for the civic society in the spring by having a Zoom meeting for this group, whilst I was away on a campsite in Ludlow.

For the Citizenship Group in particular, our plans had to change with the VE Day 75th Anniversary being cancelled nationally, but this doesn't mean we have been quiet. We have actively looked for different opportunities and have produced some fantastic work with children's activities for online events. Where we would have normally attended public events and promoted Pontefract, we have had to rethink how we can achieve this, resulting in doing more online. We have ensured that our Facebook page is up to date and relevant timely information is shared to others. The benefits of which have been unexpected but very welcome. I firmly believe that due to turning our events to an online format

this has given the civic society a boost in the community and better recognition, which is something we have been aware we needed to do for a few years now. We are actively engaging with more schools; this is clearly demonstrated in the fantastic response they gave on top of public contributions, for the Remembrance Day poppy waterfall at the town hall. It has been a very busy and active year, not only in our mission to encourage youth membership and interaction with the civic society, resulting in working with St Giles & St Mary's Pantomime Society, Pontefract Academies Trust, and of course our ongoing work with St Giles C of E Academy. I am delighted in the way the whole team has taken this working group forward, whilst adapting to very different circumstances. What is very satisfying for me is the interaction with other community groups and local business supporting Pontefract Civic Society in making Pontefract a talking point in a positive way in the district, and beyond.

The Decoration Squad sees members of the public, other organisations and businesses coming together under the umbrella of Pontefract Civic Society, and this saw severe restrictions for how we would create and install the fantastic poppy waterfall on the town hall with contributions of painted plastic bottle bottoms from many local groups, schools, and the public.

Whilst a display for the Centenary of The Royal British Legion on 15 May, 2021 will be a focal point, the deferred programme for the 75th Anniversary of VE Day such as a town hall concert, activities and a newspaper of memories has to be delayed once more.

Citizenship Achievements 2020

- Community Showcase virtual slideshow
- Commissioned Rachel List for the VE Day/ Capt Tom and NHS artwork, which will continue to be displayed indoors in the town
- Engaged with St Giles & St Mary's for virtual Heritage Open Days
- Engaged with Pontefract Academies Trust for various projects in particular Remembrance displays
- Two new Christmas tree community banners from St Giles CofE Academy and Larks Hill School
- Virtual events for Civic Day, Pontefract Allsorts, and Yorkshire Day
- WDH Community Award 3rd place in the Digital in the Community category
- VJ Day ceremony with Ackworth & Pontefract RBL
- Virtual Remembrance Day and support for the live ceremony
- 2021 Pontefract Calendar raised in excess of £4,000 for The Prince of Wales Hospice with the support of Rachael List

Decoration Squad Achievements 2020

- Easter display
- VE Day display loaned to residents in four separate areas
- Displays on the town hall for VE Day, Yorkshire Day, and Remembrance Day
- Christmas display at Valley Road
- Support to Friends of Friarwood Valley Gardens for their Christmas wonderland decorations

Citizenship Group & Decoration Squad 2021

- Virtual Community Showcase
- Supporting RBL Centenary
- Displays for the Olympics, European cup football and Halloween
- Participation in the Lioness Lantern Parade
- 2022 Photographic Calendar
- Larger poppy display for Remembrance Day
- Greater public engagement in all our town hall displays
- Early planning for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Phil Cook

Citizenship Group Coordinator





Rail Group

The year started with our local rail franchise, Northern Rail, experiencing severe financial difficulties; at the time, our rail group was concerned that this might have an effect on services, though this proved not to be the case. Our publicity campaign for services on the Baghill Line, which was funded by Railfuture, was in full swing which included several articles in the local free magazine, The Pomfretian.

In February the government announced a "Beeching Reversal" scheme, in which closed lines could possibly be re-opened. One of our main aims is to introduce a Leeds to Doncaster service, via Pontefract and Askern. As this had to be applied for via an MP, a meeting with Yvette Cooper ensued. Yvette was very attentive and promised to contact all the people and organisations this would involve. Unfortunately, this was unsuccessful. Limited ideas for our Pontefract Stations

Friends Group were discussed, which include planting wild meadow seed at Monkhill Station and a trip for a local School to York Railway Museum, though the latter had to be put on hold.

It was announced in the Media that Monkhill was finally going to receive full disabled access, with a new footbridge incorporating a lift system. The group were ecstatic at this news, as we had been campaigning for this for many, many years.

March brought a timetable change on the Baghill Line, which moved the first service to depart from Baghill at 08.12. The group were unhappy about this, as it made leisure travel much more difficult.

Due to the Lockdown, our meeting in April was our first to be held online via Zoom. All services were suspended from Baghill, as

were the Grand Central Services to Kings Cross from Monkhill.

A relatively quiet period for the group then ensued, as the Government was instructing people to only make rail journeys if they were Key workers, and had no alternative. Also in this period, a letter was written to Yvette Cooper, asking for her support in our quest for a useable Sunday service on the Baghill Line.

In November letters were written to WYCA and Railfuture, concerning better services to Goole and new services to Doncaster. A reply was received from Network Rail, stating that paths are available for a service to Doncaster via Askern. East Midlands Railway was offered our full support for a possible extra Sheffield to York weekend services calling at Baghill, though they haven't taken this forward, yet.

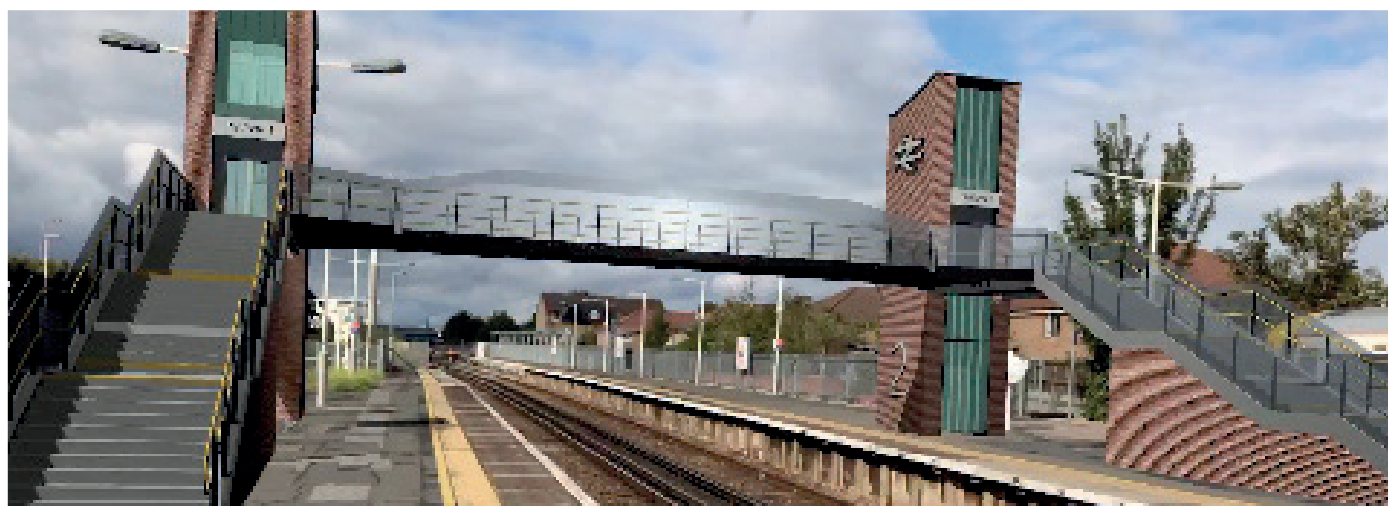
Several online conferences were attended in December, including Yorkshire Railfuture, Railfuture National Conference, Northern Community Rail Conference and a Wakefield District Consultation Sub Committee meeting. Our former Chairman, Peter Cookson, entered dialogue with a Lincolnshire Rail Campaign Group with a joint aim of a new Cleethorpes to Leeds service, via Monkhill, Knottingley, and Askern.

Through Covid Lockdowns all services were suspended from Baghill, a limited service operated via Monkhill, and the government discouraged rail travel; therefore, we will have to campaign very hard in 2021 to maintain the services that we already have. Now the rail franchises are directly financed by the government, budget cuts are inevitable. We will do our best to ensure a proposed East Midlands Railway service goes ahead in future years. I believe a useable Sunday service on the Baghill Line should be achievable in 2021. After a year of dither, the scaffolding which had blighted Baghill Station was finally removed, and in 2021, we are also keen to secure the future of the building, with help we expect from Yvette Cooper MP.

Our longer-term aims are a service to Doncaster via Askern and an increased service to Goole, and we will obviously be working very hard to achieve this in these uncertain times.

Dave Hogg

Rail Group Coordinator



Planning Group

The planning group has monthly meetings, which from May were switched to online Zoom sessions; these primarily review planning applications submitted to Wakefield Council for the Pontefract area, focusing on the town centre conservation areas, and other key applications of concern. The local authority planning portal has plans and development layouts together with consultation comments from statutory consultees, community groups and the general public. The group has made comments on more than twenty proposals, some in support, others suggesting refusal.

A planning agenda is prepared for each meeting and has considered national proposals affecting planning law and the devolution deal to deliver a West Yorkshire Mayor which will deliver investment for major development. Some relaxation in planning has taken place and the new planning white paper goes even further, which between them:

- will make it easier to gain planning permission, in particular, for large scale residential developments
- small changes to enable house extensions to be increased in size could create issues in neighbourhoods
- changes to permitted development rights allow office space to be converted to residential use. However all applications have to comply with building standards and the local authority current planning policies.

Community involvement continues to be a particularly important aspect of the planning process, though in 2021 the Planning White Paper will water down that community

involvement, which is a real concern.

We have been fortunate in being able to meet with Wakefield MDC at both officer and executive level where planning and wider regeneration issues are discussed.

‘High street’ issues remain on our radar highlighted by the fortunes of the retail sector, market hall and the outdoor market though vacancy rates for units within the town centre have remained low. The proposed very large Axiom retail & leisure development next to Xscape has had its planning permission renewed and would be a threat to the viability of the town, were it ever to be constructed. In the current economic climate this seems unlikely.

At the beginning of the year several developments involving the Robin Hood Public House, Valley VenYou, and the Priory Wood off Wakefield Road were subject to planning applications. The residential application for the latter involving 22 homes to which we objected was however refused planning permission.

We have continued to monitor the larger housing sites as planning applications have been made, and layouts and details have been progressed. Phased development on the former Prince of Wales Colliery site, land off Cobblers Lane, land off Pontefract Road and the Lime Trees site will deliver substantial private housing. The sites at the former Carlton Furniture Works and former Phillidas site have planning permissions for housing, but have not progressed to development yet.

A site visit to the former Prince of Wales colliery slurry site, in the long term will provide a Country Park with footpaths and additional

leisure activities, which looked very positive from our visit. Extensive replanting work and regrading of the slopes has taken place which will provide spectacular views of Pontefract, the surrounding countryside, Leeds city centre to the north, and power stations and Vale of York to the east.

A second phase of much needed employment provision has been developed adjacent to the TK Max/Homesense site at Knottingley. There are still available units for employment use at Park 32 (Park Road) industrial site.

Over the last year work has been continuing to create a new Masterplan for Pontefract. This has been looking at eight sites on the edge of the town and also Horsefair. Planning consultants, Nash Partnership, Wakefield MDC, and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority hope to trigger new ideas for development proposals to boost the attractiveness of the town as a place to both work and live. A redevelopment scheme already earmarked for the former fire station site by Wakefield District Housing is under consideration, for which we have received presentation and we're supporting, will provide much needed affordable housing in an attractive layout.

We're looking forward to the whole Leisure Hub complex in Pontefract Park being completed, which hopefully, subject to the end of the pandemic, will bring a little bit of cheer back to the town and the east of the district.

Peter Taylor
Planning Group Coordinator



Talks & Tours Group

This has been a year like no other. No visits to business or other towns were possible, and with the recent resurgence of the virus, it is not known when they will resume.

The talks' season started off a month earlier than normal this year, with "Tyke Talk" in January, delivered by the secretary of the Yorkshire Dialect Society, Mr Eric Scaithe. To say Eric was a character would be an understatement! He gave a humorous and detailed account of the origins of the Yorkshire dialect, and Eric also told many stories and tales involving Yorkshire culture. The talk was a slight departure from the norm, and the feedback received was very positive.



Yorkshire Dialect Speaker

Over 90 people attended the "Battle of Towton" presentation in February, which was given by former battlefield guide David Skillen. We were treated to some excellent illustrations, and the details of the actual battle sent a shiver down your spine, as it was the highest death toll of any battle on British soil.

Our own Allan Blaza gave what was to be the last live talk of the year, in March. Allan gave details of the famous guests who attended the civic society annual dinners in the early

seventies. These included Princess Margaret, Patrick Moore, and Sir John Betjeman, all of whom were invited by our President at the time, Lady Rosse.



Battle of Towton Illustration

We all know what happened next. It was decided we would offer our talks on the internet via Zoom. Our first was in June and Eric Jackson gave an interesting account of the explosion that happened in the Barnbow munitions factory in 1916, and a general history of the factory.



Barnbow Factory

This was followed in August by Professor Joyce Hill with her account of how the Vikings established themselves in Yorkshire; her details of local place names derived from

Norse were particularly interesting.

Our next online talk was in September and local historian Eric Houlder with "Doomsday Pontefract", an account of pre-Norman Pontefract, with details of a Roman Villa and an Anglo-Saxon Minster.

October brought us East Yorkshire archaeologist Karen Adams, who took us through the history of York from the Roman invasion right through to the present day.

The year's programme was brought to an end in November by another talk by Eric Jackson, this time giving us full details of the Gunpowder Plot. Eric provided many interesting illustrations including Guido Fawkes signature before and after torture.



Below Parliament - The Gunpowder Plot

We plan to continue with diverse, interesting and entertaining talks in 2021, starting via Zoom until we can safely go back to the Town Hall. We have earmarked several places we would like to visit, but obviously cannot make any arrangements until the pandemic is well and truly over.

Dave Hogg

Talks & Tours Group Coordinator

Heritage Group

The key focus in this difficult year has been to deliver Heritage Open Days, though numerous other channels of research have been pursued, in particular by Phil Henfrey. The research has contributed to the wider civic society online activities with other working groups such as VE Day, Civic Day, the Liquorice Festival replacement Pontefract Allsorts, and Yorkshire Day.



We started the year, reviewing our 2019 HOD activity, checking the lessons we'd learnt, and then how we'd plan for a bigger and better September festival, then something happened!

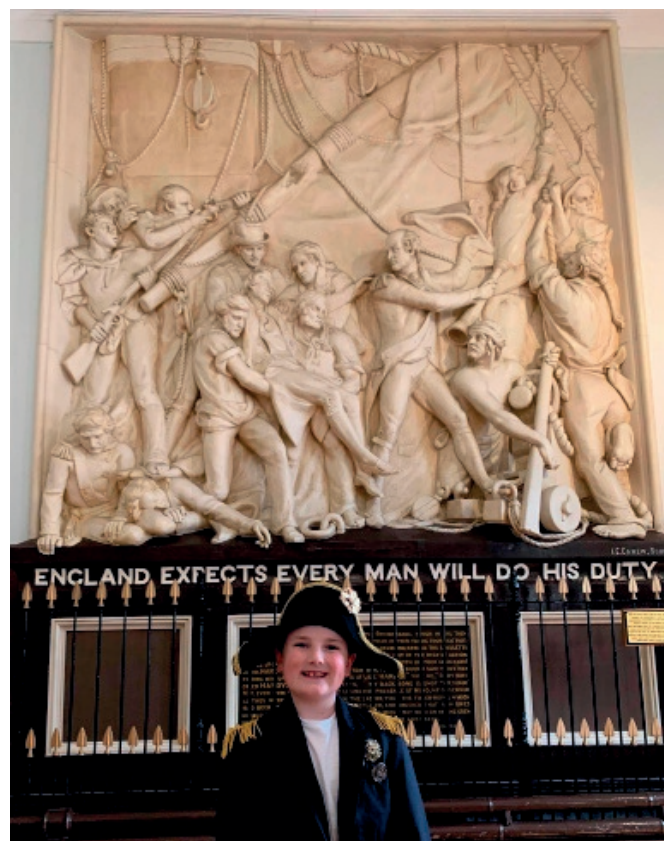
As the summer progressed, we remained optimistic for a limited number of physical events, talks and guided walks, though a virtual strand was also emerging to run from Fri 11th to Tues 22nd September. In order to create this year's festival including 21 online activities, our project team had to be creative, which has meant we were busier than ever working behind the scenes to create content for a blended approach with lots of online content delivering virtual activities on Facebook, whilst retaining six live socially distanced events, though we had to re-plan in August, which included a live talk on Zoom by Eric Houlder on Domesday Pontefract, which actually connected with a different audience, including non-members from across the country.



We were really pleased that our partnership approach had the support of St. Giles with St. Mary's Pantomime Society, Pontefract Heritage Group, Ackworth School, Tom Dixon, local churches, and Wakefield Council. Our small band of members in the group worked hard to share our virtual content across multiple Facebook pages and groups, as well as links on Twitter, whilst also ensuring participants had informative, engaging, fun and safe experiences throughout. I am particularly thankful of the effort given freely by Phil Cook, Linda Benson-Henfrey and Phil Henfrey in creating the HOD experience 2020. Whilst we had some emerging new activities, we did have to put those on the back burner, for 2021.

Paul Cartwright

Interim Heritage Group Coordinator



Highways Group

It is the custom to report on the activities of the Highways Group over the past year.

Under lockdown it has been impossible to meet as a group apart from one successful attempt via Zoom.

The group's work is dependent on meeting with officers of the District Council's Transportation and Highways Department, normally two or three times a year. This year, contact has only been by email on two occasions when I have requested information on progress with the major schemes high on the list of much needed improvements. The replies show that there has been little progress on any of these important schemes. As recently as Jan 14th, 2021, the situation notified to me by Paul Stevenson is as below.

All Saints' Church area highway scheme

No date for work to start and awaiting an update on "pinch-point" funding from government which was applied for more than a year ago.



All Saints' Gyratory

Park Road northwards towards M62

Feasibility study work has started, but with an emphasis on cycle provision to encourage "active" travel solutions.

South Featherstone Link Road

Officers are due to brief consultants in February, 2021, to carry out more feasibility studies with a view to holding an extensive public consultation in 2022; this has been delayed because of Covid restrictions. This could be developed in stages and has for a long time been suggested, but this will be part of the public consultation.

This is far from a satisfactory report, as we seem to go round in circles with slippage on so many projects.

Derek Vaux

Highways Group Administrator



All Saints' Gyratory

TRUSTEES

Our Trustees

Title	Name
Chairman	Paul Cartwright
Vice Chairman	Phil Cook
Secretary	Karl Gilbert
Treasurer	Ian Wood
Citizenship Coordinator	Phil Cook
Planning Group Coordinator	Peter Taylor
Talks & Tours Coordinator	Dave Hogg
Rail Group Coordinator	Dave Hogg
Co-opted	Dr Colin White

Our Working Groups

Citizenship Group	Rail Group	Heritage Group
Phil Cook (Coordinator) Vacant (Deputy) Vacant (Administrator) Paul Cartwright Christine Cartwright Claire MacDonald Joanne Draper Carol Trueman	Dave Hogg (Coordinator) Philip Henfrey (Deputy) Anthony Dee (Administrator) Rosemary Barnes Paul Cartwright Peter Cookson Chris Hyomes Ian Wood Nick Pridham	Paul Cartwright (Interim Coordinator) Vacant (Deputy) Vacant (Administrator) Philip Henfrey (HOD Coordinator) Phil Cook John Turner Linda Benson Henfrey Claire MacDonald
Planning Group	Talks & Tours Group	Highways Group
Peter Taylor (Coordinator) Philip Henfrey (Deputy) Vacant (Administrator) Christine Cartwright Paul Cartwright	Dave Hogg (Coordinator) Dr Colin White (Deputy) Vacant (Administrator) Paul Cartwright Mollie Garbett Claire MacDonald Mike Skidmore	Anthony Dee (Coordinator) Vacant (Deputy) Derek Vaux (Administrator) David Hogg Peter Cookson Paul Cartwright

Report of the Trustees for the period ending 31st December, 2020

The Trustees, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 31st December, 2020.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the SORP accounting policies set out by our Treasurer.

Structure, governance and management

Pontefract Civic Society is a registered charity governed by constitution. The organisation is viable by self-generated income from subscriptions and events. Project funding is developed through grant opportunities. There are no plans to recruit an Executive Director, and we intend that the trustees will continue to manage the charity on a voluntary basis. In the long term, paid roles may be considered, should new income or grants sustain a different business model.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

As set out in the Constitution, the Chair of Trustees is nominated by the membership. The trustees are set out in this report and are those in place at AGM. The Board of Trustees has the power to co-opt trustees, as necessary.

Trustee induction and training

The Trustees maintain a good working knowledge of charity and charity law and

best practice. Attendance at charity training courses as deemed applicable. This whole area is always under review in order for us to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, though there's room to do more.

Organisation

The Charity is controlled by a Board of Trustees. The day to day running of the charity is divided amongst these trustees with specific roles and responsibilities as required.

Charitable objectives and activities

The Society is established for the public benefit for the following purposes in the area comprising Pontefract and District, which area shall hereinafter be referred to as "the area of benefit":

- (i) To promote high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit.
- (ii) To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area of benefit.
- (iii) To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area of benefit.

Public benefit

In furtherance of the said purposes, but not otherwise, the Society through its Executive

Committee shall have the following powers:

1. To promote civic pride in the area of benefit.
2. To promote research into subjects directly connected with the objects of the Society and to publish the results of any such research.
3. To act as a co-ordinating body and to co-operate with the local authorities, planning committees and all other statutory authorities, voluntary organisations, charities and persons having aims similar to those of the Society.
4. To promote or assist in promoting activities of a charitable nature throughout the area of benefit.
5. To publish papers, reports and other literature.
6. To make surveys and prepare maps and plans and collect information in relation to any place, erection or building of beauty or historic interest within the area of benefit.
7. To hold meetings, lectures and exhibitions.
8. To educate public opinion and to give advice and information.
9. To raise funds and to invite and receive contributions from any person or persons whatsoever by way of subscription, donation and otherwise; provided that the Society shall not undertake any permanent trading activities in raising funds for its primary purpose. To acquire, by purchase, gift or otherwise, property, whether subject to any special trust or not
10. Subject to such consents as may be

required by law, to sell, let, mortgage, dispose of or turn to account all or any of the property or funds of the Society as shall be necessary.

11. Subject to such consents as may be required by law, to borrow or raise money for the purposes of the Society on such terms and on such security as the Executive Committee shall think fit, but so that the liability of individual members of the Society shall in no case extend beyond the amount of their respective annual subscriptions.
12. To do all such other lawful things as are necessary for the attainment of the said purposes.

We do this by organising membership events, and reaching out to non-members to attend public talks and meetings in accessible locations and venues.

A number of free public meetings are organised and publicised, which ensures the Society remains accessible, financially viable and sustainable.

Risk management

The trustees have a risk management strategy which comprises:

1. An annual review of the risks
2. The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate risk
3. Implementation of the procedures designed to minimise any potential impact should those risks materialise

Role and contribution of volunteers

Pontefract Civic Society celebrates its commitment to a diverse and skilled volunteer team, and whilst some members have worked hard, it has been patchy. There remains much more to do, and volunteers of all backgrounds and experiences are openly welcomed especially transferable skills from professional or community organisations which can benefit the civic society, thus ultimately, the town.

Financial review

The Statement of Financial Activities showed a surplus of £1,964.

Reserves policy

In accordance with the advice of the Charity Commission, the charity aims to hold unrestricted reserves at levels of approximately 12 months of budgeted unrestricted expenditure, to meet unforeseen costs and statutory obligations.

Future plans and developments

The main priority continues to be to create a blend of experience and 'younger blood', supplemented by relevant governance controls and trustee training, to deliver operational plans:

- To continue working in partnership with public, private, and third sector stakeholders
- To increase our membership with a

broader demographic and encourage active participation

- To develop our Business Member scheme for the benefit of all parties and the town
- To develop a more strategic Board
- To diversify income generation
- To manage capacity building for delivery projects of benefit to the town
- To develop policies and procedures recommended by the Charity Commission
- To further implement the use of free online technologies with trustees and other key volunteers

On behalf of the Board,

Paul Cartwright

Chair



Paul Cartwright, Chairman



VICE CHAIR'S REPORT

As we entered 2020, none of us could foresee the length of time that our activities would be affected, and how things would change on the rollercoaster of a year, that 2020 was. We all know that it has been a very difficult and challenging year, though in my view as Vice Chair, it has in reality turned out to be one of our most productive years in my time with the civic society. I am very pleased in the way we have pulled together and been at the forefront of support for our town, bringing different groups and individuals together, cultivating mutual support and team spirit. The year has forced us to look inwardly and review how we operate and communicate, including via our website and social media, ensuring public awareness was not lost. We quickly moved our focus to increase online sales and improve our social media presence. As a result, I am delighted to say we have seen record book sales, and we've increased our Facebook following by over 1,000.

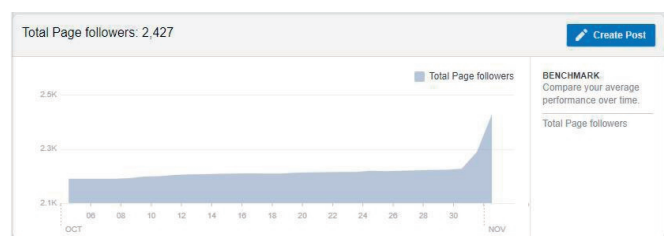
While reviewing our website, it was brought up to date and its messaging was aligned with

our social media content. It was surprising to see how necessary changes had been overlooked. Many changes made so far will not be immediately obvious, as some are a simple alignment or updating of information, and others are yet to be made as they will require technical support. In all, as vice chair, my focus has been ensuring we maintain our public presence and are able to support our town, its businesses, and its community in a very different year. I fully believe we have succeeded in this, and our engagement with Wakefield MDC and the business community has increased in 2020.

Now to 2021

Moving forward, we need to maintain this momentum and grow our membership even more, whilst being mindful that this can only be done as a team, prioritising recruitment of active members, as we all broaden our skill base, as the charity needs this to achieve our future goals. We will

require new members with specific skillsets, some areas of our activities reprioritised, and upskilling members to make the best use of new technology in this ever-changing world. We have a prioritised list of new policies which will be created in 2021 and beyond, though ownership of each one should rest with different trustees, whilst all trustees are accountable. Our engagement will grow in 2021 as we support Wakefield Youth in their focus to bring activities into the town, and our own skills will increase as our networking grows. This kind of shift will provide further opportunities for the civic society and our town.



Facebook page followers increase in 2020

Policies Previously Approved

- Health & Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Privacy Retention
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy

Policies Approved in 2020

- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Expense Policy and documentation (updated)

Achievements

- Engagement with WMDC markets team on outdoor stall layout for Covid response
- Worked with WMDC markets team & major events team on planning for Light Up Pontefract, and future speciality markets
- Regular meetings with WMDC
- Book sales online increased and regular reporting with stock checks
- Increased Facebook activity and followers, plus extensive insight reporting to the board
- Support to other working groups
- Support to WMDC Covid response & testing hub at St Mary's Community Centre
- Support and engagement with local businesses
- Reviewed and provided new content for our website

Phil Cook

Vice Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's report for 2020.

I can confirm that all expenditure has been correctly dual authorised, prior to processing payments promptly, when due, and properly allocated/accounted for. I would like to thank Christopher Hyomes for an effective independent examination of our 2020 Annual Accounts.

2020 has been a year of complete contrast when compared with our successful 50th birthday year of 2019, the effects of Covid-19 curtailing many of our planned activities. However, despite the many challenges faced in the year the Society achieved a cash inflow of £1,964, which was very similar to that of 2019 (£2,144).

Our income in 2020 (£13,999) is made up principally of the combined sales of calendars, various books, pens and pin badges much of which was conducted online amounting to £7,637, and annual subscriptions amounting to £2,772.

A successful calendar sales campaign in partnership with the Prince of Wales Hospice generated income of £6,150, the majority of the resulting profits (after costs and our usual income) being donated to the Hospice (over £4,000).

Annual subscription rates for 2020 for "individual" and "joint" memberships which were reduced significantly in 2019 to celebrate our 50th birthday reverted back to 2018 levels, this being the primary reason for the increase over the previous year.

Our net costs in 2020 after adjusting for

the transfer of funds between accounts amounted to £12,035 which was somewhat higher than in the previous year. Significant items of expenditure included the share of profits on the sale of calendars donated to the Prince of Wales Hospice, the production costs of calendars (£2,276), and expenditure on various grant funded projects (£2,944). In keeping with previous years the Society has made donations to various local projects including Pontefract in Bloom, and St Giles with St Mary's Pantomime Society, totalling £600. Other aspects of the civic society's expenditure are either broadly in line with earlier years or somewhat lower, for example expenditure on events and PR materials as a result of the curtailment of activities caused by Covid-19.

Ian Wood
Treasurer



Captain Tom mural by Rachel List of Pontefract.



Captain Tom mural held aloft

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Pontefract Civic Society
Charity Commission number 513509
Treasurer's Report for the year ended 31 December 2020
Income and Expenditure Account
For the year ended 31 December 2020

Income	2020	2019
Annual subscriptions received	£ 2,772	£ 2,173
Gift aid	£ -	£ 705
Blue plaques	£ -	£ -
Grants	£ 2,250	£ 2,937
Donations	£ 102	£ 593
Events revenue	£ 1,238	£ 3,827
Book, calendar, pen and badge sales	£ 7,637	£ 1,709
Recharge cost of design award plaques	£ -	£ 181
Legacies	£ -	£ -
Sub-Total	£ 13,999	£ 12,125
Income from monetary assets		
Transfers between accounts	£ 5,361	£ 929
Loan	£ -	£ -
Bank interest	£ -	£ -
Total Income	£ 19,360	£ 13,054

Expenditure	2020	2019
Direct charitable expenditure:		
Civic Voice	£ 194	£ 107
YHACS	£ 50	£ 175
Railfuture	£ 25	£ 25
Events & meetings	£ 902	£ 3,205
Donations	£ 3,639	£ 553
Sub-Total	£ 4,810	£ 4,065
Other Expenditure incurred:		
Membership refunds	£ -	£ -
Insurance	£ 579	£ 579
Printing & Postage	£ 229	£ 116
Student's Expenses	£ -	£ -
Grants expenditure	£ 2,944	£ 116
Transfers between accounts	£ 5,361	£ 929
Book Printing	£ -	£ 2,096
Calendar Printing & Envelopes	£ 2,276	£ 362
Pin Badges	£ -	£ 189
Grants Repayment	£ -	£ -
PHG Profit Share on Book Sales	£ 50	£ -
Business support costs	£ -	£ 198
PR Materials	£ 435	£ 1,633
Website & Other Software Costs	£ 171	£ 36
Travel costs	£ -	£ 24
I T Equipment	£ -	£ 180
Membership related costs	£ 541	£ 387
Sub-Total	£ 12,586	£ 6,845
Total expenditure incurred	£ 17,396	£ 10,910
Overall Excess/Deficit of Income over Expenditure	£ 1,964	£ 2,144

Statement of Assets of Liabilities as at 31 December 2020

Monetary Assets	2020	2019
Barclays Community A/c (current)	£ 28,515	£ 26,120
Paypal A/c	£ 69	£ 500
Totals	£ 28,584	£ 26,620
Reconciliation of cash movements to bank balances		
Opening bank balances	£ 26,620	£ 24,476
Total cash receipts	£ 19,360	£ 13,054
Less: Expenditure	£ 17,396	£ 10,910
Total cash inflow	£ 1,964	£ 2,144
Closing bank balances	£ 28,584	£ 26,620

Treasurer: I Wood (2020)

I have examined the Receipts and Payments for the Year 2020 and found it to be in accordance with the records and vouchers produced.

Christopher Hyomes
Independent Examiner

P Cartwright
Chairman

Donations & Bequests

Have you thought of making a donation to Pontefract Civic Society during your lifetime, or leaving us some money in your will?

Pontefract Voice and our Annual Reports show the tremendous work the society and our members are doing to make Pontefract a better place. To continue our important work at its present level, or in fact expand it, then additional resources are always beneficial, especially for new projects.

The civic society is both independent and non-political. As the town's 'watchdog' for the built environment, highways, rail, planning, architecture, heritage, events, business, and public amenities, we can speak on behalf of those who live, work, are educated here, or visit Pontefract, without fear or favour.

We would be absolutely delighted if you would make a donation or a bequest. Both the Chair and Vice Chair are available if you wish to discuss this in more detail.



Pontefract Events 2021



PONTEFRAC
CIVIC SOCIETY

For more information, please visit
www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk/events



Jan
12

"Finding Pontefract's Broken Bridge"

An online talk by Eric Houlder

Feb
9

"The Pontefract Murders"

An online talk by Eric Jackson

Mar
9

"The History of Rowntree's"

An online talk by Karen Adams

Mar
27-31

Virtual Community Showcase

Apr
13

"Votes for Women"

An online talk by Eric Jackson

May
8

VE Day

May
11

"The Many Behind the Few"

An online talk by David Skillern

June
8

"Medieval Leeds"

An online talk by Professor Joyce Hill

June
27

Summer Fair

Jul
13

"American Civil War"

An online talk by David Lynn Skillen

Aug
1

Yorkshire Day

Aug
15

VJ Day

Aug
21

Friarwood Festival

Sept
10 - 19

Heritage Open Days

Sept
14

"Mrs Fawcett's Handbag (a suffragette's tale)"

A performative piece by Sharron Garner

Oct
12

"A Day in the Life of a Yorkshire Miner"

An online talk by Dave Hogg

Nov
9

"The Barnbow Lasses"

A talk by Carole Smithies

Nov
11

Armistice Day

Nov
14

























Remembrance Sunday

Dec
9

Christmas with the Liquorice Singers

King's Croft Hotel

All talks will revert from online to face-to-face events once government guidelines change to allow indoor gatherings.
All talks are free for Pontefract Civic Society members and £3 for non-members.

Gold Member	Gold Member	Gold Member	Gold Member
			
Silver Member	Silver Member	Silver Member	Silver Member
			
Silver Member	Silver Member	Silver Member	Silver Member
			
Silver Member	Silver Member	Bronze Member	Bronze Member
			
Bronze Member	Community Group	Community Group	Community Group
			
Community Group	Community Group	Community Group	Community Group
			
Community Group			
