



Annual Report 2011

Who we are

Established in 1969, Pontefract Civic Society is a registered charity promoting supporting the well-being of Pontefract in all its aspects.

Charity No. 513509

What we do

An extract from the Constitution clause 2:

2. OBJECTS

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.

Mission

To raise the profile of Pontefract as a place to live, work, do business and visit, by protecting and enhancing the environment.

Vision

By 2020, through innovation and lobbying, to raise the profile of Pontefract and the Pontefract Civic Society in the Leeds City Region by promoting good land use, architectural, environmental and transport changes to achieve a range of inter-related and farsighted objectives which conserve the best features of the town, encourage regeneration and improve the quality of life for residents.

These achievements will be publicised in a variety of ways for the benefit of Pontefract citizens, businesses and visitors.

Values

Professional, Inclusive, Proactive, Educational and Influential in promoting Civic Pride in the Pontefract district.

Objectives

1. To promote an understanding of the changes facing Pontefract and district,
2. To assess the possible effects of these changes on the town's environment and on quality of life. Town environment includes the built-up area, transport facilities, public open spaces and surrounding countryside,
3. To oppose undesirable change, promote changes to enhance high quality design of buildings and spaces,
4. To encourage the conservation and improvement of public spaces and built structures that are either of historical interest or contribute to public amenities,
5. To liaise with local authorities, English Heritage, Metro and other bodies about changes in the area, to represent local interests at public inquiries and on other occasions when the above issues are under consideration,
6. To help raise awareness of the above matters by arranging public meetings, workshops, events, lectures and exhibitions,
7. To publish reports and other material in support of the above objectives,
8. To maintain links with the Civic Voice (our national umbrella body), and with other relevant local and regional bodies.



Contact Us

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Our Trustees

President – Vacant

Executive

Chairman – Peter Cookson

Secretary – Paul Cartwright

Treasurer – John Colvill (to Apr, 2011)
Paul Cartwright (*covered from Apr, 2011*)

**Conservation, Environment & Planning
Chair** – Peter Taylor

Land Use & Transport Chair –
Adrian S. Pope

Co-opted – Derek Vaux (from Sept, 2011)

Parks & Open Spaces Chair - Vacant

Publicity & Events Chair – Kebir Berry
(to Apr, 2011). Paul Cartwright (*covered
from Apr, 2011*)

Our Committees

**Conservation, Environment & Planning
Committee:**

Peter Taylor, Paul Cartwright,
Christine Cartwright, Mick Turner

Land Use & Transport Committee:
Adrian S. Pope, Peter Cookson,
Sir Bill O'Brien, Derek Vaux, Anthony Dee

Parks & Open Spaces Committee:
Dormant

Publicity & Events Committee:
Kath Evans, Mollie Garbett

Membership

Member Fees

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Personal membership | £10 |
| Corporate membership | £30 |

Corporate Members

- Blackmoor Head
- Boots The Chemist
- The Broken Bridge
- Jolie Maison
- Pomfret Gallery
- Southgate Business Centre
- Rogerthorpe Manor

Member Offer

- Bi-monthly Newsletter
- Talks & public meetings
- Society Communication
- Vote
- Visits (possible charge)
- Annual Dinner (chargeable)
- Website & email alerts
- Insurance
- Corporate window sticker



Sun Dial, Pontefract Castle

Chairman's Review of 2011

The work of campaigning groups, such as the Civic Society, is often frustrating and progress is usually slow. This is not because of a shortage of ideas or a lack of zeal or commitment - it is rather the lack of power. We have to rely on the strength of our arguments and our ability to put these across to those who can get things done. This is why regular meetings with our Councillors, our dealings with the Local Authority, the press and other interest groups in Pontefract are so important. But, in the end, nothing much will happen in the town's public realm without the will and the resources to do them.



There are, however, in spite of national economic problems, some reasons for optimism. After a decade of huge development in Wakefield, the Local Authority is turning its attention to the early delivery of the Prince of Wales site by applying for appropriate funding to bring this forward. As a consequence of this, an improvement in the infrastructure of the Monkhill area is being seen as a priority. The Society has long campaigned for improvements to road and rail in this area and we shall continue to make our views known in a constructive way.

This year has also seen two other initiatives, which have the potential to bring early improvements to our parks. Friends groups have either already been set up or are in the process of being set up for the Park and the Valley Gardens. Such groups are able to access funding that is not available to the Local Authority and this should enable them to bring much-needed improvements to these very important areas. In this context we acknowledge the excellent work that has already been done at Pease Park and recognise the importance of the new country park to be created on the Prince of Wales spoil area. The Society will be represented in all these initiatives.

Of some concern is the rather slow progress of the Town Centre Heritage Initiative. This five year programme of grants for the refurbishment of town-centre buildings has not yet revealed any visible improvements, but there are some businesses showing an interest and we hope to see progress this year.



Perhaps the most interesting event of 2011 was the partial excavation of St Richard's Friary which came, rather unexpectedly, out of demolition of the hospital. The Society cooperated with the Archaeological Society in a campaign to secure the excavation, which yielded much valuable knowledge and engaged wide public interest. It is hoped that a

further, larger dig will take place this year. But where do we go from there? That is a very important question, for we have a considerable historical heritage in the town that needs to be developed and marketed if we are to attract visitors and improve the prospect for Pontefract to be a viable town. People will not visit in significant numbers unless it is an attractive place with things to see and do. The Society will work hard to encourage the view that our historical assets should be seen as a whole and developed to form the basis of a visitor strategy for the town.



The present year will probably see a planning application for a new town-centre Tesco store. A new store is clearly needed, as the present one falls well below modern standards, but this will be both an asset and a threat and we shall have to work hard to try to influence the development for good. It may well be that work on this project will be the catalyst for the redevelopment of the Tanshelf area, which is seen as a priority for the town.

Those who have known Pontefract over the last two or three decades will have witnessed its sad decline, as local services have been transferred away to larger centres in the name of progress. The reduction in status of the hospital from a good district hospital to little more than a diagnostic centre is just one example -

there are others. Against this background, Pontefract needs to develop in order to remain a viable entity and it is the Society's purpose to try to influence these changes for the general good.

It now only remains for me to thank all members of the Society, who have worked for our committees, and those who have supported us in our various events. There is much still to do and I would cordially invite all who have the Society's aims at heart to join us and take part.

Peter Cookson - Chairman

Secretary's Report

From spring 2011, my efforts in supporting the Executive and the Conservation, Environment and Planning Committee (as Secretary for both), has actually slowed whilst focusing on other areas of the Society's work. That said, communication is key to our activities, and in that I have relentlessly kept committees and members up to date with Society business, information from Civic Voice, YHACS, NCVO and other local, and national bodies which touch the civic and charitable movement. I have also provided input and secretarial support to the Pontefract Friary Action Group which met weekly during the Spring and early Summer.

The other additional tasks which took some of my time will be covered elsewhere in this report, but for completeness, I have covered the roles of Treasurer and kept events moving forward through the Publicity & Events Committee. During 2011, I produced the 2010 Annual Report and Design Awards

evening, and our four newsletters. The Society was also consulted by WMDC on new tourism boards and maps, and it was agreed that the Library, Museum and Castle would also sell our Blue Plaque Guide.

A long outstanding priority project to deliver a brand new website was successfully delivered after months of planning, and with the support of Pontefract North's Councillors, in countersigning our funding bid to WMDC. Some areas of the website remain undeveloped, though it has already proved to be a great shop window for Pontefract Civic Society.



June was Civic Day month, if that makes sense, where a series of activities culminated in a blue plaque being presented to Rogetherthorpe Manor (which I coordinated), and we launched the website, a facebook page, and generally raised the public profile of the Society.



By September, our efforts hadn't gone unnoticed, when at the Civic Voice AGM, I had the pleasure of collecting a Civic Day Award for raising the profile of the Society. The presentation took place at Sheffield Town Hall, and the award was presented by Civic Voice Chair, Paula Ridley.

I have attended most meetings of YHACS and Wakefield District Societies, in order to hear speakers, share our successes, experiences and frustrations, and to hear what other Societies are doing. One such YHACS meeting in Beverley was attended by Peter Cookson, Peter Taylor, my wife and myself, and we hear from the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government.

Paul Cartwright - Secretary

Treasurer's Report

We started the year well, with John Colvill in the Interim Treasurer's seat, after Mae Collins planned to move house out of the area. John was a welcome addition to the Executive too, though due ill health, he stood down on 20 April, 2011. Despite considerable requests to members, and some external contacts, we've failed to secure services of a replacement Treasurer. Between myself and Christine, we have ensured that all banking has been done, bills paid, and the bank mandate was also updated.

I have done my best to maintain the records and prepare the Annual Accounts. Some elements of the Accounts will be spoken to covering a number of 'year on year' comparisons, 2011 over 2010.

Finance Report

Membership income increased, though primarily due to extensive work in recruiting Corporate Members, this work will never be finished. *In passing, I should like to specifically thank both Kath Evans and Sean Stephens for their support in our corporate recruitment activity.* Subscriptions increased from £300 to £500, and donations remained in line with 2010 at £126. However, Talks have received only £770 in income, which £300 down on 2010.

On Expenditure, postage and printing has significantly increased from £69 (2010) to £371, as a result of more newsletters (note that not everyone is on email) and also the production of a more comprehensive Annual Report. In adding printing costs, I would highlight that have been supporting St. Giles and St. Marys. A vinyl banner was purchased to promote the Society. Talks & events costs increased from £600 to £1,370 however a word of caution is that these figures are distorted due to the postponement of the 2009 Christmas Dinner, due to extreme weather conditions. Some costs were incurred by the Society for initial design and set up of new blue plaques, after which, the cost of each plaque has been covered by donations, and the Blue Plaque Guide is being sold at cost (as it is only a single page, after all). Equipment cost was down in 2011 by £200, however, this has little relevance when 100% grant funded. Whilst charities should manage reserves and utilise income for good purposes, year end balances have declined since 2009.

Paul Cartwright - Interim Treasurer

Conservation, Environment & Planning Committee Report

The Conservation, Environment & Planning Committee meets monthly to report on changes affecting Pontefract's historic fabric, in particular within the town centre. Regular monitoring of the Council's planning and regeneration website enables these planning applications to be identified. Many changes that occur do not require permission, but it is necessary to identify inappropriate or unauthorised development. Pontefract now has four Conservation Areas, and the Market Place Conservation Area in particular, has a special character and requires extra efforts and local knowledge in order to maintain its attractiveness.

The planning process invites comments from the general public and welcomes input from the Civic Society. In this regard the Civic Society continues to monitor both schemes it objects to, as well as supports. A high quality of development is needed in order to ensure that the town centre is visibly attractive to invite economic investment.

The committee has produced a Blue Plaque Guide in 2011, which includes almost 30 plaques around Pontefract and the surrounding area, *could you locate them and are you aware of their historic significance?* The committee has identified a long list of potential additions though we rely on funding or donations to progress them further. In 2011, two plaques were presented, one to Rogerthorpe Manor Hotel (funded by the hotel), and one for Pete & Fred Asquith (funded by the ASDA Foundation).



The Market Place Conservation Area has been identified to attract substantial funding via Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme, or THI). The local authority sought the Society's involvement and input by inviting a representative to its meetings and a Grants Board. This is a five year project and has already involved a lot of survey work and effort, but in the current economic climate the uptake is difficult to achieve and progress is slow.

Our committee continues to look at new ideas and future activities to promote heritage and the economic wellbeing of the town by attending meetings of YAHCS (Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies), Civic Voice, other societies across the Wakefield District and contacts with officers from the local authority. In comparison with other Conservation Areas, Pontefract lacks the attention to detail from building owners, which thus requires constant vigilance.

As Chairman I would like to express my thanks to the other members of the Group for their interest and encouragement. In 2011, we didn't have sufficient resources to coordinate Heritage Open Days, and as example, we'd like to be able to do more for Pontefract, and we'd therefore welcome additional members to join us.

Peter Taylor - CEP Chair

Land Use & Transport Committee Report

Early in 2011, two announcements gave us hope that the regeneration of Pontefract might start in earnest. Firstly, a new Pontefract Steering Group was to be set up to manage all the projects essential to the regeneration of Pontefract. We were told it would be chaired by the WMDC Councillor responsible for Regeneration, assisted by relevant officers and it would contain local Councillors, major stakeholders (such as Yorkshire Forward and English Heritage) and representatives from local community groups. It has met at intervals but there are few signs of any action and, more significantly, local groups have been refused any seats on the Steering Group. A possible sign that the failure has been recognised is that 6 local Councillors representing Pontefract have been asked to review the composition and structure of the Steering Group, with possible sub-committees, later in 2012.

Very recently, there has been a second announcement of potential importance to Pontefract. Wakefield Council has been awarded a significant sum from the Government's Housing Growth Fund. Since the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the District selected Pontefract as one of the three main areas of growth (amounting to a 40% growth in Pontefract's housing stock over a twelve year period), we can assume that Pontefract should be eligible for some of this money to pay for much needed infrastructure (roads, schools, drains etc) to support the growth. Clearly the Steering Group should be taking a lead role in bidding for this money, but past

experience suggests that the town could miss out once again.

Despite the forecast growth in Housing, the LDF has allocated virtually no new land in or around the town for employment. If we are to avoid the town becoming predominantly a home for commuters, the LUT Committee feels that the interrelated issues of the town's heritage, tourism potential and service role should all be exploited. An effective Pontefract Steering Group should be able to assess all such projects and then (if appropriate) push them forward as part of a Heritage & Tourism Strategy.

In last year's annual report we welcomed news of the new direct rail service to and from London. Despite the LUT Committee's best endeavours, some of the trains have now been withdrawn and the operator seems keen to divert the service away from Pontefract altogether. On a closely related matter, the LUT Committee has managed to gain publicity and to secure attendance at some high level meetings on the range of necessary improvements to Monkhill station, but Wakefield Council seems intent on doing only minor works. Our bold and imaginative scheme for Monkhill is probably the most important single project for the regeneration and expansion of the town, but Wakefield Council has been slow to take this forward.

The Land Use and Transport Committee is very constrained by the speed at which WMDC and private developers wish to move. We can react when we are consulted but sometimes a chance conversation in town or a routine check on a website can open up an unexpected opportunity. This year such an opportunity arose when a Society member

was routinely examining some planning applications on the council's website. The applications concerned 3 Hospital buildings (behind the Dispensary), for which permission to demolish was required since they fell within the Friarwood Conservation Area.



The real discovery was an indistinct supporting plan showing that demolition of a much wider area was due to begin on May 18th 2011, as it didn't require planning permission. Under this area were thought to be significant remains of the Dominican Friary. Since the planned demolition and site re-grading were likely to destroy most of the remains, the Civic Society joined with the Pontefract Archaeological Society in a campaign to preserve the ruins. This was successful and subsequently, the Archaeological Society was able to undertake a remarkable 10-week dig with which most Civic Society members will be familiar.

The next 12 months is also likely to be a challenge because many important aspects of National Planning Policy, Regional Government, Localism and the way developers contribute towards necessary infrastructure are all being changed. At the regional level, the Leeds City Region (which covers 11 existing local authorities) is being given many powers which previously rested with Whitehall. The

Localism Act, which became law in November, 2011 is offering local people and organisations planning powers which previously rested with local planning authorities, but no-one knows whether many people will want to make use of them. On developer contributions, local councils can now introduce a system of Community Infrastructure Levies, largely in place of Section 106 legal agreements but WMDC has so far not shown its hand. Pontefract's growth requires a lot of infrastructure improvements, so early action by WMDC to secure funds for Pontefract from both this levy and the Housing Growth Fund, is vitally important to existing and new residents.

Adrian Pope - LUT Chair

Publicity & Events Committee Report

After Kebir stepped away from the Executive at the 2010 AGM, I have maintained the calendar of events, finalised the visit to Selby, and managed the Talks at the Grange, ably supported by Mollie and Kath.

Our summer and autumn talks season began with Matthew Webster giving is a very enthusiastic review of the RAF's impact on Tockwith and Marston Moor. This was followed by Eric Houlder's view of the possible of "The Broken Bridge". In October, we were treated to a strategic view of planning by John Thorpe, Leeds City architect. Finally, Simon Tomson took us to medieval times for an entertaining talk.

Unfortunately, we were not able to offer Heritage Open Days in 2011, due to the lack of a volunteer to coordinate the activity, and so far, no one has come

forward for 2012. If you want to see this on our calendar, then please volunteer, or help us find a coordinator.

The Christmas Dinner closed our year on December 1st, which was our second visit to Rogerthorpe Manor Hotel. Although I couldn't attend, I'm sure those who attended enjoyed the evening. I hope the members who attended any or all of the events enjoyed them.

2012 Talks & Tours

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| Tues 17 Jan | Talk: O What Transport of Delight ~ Peter Cookson. |
| Tues 7 Feb | Talk: Two Families One Story - Warde Family & Saltonstall Family ~ Dr Mae Collins. |
| Mon 27 Feb | Valley Gardens Public Meeting. |
| Tues 6 Mar | Design Awards & Annual General Meeting. |
| Sat 21 Apr | Visit: to Goole Civic Society |
| Sat 12 May | Selby Civic Society visit to Pontefract. |
| Tues 15 May | Talk: Groundwork (TBC). |
| Sat 9 Jun | Market Weighton Civic Society visit to Pontefract. |
| Sat 23 Jun | Civic Voice - Civic Day. |
| Sat 21 Jul | Visit: to Market Weighton. |
| Thu 6 - Sun 9 Sep | TBC Heritage Open Days. |
| Oct TBC | Talk: Methodism in Pontefract ~ Mollie Garbett. |
| Nov TBC | Talk: Button Park / Friarwood Conservation Area ~ Adrian Pope. |

Paul Cartwright - Secretary

Design Awards 2011

The Conservation, Environment & Planning Committee have had some tough discussions to make the final choice for the Design Awards and Façade of the Year Award 2011.

The nominations and winners are:

Countess of Rosse Façade of the Year Award

❖ **Flowerworks - 1st Place**

"A great improvement to Front Street, through a change of use on this key gateway to the Conservation Area."



❖ **Kelly Ireland - Runner Up**

"...a nice looking facade, in keeping with the neighbouring shops."



Improvement Award
Deferred till 2012 awards.

Regeneration Award

❖ **@loma House - 1st Place**

“Key features of a character building have been retained in this careful restoration project – a welcome change to the Conservation Area. Jobs will also be created.”



Heritage Award
No qualifying nominations.

Special Commendation

❖ **Pontefract Castle - 1st Place**

“Considerable effort through partnership funding to deliver major restoration of stonework and pathways, and add new features which will encourage tourism and an interest in the town’s rich heritage.”



❖ **Charles E. Ashton & Son - Runner Up**



“An attractive frontage embellishing a key town gateway at Town End.”

Residential Award

❖ **Old Castle Apartments - 1st Place**

“Conversion from redundant pub to apartments close to the town centre, and sympathetic to the approach route to Pontefract Castle.”



❖ **Willow Park Care Home - Runner Up**

“A new build replacing a redundant pub, completed to a high standard, and in keeping with the local Willow Park & Baghill area.”



**On behalf of the Conservation,
Environment & Planning Committee**

Annual Accounts 2011

Treasurer's Report for year ended 31 December 2011

| | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Membership | | | | |
| Life | | 47 | 59 | 68 |
| Annual | | | 43 | 37 |
| Corporate | 8 | | | |
| Household | 52 | *26 | | |
| TOTAL | 60 | 73 | 102 | 105 |

| | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Income | | | | |
| 2011 Subscriptions | 581 | 277 | 309 | 200 |
| less 2012 Subscriptions | -65 | | | |
| | 516 | | | |
| Donations | 126 | 114 | 43 | 130 |
| Revenue from Events | 776 | 1053 | 1552 | 761 |
| Grants and Gift Aid | 675 | 0 | 1148 | 112 |
| Blue Plaques | 658 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sub-Total | 2751 | 1444 | 3052 | 1203 |
| Income from monetary assets | | | | |
| Bank Interest | 1 | 2 | 3 | 113 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 2753 | 1446 | 3055 | 1316 |

| | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Monetary Assets | | | | |
| COIF | 57 | 57 | 57 | 56 |
| Barclays Investment | 2379 | 2378 | 2676 | 2674 |
| Barclays Current | 533 | 1151 | 1628 | 406 |
| TOTAL | 2969 | 3586 | 4361 | 3136 |

Equipment Register

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Acer projector | | | | |
| Projection screen | | | | |
| Extension reel | | | | |
| 2 banner stands | | | | |
| Table top display board | | | | |
| Vinyl banner | | | | |

Treasurer cover by Secretary: P. Cartwright (2011)



Voluntary Action
Wakefield District

| Expenditure | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 |
|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Direct charitable expenditure | | | | |
| Fees & Subscriptions | 101 | 88 | 0 | 60 |
| Events expenditure | 1371 | 608 | 1440 | 683 |
| Donations | 30 | 42 | 60 | 0 |
| Sub-Total | 1501 | 738 | 1500 | 743 |
| Other expenditure incurred | | | | |
| Insurance | 245 | 250 | 240 | 141 |
| Postage & printing | 376 | 61 | 26 | 19 |
| Miscellaneous | 18 | 167 | 64 | 0 |
| Campaigns | 30 | 91 | 0 | 0 |
| Equipment (website) | 725 | | | |
| Blue Plaques & Blue Plaque Guides | 771 | | | |
| Payments outstanding | 0 | 517 | 0 | 111 |
| Total expenditure from current income | 3667 | 1824 | 1830 | 1014 |
| Purchase of equipment from a 2009 grant | | 924 | | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 3667 | 2748 | 1830 | 1014 |
| OVERALL DEFICIT/EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE | -914 | -1302 | 1225 | 302 |
| | 2753 | 1446 | 3055 | 1316 |

| Liabilities | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Accumulated surplus before income provisions | 3586 | 4361 | 3136 | 2722 |
| Deficit/surplus from Income and Expenditure | -914 | -1302 | 77 | 302 |
| | 2672 | 3059 | 3213 | 3024 |
| Creditors (room hire) | | | | 112 |
| Reserve for purchase of equipment | | | 1148 | |
| Creditors (postponed xmas dinner) | | 517 | | |
| Creditors (2011 Subscriptions pre-paid) | | 10 | | |
| Creditors (cheque 200158: Carleton CC) | 32 | | | |
| Creditors (2012 Subscriptions pre-paid) | 65 | | | |
| | 2769 | 3586 | 4361 | 3136 |

Reconciliation of cash movements to bank balances

| | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|-------------|
| Total balances at 31 December 2010 | | | | 3586 |
| Total cash receipts (including Subs 2012) | | | 2818 | |
| Total expenditure incurred | 3667 | | | |
| less payments outstanding | 32 | | | |
| less Total cash outflow | | 3635 | | |
| Reduction in cash assets | | | | -617 |
| TOTAL BANK BALANCE 31 DECEMBER, 2011 | | | | 2969 |

I have examined the receipts and payments for the Year 2011 and found these to be in accordance with the records and vouchers produced.

Signature: D. Vaux Date: 03/03/2012
Executive Member

The Income and Expenditure account for the year ending 31/12/2011 and the Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 21/12/2011 set out above are as approved by the Executive.

Signature: P. Cookson Date: 03/03/2012
Honorary Chairman



Gasgoigne Tower, Pontefract Castle