



ANNUAL REPORT 2021





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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Venue provision: Pontefract Town Hall (WMDC), The Old Grocers, Tracked Spider Solutions, King's Croft Hotel

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CHAIR'S REVIEW OF 2021



December saw the close of another challenging, interesting, and yet successful year in so many ways, especially when the pandemic remained and many charities and community groups have had their activities curtailed, and some in fact have lost members, funding, and leadership, thus have ceased to exist.

The details of our membership growth in 2021 are shown in our Secretary's report, though the headline for me is that we have more people and organisations involved than at any other time since I joined thirteen years ago!

Pontefract Civic Society, on the other hand, has continued to lead the way as an active organisation through a blend of in-person and virtual events, meetings, and talks, together with significant local and regional media output across print, socials, radio and now TV. My approach to any annual programme of work is to achieve a mix of content which raises the profile of the civic society, whilst promoting and taking a keen interest in the place where we all live and work; this benefits more people and other community organisations and businesses that we work with, and of course Wakefield MDC.

As well as working within the civic society in partnership with other organisations, I've managed our 2021 Design Awards assessment, invitations, certificates (for the ceremony in Jan, 2022), attended Light Up at Aspire including an official opening ceremony and site tour, secured Pontefract as the venue for The Yorkshire Society Heritage Summit in 2022, oh, and we had a

Christmas dinner with a handful of members (the latter will I'm sure be more well attended in 2022).

WORKING FOR PONTEFRACT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WAKEFIELD MDC

- Meetings with Deputy Leader & Climate Change lead, Cllr Hemingway, and Mark Lynam, Corporate Director of Regeneration, which was followed by a walk around Pontefract with Mark
- Quarterly Operational meetings chaired by Cllr Byford
- Six-weekly meetings of Pontefract Deliver Group
- Briefed on the Market Hall refurbishment programme
- Supported Pontefract Allsorts and other social media support for events and festivals
- Pontefract Giants performance – In July, I met with the two organisers with our member, John Turner, to discuss the context of Pontefract's long and rich history, and to connect them with Tom Dixon, followed by recruitment of local performers, and participation in the filming, along with numerous other civic society members. I also directed performers to the Old Tavern as they were seeking B&B accommodation for their crew for 1 week in September. Those involved were then invited to an official reception ahead of the performances over two nights in September
- Contributed to Wakefield Council's Contemporary Art workshops
- Invited to join the Armed Forces Steering Group, and I've attended meetings

- Following pre-meetings and hours of presentation preparation, I was pleased to be invited to present Pontefract Civic Society to Pontefract Park Steering Group (21 Oct), though it was with some disappointment that this was blocked. The group chair suggested that we should work with Arcadis on the next 10-year plan, which was accepted, though we've not been contacted since
- Attended a site visit to be introduced to the new Park Ranger service which would work with the Friends of Friarwood Valley Gardens

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER LOCAL GROUPS

- Supported FFVG gardening and litter picking
- Support for Pontefract in Bloom – Bridge St planter, 6 hanging baskets off Stuart Rd, and 2 PR boards added
- Met Lions Club in order to support their plans, which extended to the civic society facilitating and staffing the town hall for their immensely successful Santa's Grotto on Light Up day
- Elizabeth Love Trust Museum visit, and offered support
- Presented the civic society to Pontefract Rotary Club (20 Jul) in an online meeting, which has since secured their member for 2022
- 5 Towns Radio – reflection on Jubilee public meeting, and promoting other community groups & businesses
- Engagement with Pontefract Academies Trust throughout the year, and a tour of Larks Hill school with the head, planning 2021-2022 (11 Oct)
- Engagement with St Giles CofE Academy throughout the year, and meeting with Richard Grace (head), and Hannah, planning 2021-2022 (14 Oct)
- 2022 Calendar (supporting PoW Hospice) printed, distributed including some local deliveries and all postal orders

BEING PART OF A NATIONAL AND REGIONAL MOVEMENT

- Civic Voice Regional Forum representative for YHACS
- After lobbying for her support, Yvette Cooper MP joined the All Party Parliamentary Group for Civic Societies, and at their AGM, Yvette was elected as Co-Vice Chair.
- YHACS trustee and Exec member

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Participated in numerous webinars with Civic Voice, Leeds Civic Trust, Wakefield Council, WYCA, Railfuture, Transport for the North, and the High Street Taskforce
- Set up all online meetings and talks, including arrangements for the latter on Eventbrite, social media, and town centre posters
- Social media posts on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

- Managed the printing by Pen2Print of the new Roger Ellis book we got back into print, Robson's
- Promoted 'Pontefract Stories' – ACE funded project.
- Children's Croquet launched featuring Pontefract's heritage buildings, places, and facts
- The first community group feature in the Pontefract & Castleford Express
- Delayed AGM (Sept) covering the 2020 Annual Report, which was a joint evening support FFVG's AGM
- Harworth/Prince of Wales Liaison meetings and consultation events
- Pontefract Voice – March and December
- All press releases for media
- Gained agreement that all our Talks posters will now be created by Phil Crowther, partner at Forever After/ Freshinc (new corporate member)
- Engaged with Five Towns Print & Design on various projects, and I'd like to thank Lee and James for their work
- I've exploited our relationship with the Pontefract & Castleford Express chief reporter, which has delivered numerous press releases and photoshoots benefiting the community and businesses. I've also been supportive of Wakefield MDC work in relation to the Pontefract Action Plan
- I was approached by BBC Look North for their Budget Day coverage, which required business participation from Maud's Café, Olive & Co, Forever After, and the Magistrates Market
- Christine and I attended the WDH Awards dinner at the racecourse where Pontefract Civic Society achieved a Runner Up award for Digital in the Community work throughout the year. Our friends in Pontefract Decoration Squad had a great win, which is reported elsewhere in this Annual Report



NOW FOR 2022

Our core work will continue in line with the objects in our constitution which has the focus on public realm, planning and highways, and the environment.

We will of course continue to support business, schools, and other community groups, balancing their needs and those of the civic society with the resources we have available. Our first President, Lady Rosse, said to Allan Blaza back in 1969, that for a civic trust to be successful it must work with not against the local council; in my opinion, that remains so, and therefore we will continue in 2022 to work with officers and councillors, for the benefit of Pontefract. In doing so, we will continue to be supportive, constructive, innovative, and where necessary, critical.

Our lobbying for improvements to roads and rail remains unabated, as does our support for the business community through sharing social media and facilitating media opportunities.

Our board of trustees will be refocused away from operational matters which are delegated to our working groups, to the extent that it will become more strategic, supported by the implementation of Microsoft 365, and other technologies. Additional trustees will be co-opted bringing much experience and skills to the table, and our ways of working will shift. First and foremost, whilst we are a membership organisation which listens to our members plus those outside the civic society, we must remember that as a charity, our trustees have responsibilities. Aside for the seriousness of our voluntary work, we must also balance that with some fun, as we look to be 'more social'.

Judge us in 12 months' time.

Paul Cartwright - *Chair*

PATRON'S ADDRESS

A common theme throughout 2021 is how challenging it has been. To my delight Pontefract Civic Society has not just acknowledged it but has embraced it.

New ways of working and communication have arisen out of these challenges and it remains the real Voice of Pontefract. That vital link of bringing together and supporting business, the public and voluntary sectors remains at its heart. It is also good to see the civic society play a significant role in the wider societies covering Yorkshire and the Humber whose influence has clearly been significant.

A good example of this is how that partnership has played out in looking at the Government's Planning White Paper. So many residents felt uneasy about the diminishing of community involvement in the planning process. It is clear that pressure from civic societies as well as voter reaction has led to a rethink. It was good to see schools getting involved in judging the Christmas

window displays and the enthusiasm that teachers had for this venture. It is so important that our young people get to know more about the town in which they live and also its history. I feel sure the civic society will continue to foster and develop these links with schools. After all these are the potential members of the future!

I cannot thank enough the Chairman and all the officers of Pontefract Civic Society who have continued the hard work in difficult circumstances in 2021 and their determination to do so much more in 2022. I hope to be able to play a part in their plans to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June, as well as working with the Chairman on the proposed visit by the Vice-Lord Lieutenant and Deputy Lieutenant colleagues when we visit Pontefract in May 2022.

Michael Sayles Fox DL - *Patron*

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

None of us needs to be reminded of the restrictions that Covid19 has imposed on us, nor of the fundamental ways in which our lives have been changed; but people and organisations have reacted to this in different ways.

No-one can doubt the damage that the pandemic has caused, but there are those who have tried to turn a disadvantage into an opportunity, rather than to batten down the hatches and ride out the storm.

I am glad to say that the work of the civic society has continued through this difficult period, and to some extent prospered, with as much face-to-face engagement as has been feasible, but where this has not been possible, modern technology has come to the rescue. The Chairman will report on our activities and achievements over the past year, but there will be much to occupy us in the present year as we tentatively return to a new normal. There should soon be some firmer indications of how various plans, currently in general form, will be implemented to achieve the much-vaunted "Levelling Up" Agenda in our area and we shall have to respond appropriately to these.

The general viability of our town and particularly our town-centre will continue to be a problem as online and out of town shopping habits take their toll and the gradual transfer of service provision (hospital, court services, etc.) to larger centres, all contribute to diminishing activity in our town. The solution to this problem is no doubt complex, but the need to preserve local vitality remains key to the solution and the civic society will continue to engage with all relevant agencies to find the best solution for Pontefract.

There is a very important difference between what is the best that can be achieved in given circumstances and what is the least that can reasonably got away with; we must aspire to the best we can get for Pontefract.

Peter Cookson - *President*

CITIZENSHIP

For the second year running, the plans for both the Citizenship Group and the Decoration Squad were affected by the pandemic.

The theme of adapting to virtual events and meetings which began in 2020 continued into 2021. Fortunately, we had learnt from the previous year and had already reacted to the restrictions. We were in a much better situation and able to run a fairly full programme of events by August. We were able to set up our community stall at the Yorkshire Day celebrations in the Valley Gardens. We've continued to work with Pontefract Academies Trust, and St Giles CofE Academy, making it again a very busy and active year.

I am delighted in the way the whole team has taken this working group forward, whilst adapting to changing circumstances,



though our resources are stretched. The year hasn't been without its difficulties, and the group has lost valued members, which we need to urgently replace. Allowing for restrictions and disruption in the first half of 2021, I am pleased to say that during the latter part of the year some form of normality did return allowing us to plan for what has now become our annual Christmas Celebrations - "Carols at Christmas"; the concert and social occasion was very well attended and was a great opportunity to see our members face to face. We were also able to engage local schools for our usual joint activities for Remembrance Day and judging Christmas shop window displays.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Community Showcase virtual slideshow
- Engaged with St Giles & St Mary's for virtual Heritage Open Days
- Engaged with Pontefract Academies Trust for various projects, in particular Remembrance displays
- Virtual events for Civic Day, Pontefract Allsorts
- Live Yorkshire Day events
- WDH Community Award 2nd place in the Digital in the Community category
- Remembrance Day support for the live ceremony
- Actively promoted and supported Pontefract Light Up
- Actively supported in partnership with the Lions Club on their Santa's Grotto
- 2022 Pontefract Calendar fundraiser for the Prince of Wales Hospice
- Provided a roving Santa for the Friends of Friarwood Valley Gardens
- Early planning and public meetings for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- Live event "Carols at Christmas" at the Kings Croft

DECORATION SQUAD ACHIEVEMENTS 2021

- Easter display and Christmas display at the Red Lion
- Greater public engagement in all our town hall displays which were created for the Centenary of The Royal British Legion (15 May), Yorkshire Day, and Remembrance Day
- Over 25 flags in the town celebrating the Olympics and European cup football and other sporting events
- Larger poppy display on the St Giles Church tower
- Winners of WDH Arts in the Community Award 2021
- Support to Friends of Friarwood Valley Gardens for their Christmas wonderland decorations

2022 - BRINGING THE TOWN BACK TO LIFE

In November 2021, we were also able to start planning for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022, and I am pleased to say it is going very well.

The public meeting was very well attended, and the civic society is taking the lead on co-ordinating our town's events, building on the previous success of the Tour de Yorkshire 2019. We are looking to deliver a large programme of events starting prior to the 4-day bank holiday (2-5 June, 2022), so be sure to watch our social media. We are also now planning the return of our live Community Showcase, which will be at Pontefract Library on 9 April.

What is very satisfying for me is the interaction with other community groups and local businesses supporting Pontefract Civic Society, making Pontefract a positive talking point in the district, and beyond.

The Decoration Squad comprises members of the public, other organisations and businesses coming together under the umbrella of Pontefract Civic Society. The squad installed a new poppy waterfall display for Remembrance Day on St Giles, and they mounted numerous flags in the Market Place and Beastfair, also the fantastic town hall poppy waterfall on the town hall was updated with contributions of painted plastic bottle bottoms from many local groups, schools, and the public.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Live Community Showcase
- Street displays for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee



- Coordinate Pontefract's programme for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations
- Participate in the Lions Lantern Parade
- 2023 Photographic Calendar
- Re-establish Citizenship group meetings and attract new members
- Engage the Junior Civic Society in live events and activities
- We are a member of the Armed Forces Day Steering Group
- Full return to normal operations

2022 is a year where our town can come back to life and fully celebrate the national and local events that are happening while building our community spirit.

Thank you all for your continued support.

Phil Cook - Citizenship Coordinator



HERITAGE



Pontefract has so much history and heritage, though other than online research, our practical research, as you can imagine was stalled by the on and off access to the museum and library.

The pandemic has not stopped our enthusiasm for research, not the digital output to support events (physical and digital) in 2021. Research never ends, and this seems to be the case for our work on liquorice, Pontefract's pubs, Pontefract Park & Racecourse, Mid-year, we also had the success of Derek Norfolk observing an online meeting and then joining the group, following a conversation and an invitation from Paul Cartwright to get involved.

Following a number of months reworking his Roman Roads book, Eric Houlder delivered his work for Pen 2 Print and Paul Cartwright to proofread, ready for the second edition to be printed and made available for sale, just prior to Christmas; sales have since gone very well.

THE BARRACKS REMEMBERS

Just before 11am on the Thursday, 11th November, members of the Barracks Community Association, Pontefract Civic Society and Col. Gerald Delany gathered

and remembered at the extended entrance feature to the Barracks housing estate off Wakefield Road, Pontefract.

This ceremony was part of the Barracks Community Association's phase 2 entrance feature project, of which we were a key partner. An additional commemorative bench and more paving were recently added by residents, which was topped off by our heritage information board created by Christine Cartwright, using historical references provided by Col. Delany and archive photographs from Wakefield Council. Fr Michael Taylor from St Giles Church, conducted a short service and he also read a brief history of the building of the fortress Gothic-styled Barracks in 1878, whilst Col. Delany offered personal reminiscences of growing up on the army depot, then joining the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry in the footsteps of his father and grandfather.

The interpretation board had to achieve an awful lot in a small space describing both the 'place' and the 'people'. We needed to tell a story about the scale of the depot, and to offer a glimpse into the history and campaigns of the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and to a lesser extent, the Yorks & Lancaster Regiment. We were also thankful for the considerable support from Precision Engineering in creating the interpretation board structure, which they donated to the civic society.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

We were pleased to have created three new walks for Heritage Open Days 2021, two which linked into the national theme of 'Edible England'.

Firstly, 'Elizabeth Moxon's Edible England walk', commencing in the Windmill Yard to the rear of where she lived, meandering through the imaginary sights and smells of the Market Place through to the Valley Gardens for what we believe would have been the Prospect Family's well-respected fruit orchard which supplied the country houses of Yorkshire. Secondly, 'Pontefract Park walk through the Ages', jointly researched by Phil Cook and Phil Henfrey covering centuries of use from the castle deer park to the racecourse, and later the short-lived World War I airfield.

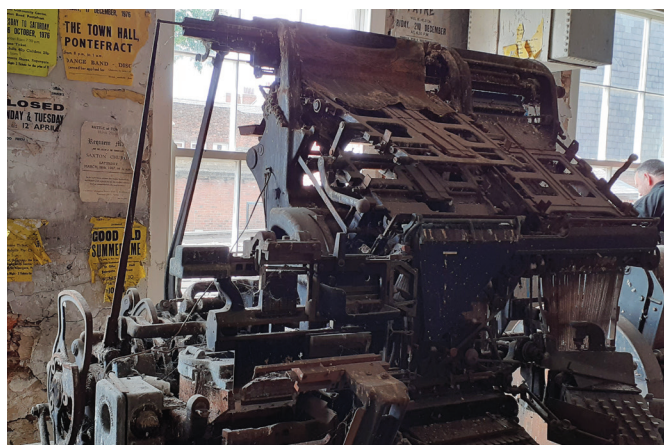
Back in the town centre, for another new walk we very successfully delivered 'Beyond the Façade – Past Retail and Social Gillygate', which commenced by walking up and down the street explaining past buildings, businesses, the British School for the MP's 'secret ballot' and the Playhouse Theatre, then moving into the time capsule that was the Holmes printworks. Visitors were able to immerse themselves in the archives left behind when the works ceased, together with numerous pieces of machinery from printing, to binding and a guillotine; it was a truly fascinating experience with every walk filled to capacity.

We were fortunate to redirect some funding from Wakefield Council to a new video on rail, which was presented by Peter Cookson, using his knowledge of the development of our three stations, supplemented by his photographs from the 1950's.

These new walks were successfully delivered alongside the stalwarts of Tom Dixon's Liquorice, Ackworth School, St. Giles Church, All Saints Church, and churches in Ferrybridge and Brotherton. These physical events were also supplemented by online content for the second year running.



In the latter part of 2021, Paul Cartwright was eventually able to complete a Wakefield Council funded project with St Giles CE Academy and Orchard Head School in 2021, to create a small booklet of stories written and drawn by primary school pupils entitled 'Pontefract Castle – Through the Eyes of a Child'. Free copies were given to the contributors, and a small stock has been given to all Pontefract's primary schools, and the remainder are now on sale at just £3.50 per copy.



2022 PLANS

- Reworking our regular Market Place conservation walk
- Hosting The Yorkshire Society 'Heritage Summit'
- Hosting the West Yorkshire Lieutenancy team supported by Wakefield Council and St Giles Church
- Researching Pontefract's royal connections for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- Researching Heritage open Days 2022 theme on 'Innovation'
- Consideration to curate shorter walks in other parts of the town, following the success of Gillygate, and a mix of walks and social time, perhaps early evenings

Paul Cartwright - Interim Heritage Coordinator
Supported by **Phil Henfrey** - HOD Coordinator

RAIL

Up to 8 members of the Rail Group have met nine times, nearly every month this year, with meetings early in the year held on Zoom and more recently face to face.

Members have met with our Member of Parliament Yvette Cooper and now have contacts in her constituency office. We liaise with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority through the Wakefield District Consultative Sub-Committee which has met throughout the year. We continued our membership of Railfuture and members attend and contribute to their regular Yorkshire Branch meetings.



We have maintained our contact with officers from West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Northern Rail and, over the course of the year, corresponded with Grand Central Trains, Friends of Reopening Askern Station, East Midland Railway, the Member of Parliament for Goole, North Lincolnshire County Council as well as the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.

Through our meetings with Officers from Wakefield Council we have been promised that we will be consulted on the installation of lifts at Monkhill Station, the provision of a cycle path between the station and Black Walk, the improvement of the station access road as well as the provision of adequate car parking for when rail travel returns to pre-Covid levels.

WE TAKE EVERY APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE OUR CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES WHICH ARE:

- Raise issues which are designed to increase the return of passengers to rail travel post-pandemic as well as generate new opportunities.
- The lack of connectivity of our local train services to destinations outside West Yorkshire. Within this campaign we support the re-opening of Askern Station with a service to Doncaster and the restoration of a more frequent service to Goole.
- The restoration of the evening journeys between Leeds and Pontefract which were withdrawn when services resumed during the summer.
- An improvement to the service between Sheffield and York via Baghill station, in particular the introduction of a Sunday morning journey in each direction.
- We are keen to develop further our Community Rail Partnership schemes for our stations.
- Raise the awareness of the state of the Baghill station buildings to stop further deterioration.
- Encourage Grand Central to timetable more trains through Pontefract by highlighting the need to speed-up the journey between Wakefield Kirkgate and Doncaster.

Meetings will continue throughout 2022 where we will continue to meet either on-line or face to face and we will encourage more members with an interest in rail to join our group.

Dave Hogg - Rail Coordinator

Compiled by **Anthony Dee** – Rail Administrator

HIGHWAYS

The Highways Group recruited a new member for our five regular meetings this year which were initially held remotely on Zoom, but we were able to meet face to face for our meeting in November.

We have met with Wakefield Council Transportation officers twice and met face to face with the Council team working on pedestrian improvements to Horsefair, which are to go out to public consultation in 2022. It is hoped that the displacement of traffic caused by the traffic reduction measures in Horsefair will allow progress on the proposal to introduce a traffic gyratory around All Saints Church. The aim is to improve the junctions between North Baileygate and Bondgate and South Baileygate.

We were invited to submit our views on the A639 Corridor Improvement Plan for Park Road in advance of the public consultation. Following the public response, the proposal to replace the roundabout at the entrance to Pontefract Park has been dropped and a revised scheme is being prepared to provide safe pedestrian crossings in advance of the retained roundabout. The provision of an additional cycle route in the park next to the A639 has also been dropped.

Members have met with Harworth Estates to consider their proposals for housing on the former Parkside Hotel site, which will entail yet another roundabout on the A639. They are also proposing to build houses on the north side of De Lacy Way.

In the town centre we have regularly raised the issue of the bollards failing to protect the precinct, which creates a danger to pedestrians, when cars especially taxis & takeaway drivers, are abusing the precinct. We have routinely submitted photos to the Council.

We have responded to the consultation on the traffic reduction scheme for Ropergate, which is now dependent on the delivery of suitable street furniture in early 2022. Protecting the traffic free precinct will become more important when this proposal is implemented as it may create the risk of traffic seeking an alternative route to Ropergate.

Working with Ackworth Parish Council we have been able to express our views on the speed reduction measures for the A628 Castlesyke Hill, which the Council will start work on in early 2022.

The South Featherstone Link Road has been on our agenda throughout the year and Wakefield Council have now appointed consultants to develop the Outline Business Case for the various route options which remain on the drawing board.

The Highways England website states that any A1 Improvements between Doncaster and Darrington will be dependent on DfT funding in the 2025-30 period and indications are that a completely new alignment is the preferred option.

For 2022 the Group will continue to meet regularly, either on-line or face to face, and will arrange to meet with Wakefield Council officers. We will also encourage interested members to join our Group.

Anthony Dee -Highways Coordinator

FUTURES

After a couple of years' absence, this group was relaunched in March 2021, which designed to support the board in shaping the future direction of the civic society.

We started as a group of four, including two relatively new members, Khalid Rasool and Rob Lord.

Our initial discussions considered existing skill gaps, bottleneck and the imbalance of workload across the Executive, which was followed by scoping out the business architecture, capability, and roles and the fundamental issue of technology.

By June, we had lost Rich Lord, though in October Peter Ferrari observed our online meeting, and subsequently joined the group.

Following protracted online negotiations with Microsoft (in the Unites States), we eventually secured a free charity account for Microsoft 365, though our technology migration did not commence until three days before Christmas.

Peter and Khalid have gone on to observe a few Executive and group meetings, to aid our future development, and Peter photographed the judging of our Christmas shop windows competition where junior school pupils were guided around a route by Phil Henfrey.

We've continued to work with and be supported by our business member, Panda IT, for the management and maintenance of our website.

WHAT DOES 2022 HAVE IN STORE?

- Document management shifted from Google Drive to MS365
- All email communication for the Executive and key group members will be in our own Outlook environment, which will support our resilience, document collaboration, and ultimate handovers when people change roles
- Website development of features, functionality and content, an example is capturing anonymised demographic data (age and ethnicity) of individual and family members, for our use
- Review our 'ways of working' for future development and change
- Enhance our existing library archive of current buildings and architectural features via social media for awareness raising of the civic society and what Pontefract has to offer, and in support of our digital activities aligned to key events & festivals
- Create a library archive of our Executive and group members for publicity purposes

Paul Cartwright - Futures Coordinator

TALKS & TOURS



2021 was a very difficult year for the group, for obvious reasons. There were no visits or tours, and I am unsure when we will plan these, for now.

Only a couple of group meetings were held, due to not being able to come up with a mutually agreeable date. The future direction of the group is due to be discussed with our Chair, Paul Cartwright.

Most of our talks this year were online using Zoom, which has proved very successful for us. The numbers attending were quite reasonable, though we lost some income due to not being able to sell raffle tickets, and a lower number of paying non-members than anticipated. However, we can say that we've connected with people across a much broader geography in England.

Our live talks in the Town Hall resumed in October with a well-attended evening on the Pontefract Tram System from our own Peter Cookson, which was followed up by an equally well attended talk on the "Barnbow Lasses", by a very passionate former employee Carole Smithies MBE.

Unfortunately, our planned double-bill Christmas treat of actor Chris Cade, followed by live Christmas themed music, had to be postponed until next year, due to concern over the new Omicron virus.

PLANS FOR 2022

We have already confirmed all speakers which will offer another broad programme of heritage and entertainment (shown within our Events 2022 page), though the group needs more active members make group meetings work and to take an active role on talk evenings. Some tasks, welcoming at the door, registration, selling raffle tickets and books, some of which can get neglected due to lack of personnel.

Dave Hogg - Talks & Tours Co-ordinator

PLANNING



The planning group monitors applications submitted to Wakefield Council focusing mainly on Pontefract town centre, its four conservation areas, and protected streets and buildings.

The local authority planning portal website gives details of planned development and as part of the process seeks comments from the general public, statutory consultees, and interested groups such as the civic society. Community involvement continues to be an important aspect for all parties to consider.

In terms of the 'High Street', there are relatively few vacant premises in the centre with a number of the larger properties unoccupied; very little large-scale development has taken place in the year part due to the pandemic. The Wakefield District Housing scheme on the former fire station site, however, has commenced and appears to be progressing well following comments from the civic society.

WHAT DOES 2022 HAVE IN STORE?

The local authority has approved improvements to Pontefract park lake, particularly the edges which were worn and dangerous, though this appears to be delayed by the racing calendar. Initial design proposals for Horsefair linking Pontefract Castle to the town centre are being carefully developed and work is due to start. Phased development on larger housing sites continue to progress especially on the former Prince of Wales site, and Cobblers Lane, though developers have still not taken up three other large, allocated housing sites on Monkhill Lane (former Phillidas factory), Mill Dam Lane (former Carlton Furniture factory), and on the A639 (former Parkside inn).

The civic society will continue to discuss planning schemes, and then liaise with the local authority and potential developers to ensure appropriate schemes continue to make Pontefract an attractive place to visit, live and work.

Peter Taylor - Planning Coordinator



DESIGN AWARDS 2021 • ENHANCING PONTEFRACT



On Weds 26 Jan, after a two-year break, Pontefract Civic Society hosted its Design Awards for 2021, in the splendour of the Nelson Room of Pontefract Town Hall in front of an impressive gathering of business and property owners, trades people, representatives from Wakefield Council, and civic society members.

Civic Society Chair, Paul Cartwright said *“this is an evening of celebration following two years of hard graft which enhances the historic streetscape of Pontefract as a place for investors and visitors, against the background of a sustained 92% business occupancy, and the clear shift from retail to hospitality and activity-based experiences.”*

The civic society has presented a Façade of the Year award in the name of its first president, Lady Rosse from Womersley Hall, and the worthy winner for 2021 was The Printer’s Draft based on the façade’s bold and distinctive colour scheme, graphics, signage, and lighting which pays homage to the Holmes dynasty of printers and historians.

Gavin Richards, director, said, *“everyone involved with The Printer’s Draft are absolutely delighted to have been awarded The Facade of the Year award for 2021 by Pontefract Civic Society; a special thanks to our designer Niki Richards”.*

Gavin went on to say, *“to be recognised by the civic society, who always have Pontefract’s heritage at the heart at what it does, is an achievement we are very proud of. They work tirelessly to safeguard Pontefract’s interests so to be awarded*

this is very special for us. We are so proud to be a part of Pontefract’s community, we have seen massive changes in the past months for Pontefract with help from the Civic Society. We’re looking forward to being a part of Pontefract’s growth and we can’t wait to welcome more Pomfretians through our award-winning doors”.

Other awards presented on the night were for improvements in shop fronts, architecture & design, place-making, and the fantastic Aspire leisure hub:

- Countess of Rosse Facade of the Year (*shop front*)
- Civic/Commercial (*a new or extended significant building*)
- Special Commendations (*complete ground floor refit*)
- Regeneration Award (*catalyst for retail expansion & footfall*)
- Residential Award (*creating attractive, distinctive, quality dwellings*)
- Heritage Award (*respecting a heritage building from the ground to rooftop*)
- Improvement Award (*attractiveness or character of the property*)

Paul Cartwright, civic society chair, said *“All the award winners were very appreciative of our recognition in making Pontefract a better place for everyone, and our search for 2022 is already underway”.*

2021 AWARD WINNERS

Façade of the Year 2021 - *The Printer's Draft*



Regeneration Award - *The Cube*



Special Commendation - *Iron Dram*



Special Commendation - *Cartners No 5*



2021 AWARD WINNERS

Improvement Award - La Rokka Mediterranean Kitchen



Heritage Award - No 1 Letting



Commercial/Civic Award - Aspire @ The Park



Residential Award - 36, 38, 40 Mayor's Walk & Bridge House



TRUSTEES

Role	Name
Chair	Paul Cartwright
Vice Chair	Phil Cook
Secretary <i>Attended from Dec 2020, co-opted from Feb, 2021, elected Sept 2021)</i>	Julie Stotten
Treasurer	Ian Wood
Citizenship Coordinator	Phil Cook
Rail Coordinator	Dave Hogg
Interim Heritage Coordinator	Paul Cartwright
Planning Coordinator	Peter Taylor
Highways Coordinator	Anthony Dee* <i>non-trustee</i>
Talks & Tours Coordinator	Dave Hogg
Co-opted	Dr Colin White
Observer <i>(from Nov 2021)</i>	Khalid Rasool
Observer <i>(from Nov 2021)</i>	Peter Ferrari



OUR WORKING GROUPS

Citizenship	Rail	Heritage	Planning
Phil Cook (C) Vacant (D) Vacant (A) Paul Cartwright Christine Cartwright Carol Trueman	Dave Hogg (C) Philip Henfrey (D) Anthony Dee (A) Rosemary Barnes Paul Cartwright Peter Cookson Chris Hyomes Ian Wood	Paul Cartwright (Interim C) Vacant (D) Vacant (A) Philip Henfrey (HOD Coordinator) Phil Cook John Turner Linda Benson Henfrey Dr Claire MacDonald (to Aug) Derek Norfolk (from May)	Peter Taylor (C) Philip Henfrey (D) Vacant (A) Christine Cartwright Paul Cartwright
Highways	Talks & Tours	Futures	Economic Growth
Anthony Dee (C & A) Vacant (D) Derek Vaux David Hogg Peter Cookson Paul Cartwright Derek Norfolk (from May)	Dave Hogg (C) Colin White (D) Vacant (A) Mollie Garbett Mike Skidmore Dr Claire MacDonald Paul Cartwright	Paul Cartwright (C) Vacant (D) Vacant (A) Phil Cook Khalid Rasool Rich Lord (to Jun) Peter Ferrari (from Nov)	Paul Cartwright Phil Cook

C – Coordinator - D – Deputy Coordinator - A – Administrator

REPORT OF TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2021

The Trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 31st December, 2021.

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, charity law and best practice, supported by 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; we should never stop learning.

ORGANISATION

The Charity is controlled by a Board of Trustees. The day to day running of the charity is led by the Chair and Vice Chair with other trustees in specific roles, 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, though with some successes recently. 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 deficit of £3,850.

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 embed more technology, specifically, Microsoft 365, for active use by trustees and other key members
- To develop a more strategic Board
- To diversify income generation
- To manage capacity building acting as a facilitator for delivery projects of benefit to the town, in partnership with other groups
- To develop policies and procedures recommended by the Charity Commission

On behalf of the Board

Paul Cartwright - Chair

VICE CHAIR'S REPORT



I think it's fair to say that we entered 2021 with an expectation that it would be back to normal; we all now know that was not the case.

We were fortunate that we had already adapted our working methods in 2020, so 2021 was in effect more of the same. That said, 2021 was another successful and productive year for the civic society; we grew our Facebook following by over 500, and we relaunched the Facebook Rail Group, as this was held under a private account which left us vulnerable. Our website was reviewed periodically, which helped us to create more updated content, such as the shop to news items taken from our press releases and campaigning letters.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Engagement with WMDC markets team on preparation for the Queen's Jubilee
- Worked with WMDC markets team & major events team on planning for Light Up Pontefract 2021, requesting the event moved to a Sunday, and contributing to planning future speciality markets
- Regular meetings with various WMDC officers and Councillors
- 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
- Year on year increase in Facebook followers

POLICIES

We have continued to prioritise the essential policies we need to have in place to effectively run the charity, which also support funding applications, when required. We commenced a review of existing policies to ensure that the environment and climate change were being considered and embedded, where they are applicable for our circle of influence; this review will continue in 2022.

POLICIES PREVIOUSLY APPROVED

- New Policy Introductory template and documentation
- Health & Safety Policy and incident report
- Data Protection Policy
- Data Privacy Retention Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Expense Policy and documentation
- Executive Reporting template (updated)
- Trustee Induction (updated)
- Project proposal documentation

POLICIES APPROVED IN 2021

- GDPR Policy
- Environmental Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy

OUR DIRECTION FOR 2022

There is much to do through our Futures Group which will require technical support as we move from Google to Microsoft365 for documentation and email management, which started over the 2021 Christmas period when our activity was at a low level. This move has also created a large training and familiarisation need for our Executive and key working group members; it is expected that this will not be completed until mid-2022 due to amount of work required by our volunteers. These changes in the way we work support the sharing of and collaboration on documents, eliminating duplicated copies, which is a big benefit.

We are prioritising the recruitment of active members to fulfil vacant roles, as we all broaden our skill base. Our engagement will grow further in 2022 as we continue to support Wakefield Youth in their focus to bring activities into the town, and our own skills will increase as our networking grows. Our engagement with WMDC has grown and the town is now benefiting from our approach to joint working, especially in working openly with the Major Events team. This kind of shift will provide further opportunities for the civic society and our town. I will continue to act as an independent observer at WDH tenants' meetings.

Phil Cook - Vice Chair

TREASURER'S REPORT



I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for 2021.

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

once again like to thank Christopher Hyomes for an effective independent examination of our 2021 Annual Accounts.

2021 has once again been a difficult year for the civic society, the continuing effects of Covid-19 once again curtailing many of our planned activities, resulting in a net cash outflow in the year of £3,850 (2020 – net inflow £1,964).

Our income in 2021 (£7,610) was considerably lower than in 2020 (£13,999) due in the main to the fact that in 2020 £6,150 was generated from the successful calendar sales campaign run in partnership with The Prince of Wales Hospice.

2021 income is made up principally of annual subscriptions amounting to £3,904, and the combined sales of various books, calendars, mugs, pens and pin badges amounting to £2,221.

Once again a considerable proportion of these transactions were conducted online.

Annual subscription rates for 2021 remained at 2020 levels but due to increases in memberships in all categories, particularly businesses, a 41% increase in income was achieved.

Our net costs in 2021 after adjusting for the transfer of funds between accounts amounted to £11,460 which was very similar to the previous year. Significant items of expenditure included the production costs of books and calendars (£4,613) and expenditure on various grant funded projects (£2,774). In keeping with previous years, the civic society has made donations to various local organisations including The Prince of Wales Hospice and Pontefract In Bloom, totalling £991. Other aspects of the Society's expenditure are broadly in line with the previous year.

A considerable proportion of funds as at 31st December 2021 (£18k – 73%) has originated from various grants and has been ring fenced for projects which due to Covid-19 have not progressed as planned. It is anticipated that in 2022 much of this cash will now be utilised.

Ian Wood -Treasurer

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 civic society does to make Pontefract a better place; new projects always need support. The civic society is both independent and non-political.

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.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 31 DECEMBER 2021

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

INCOME	2021	2020
Annual subscriptions received	£3,904	£2,772
Gift aid	£-	£-
Blue plaques	£-	£-
Grants	£335	£2,250
Donations	£350	£102
Events revenue	£800	£1,238
Book, calendar, mug, pen and badge sales	£2,221	£7,637
Recharge cost of design award plaques	£-	£-
Legacies	£-	£-
SUB-TOTAL	£7,610	£13,999
INCOME FROM MONETARY ASSETS		
Transfers between accounts	£4,458	£5,361
Loan	£-	£-
Bank interest	£-	£-
TOTAL INCOME	£12,068	£19,360
EXPENDITURE	2021	2020
DIRECT CHARITABLE EXPENDITURE:		
Civic Voice	£203	£194
YHACS	£50	£50
Railfuture	£25	£25
Events & meetings	£852	£902
Donations	£991	£3,639
SUB-TOTAL	£2,121	£4,810
OTHER EXPENDITURE INCURRED:		
Membership refunds	£-	£-
Insurance	£579	£579
Printing & Postage	£252	£229
Student's Expenses	£-	£-
Grants expenditure	£2,774	£2,944
Transfers between accounts	£4,458	£5,361
Book Printing	£3,881	£-
Calendar Printing & Envelopes	£732	£2,276
Mugs & Boxes	£191	£-
Grants Repayment	£-	£-
PHG Profit Share on Book Sales	£-	£50
Business support costs	£-	£-
PR Materials	£235	£435
Website & Other Software Costs	£72	£171
Travel costs	£-	£-
I T Equipment	£-	£-
Membership related costs	£623	£541
SUB-TOTAL	£13,797	£12,586
TOTAL EXPENDITURE INCURRED	£15,918	£17,396
OVERALL EXCESS/DEFICIT OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	-£3,850	£1,964
STATEMENT OF ASSETS OF LIABILITIES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021	2021	2020
MONETARY ASSETS		
Barclays Community A/c (current)	£24,734	£28,515
Paypal A/c	£-	£69
Totals	£24,734	£28,584
RECONCILIATION OF CASH MOVEMENTS TO BANK BALANCES		
Opening bank balances	£28,584	£26,620
Total cash receipts	£12,068	£19,360
LESS: EXPENDITURE	£15,918	£17,396
TOTAL CASH INFLOW	-£3,850	£1,964
CLOSING BANK BALANCES	£24,734	£28,584

Treasurer: I Wood (2021)

I have examined the Receipts and Payments for the Year 2021 and found it to be in accordance with the records and vouchers produced.

Christopher Hyomes - Independent Examiner | P Cartwright - Chairman

SECRETARY'S REPORT



This has been the strangest start to a post ever, even if it is a voluntary one.

I took on the role of secretary part way through 2021, and since then I have been learning, remotely, what the role entails. One of the 'perks' of the role is writing this report – my first one so be gentle with me!

As you can see from the graph below, 2021 was a good year for memberships, with an increase on the previous year in almost all categories now offered. The biggest percentage increase being in the Junior Civic Society Category is down to the work of Paul and Phil, working with schools in the area.

Despite the lockdowns Pontefract Civic Society has been very busy – I am still learning what all the groups are involved with – this Annual Report will hopefully fill in some of the gaps.

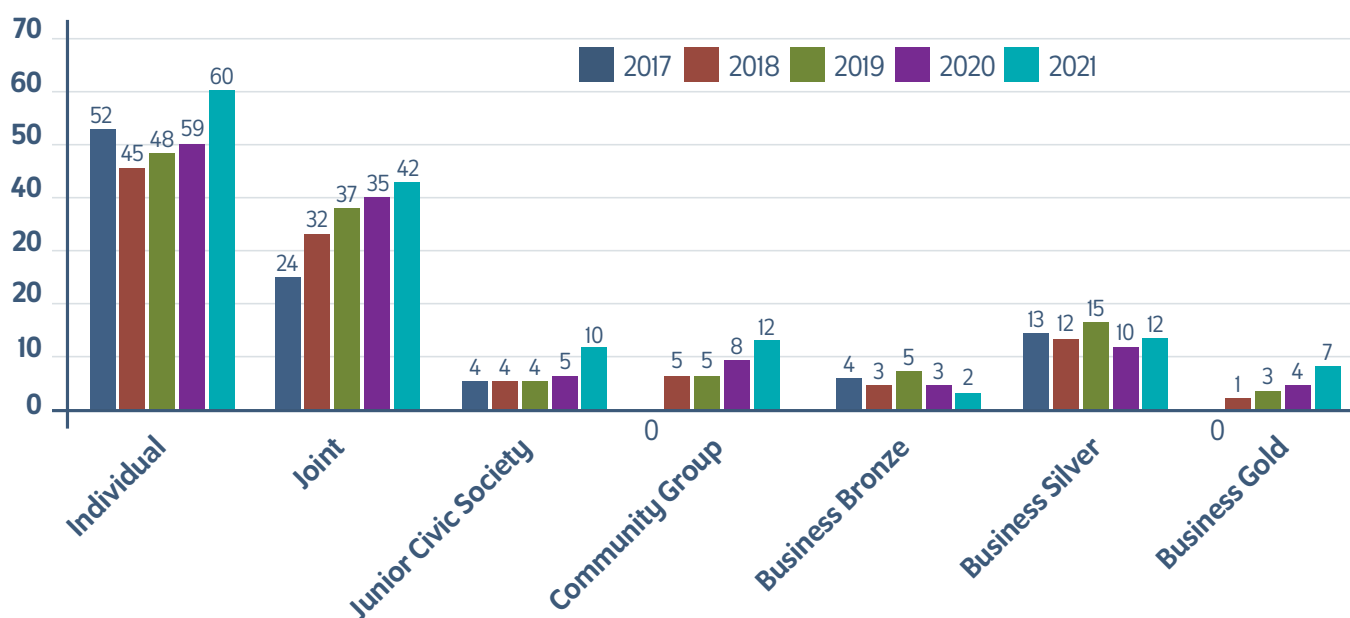
If any of you are new to the Society and would like to learn along with me by visiting some of the groups, please get in touch with the relevant group coordinator to find out more.

2022 PLANS

I'm looking to get more involved in the running of the civic society through some of our groups, myself. I will also be working closely with Paul and Ian on our membership records.

Julie Stotten -Secretary

MEMBERSHIP BY TYPE



EVENTS CALENDAR 2022

**Jan
17**

"If Pontefract buildings could talk"

by Dave Cook

**Jan
26**

Design Awards

**Feb
16**

Civic Society AGM

**Feb
21**

"Tales from Northgate Lodge"

by Tom Dixon

**Mar
21**

"What really happened at Sutton Hoo"

by Eric Houlder

**Apr
9**

Community Showcase

Pontefract Library

**Apr
25**

"The Wonkey Donkey Sanctuary"

by Jenny Howarth

**May
4**

"Mrs Fawcett's Handbag"

performance by Sharron Garner

**May
16**

Yorkshire Air Ambulance

**May
29**

Pontefract Collieries Community Fun Day

Pontefract Collieries

**Jun
2-5**

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Various locations

**Jun
20**

"Behind the Gates"

by Veronica Bird

**Jun
26**

The Prince of Wales Hospice Summer Fair

**Jul
3**

Armed Forces Day

Pontefract Park

**Jul
9-10**

Liquorice Festival

**Jul
9**

Proms at the Castle

Pontefract Castle

**Jul
18**

"Mortal Remains"

by Eric Houlder

**Aug
1**

Yorkshire Day

**Aug
13**

Friarwood Festival

Friarwood Valley Gardens

**Sept
9-18**

Heritage Open Days

Various locations

**Sept
19**

"The Railway King"

by Chris Cade

**Oct
17**

"Pontefract Castle, the First Siege"

by Dave Cooke

**Oct
22**

Lions Lantern Festival

**Nov
13**

Remembrance Sunday

**Nov
21**


"Fletcher Rhodes Collaboration"

by Roger Ellis

**Dec
6**

Double Bill: "A Christmas Carol" by Chris Cade, and "Festive Underdrive Johnny"

Gold Member			
			
Gold Member			
			
Silver Member			
			
Silver Member			
			
Silver Member			
			

Bronze Member			
	<p>Friends of Friarwood Valley Gardens • Friends of Pontefract Park • Liquorice Singers Pontefract Art Club • Pontefract Athletics Club • Pontefract Collieries FC Pontefract Heritage Group • Pontefract Heritage Partnership • Pontefract in Bloom Pontefract Lioness Club • Pontefract Rugby Union Football Club • St Giles Centre</p>		



For more information, contact us by email:
 ✉ info@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk
 or visit us on social media:
 f @PontefractCivic



With thanks to Five Towns Print and Design,
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🌐 www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk