



PONTRFRACT  
CIVIC SOCIETY

Spring 2026



# PONTRFRACT VOICE



Pontrfract Civic Society is a Registered charity in England and Wales (513509)

## CHAIR'S REPORT

### Part 1 – January to AGM

As Chair up to the recent AGM, I have continued with my external and internal commitments on behalf of Pontefract Civic Society, some of these alongside other members.

In January, I met with Mel Armitage to advise on hosting a visitor economy and tourism event at Pontefract Castle, which took place and was attended by myself, John Turner and Kelvin Wilkins.

I attended our Design Awards though played a much smaller role this year due to recently having had shingles which wiped me out for at least two weeks. Fortunately, we had already agreed at an earlier time that Canon Andrew Sage would be MC for the night.

I met Mel Jones with Phil Cook. Mel had expressed an interest in becoming a trustee as she was not seeking re-election as a district councillor.

There was a quarterly meeting at Wakefield One with Wakefield Council officers and ward members, attended by Phil Cook, Kelvin Wilkins and myself.

I enquired about getting a guided tour of Holy Family Hub CIC for a group of trustees, plus planning group and heritage group members.

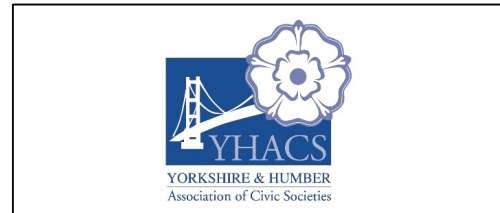
I attended the Community Showcase and AGM, which are reported elsewhere

I was asked by Tegwen Roberts to attend a council organised Dispensary Focus Group meeting in Pontefract Library for invited stakeholders.

I represented the civic society at the funeral of Colonel Gerald Delany (KOYLI and RBL).

Also, should there be any concerns about the electronic equipment which the civic society owns, all items were PAT tested with thanks to Ian Wood and St Giles Church.

Phil Cook and I met with Andy Weston, a director of Pontefract Masonic Hall, at his request to discuss ways of working closer together for mutual benefit in a more community-focused way for their operations.



### Yorkshire & Humber Association of Civic Societies.

Christine and I attended the AGM hosted again in Harrogate. During the morning, a number of invited contributors presented their thoughts on the current risks and opportunities for the use of artificial intelligence (AI) within the civic society movement, which included anything from reporting on meetings (minutes or meeting notes) to succinctly getting the right phrases into funding applications.

I participated in an online meeting of the YHACS Executive, and at the end of April. Christine and I went to the YHACS quarterly meeting in Doncaster, hosted at The Point; a community arts and well-being organisation based in a terrace of Georgian buildings with a contemporary rear extension and garden. The visit included a tour of the building in the morning which has undergone a contemporary refurbishment whilst respecting the heritage, such as windows, mouldings, fireplaces, yet making it a series of connected flexible spaces fit for the future.

## The Yorkshire Society Heritage Summit



I hosted this event in two parts, with Colin Speakman leading the morning's sold out Symposium of 3 speakers and 70 delegates. For my part, I managed the venue communications to a record 39 exhibitors, and worked with Barnsley Civic Trust where they delivered a heritage walk twice during the day.

The Yorkshire Society's event was also aided by Barnsley Council's tourism team, I also got Barnsdale Hood to play background music at the Eldon Street foyer ahead of the Symposium, and then moved camp for the rest of the day till 4pm by playing in the Theatre atrium.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The following were therefore re-elected:

Kelvin Wilkins - Chairman

Ian Wood - Treasurer

Mike Farrell - Planning Coordinator

Kelvin Wilkins - Heritage Coordinator

Ian Wood - Rail Coordinator

Phil Cook – Community Connectors Coordinator

Highways is led by Anthony Dee (non-trustee)

As the AGM proceeded, Paul Cartwright was elected at President (non-trustee).

Phil Cook remains in post at Vice Chair and he was not due for re-election at this AGM.

At the next board meeting, Colin White, Evelyn Westwood, Fr Ian Bullock and Mel Jones were co-opted.

## AGM - Trustees

### Kelvin Wilkins



I have made Pontefract my home since 1988 with my wife and enjoy living in the area.

I am recently retired from a life of machinery sales and management and want to put my skills to good use. I was a Darrington parish councillor for 10 years and acted as Clerk during this time and I was an Ambassador for Martin House Children's Hospice. I am passionate about helping Pontefract fulfil its potential and look forward to working with a great team.

### Mike Farrell



Mike joined the civic society in Sept 2023, and he has a construction industry background in the UK and the Middle East. He has been a school governor, is known to many people around the town, and he's not shy at getting involved, even beyond planning group meetings. He's offered to review any site plans for Holy Family Hub once they're done, and he's in the process of introducing Melissa to Julian Appleyard, CEO, Pontefract Academies Trust.

## **Fr Ian Bullock co-opted by the Executive (25 March, 2026)**



I enjoyed being in Pontefract so much the first time, I came back!

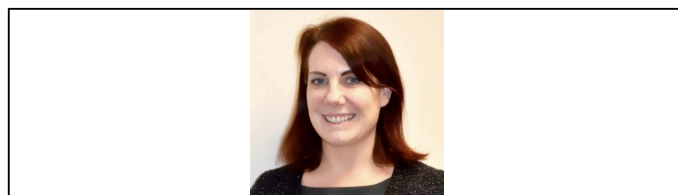
Many of you will have already seen me around and about in Pontefract. My first encounter with the town was between 2008-2011 when I came here as a shiny new curate. I've been back two years now, as Vicar of Pontefract, and leading the four parishes in the vicinity.

Not only am I enjoying being back as part of this town, but delighted that I was invited to become part of the civic society Executive. Before being ordained my background was in Banking and IT, and nowadays sit on several boards, and bring a wealth of strategic experience.

As a member of the Exec, I am looking forward to having the opportunity to understand more about how the civic society works, and getting to know the team, and continue to build relationships with the people we serve in Pontefract.

The people who serve as trustees give so much of their time willingly and are a very supportive group. If you've ever thought about giving some time back to the community, I am sure that any of the members of the team would be very happy to talk to you about how you could add your skills, as together we seek to enhance and promote our town.

## **Melanie (Mel) Jones co-opted by the Executive (25 March, 2026)**



I am a retired nurse specialist with a background in the NHS across clinical practice, training and service management, alongside experience in local government and the voluntary sector. I have also worked as a Communications Officer within the UK Parliament, supporting engagement with communities and stakeholders.

Through my roles as a District Councillor, Charity Board Chair, Equality Representative and former Civic Ambassador as Mayoress of both Wakefield and Normanton, I have developed a strong interest in accessibility, inclusive design and supporting community wellbeing.

I am keen to volunteer with the civic society and use my experience in partnership working, governance and public engagement to support projects that protect local heritage, enhance the built environment and strengthen community pride.

### **Awards made**

We celebrated both the hard work from five of our community group members, as well as commending organisations and individuals that have actively supported our work, and critical fundraising for our major events.

The submitted entries were judged by our Community Connectors group members, and those excellent and varied entries came from Castleford and Pontefract District Lions Club (Lantern Festival), Friends Of Friarwood Valley Gardens, Pontefract (seven projects & activities across the year), Ackworth & Pontefract British Legion (VJ 80th Anniversary celebration), Breast Cancer Support group (Paint the Town Pink campaign), The Parish of St Giles' with St Mary's, Pontefract (Pontefract Food Share).

## Community Awards Sponsored by Cartners No5.

Winner: Friends Of Friarwood Valley Gardens, Pontefract received the annual trophy, a certificate and a cheque for £75.



Runner Up: Pontefract Breast Cancer Support group received a certificate and a cheque for £25.



Awards presented by Paul Copley Cartners No5 with Phil Cook.

We were equally pleased and thankful to present certificates of appreciation for WheelFest25 to Want2Jive and The Old Post Office and additionally to Cartners No5 for ongoing fundraising support with thanks to Paul & Karen and their customers. Awards presented by Phil Cook.



Want 2 Jive



The Old Post Office

## Presentation of Gifts



I said at the start of the AGM, that it was going to be a strange one for me, and it turned out that way with thanks especially to Phil Cook and John Turner for 'taking to the stage', with an element of emotion, which I felt too, not only to receive a framed President's certificate but an array of unexpected gifts and cards with some lovely messages which meant so much, including flowers for Christine, without whom I would not have achieved so much with you and for you and the town.

With a mix of shock and surprise at the end of the AGM, and here's my second apology, I didn't open nor immediately acknowledge all the fantastic gifts. Please accept my apologies for not saying too much by way of a thank you as a result of the shock and the clock! I knew we were overrunning the time that we'd paid for at the church, though Fr Ian was generous in allowing extra time for packing away our stall and resetting the church chairs.

Thoughtful words from Phil Cook, Peter Cookson and Mike Sayles-Fox were read by John Turner, aka Town Crier with the title 'this is not a proclamation'. I have received other messages including one from former ward councillor and mayor, David Jones, with whom we worked in tandem with on many local issues, and David was key in adding his voice to the King's Award for Voluntary Service during the 2.5 hour interview/assessment panel alongside other members.

## **This is not a proclamation**

**Phil Cook, Vice Chair** - *"I first met Paul at the Central Methodist Church where the Pontefract Civic Society were hosting a meeting about the Crescent Cinema, and I was attending out of interest. At the point in the meeting when Paul asked for volunteers Jackie, my wife, failed to keep me sat down. From that time, I was trapped. I have been fortunate to share the highs and lows of the past 10 years of the civic society with Paul and Christine. During Paul's tenure it has been a pleasure to help Paul direct the civic society to become stronger and to be recognised as one of the most active and successful civic societies in the country."*

*Pontefract owes a lot to Paul's determination and drive to make the civic society what it is today. Paul and Christine enjoy what is now your time, but don't forget to visit, and return to your Liquorice roots".*

**Peter Cookson, President** - *"One of the most difficult social skills to acquire is the capacity to manage differences of opinion and to effect change. Change is an inevitable part of life and the civic society has had to adapt to new ways of working and communication, no less than other organisations."*

*During Paul's tenure as Chairman of the civic society he has led a team of members who, with great skill, have managed to bring our society to the position of strength and influence we now occupy.*

*This has not been an easy task on occasions, and we all owe them a great debt of gratitude as we move forward into a new era".*

**Mike Sayles-Fox DL, Patron** - *"I first met Paul when I attended, as a Deputy Lieutenant, an Armed Forces Day event which was held at Wakefield College. I knew absolutely no one but saw one chap wearing a Pontefract Coat of Arms badge of his lapel. I immediately got in conversation with him and told him Pontefract was my old hometown. From those humble beginnings began both an admiration and friendship for Paul which has now existed since 2018. All the very best to you Paul and Christine as you start on another new venture in life"*

**John Turner** continued – *"I would just like to add that Paul encouraged & supported me in many endeavours for the civic society, especially for arranging the funding for this livery and facilitating the completion of my application and acceptance to the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Criers. Paul, and Christine - I thank you".*

On behalf of Christine and me, please accept our heartfelt thanks, and I hope someone involved will pass on my thanks to the crafter who created the replica 'blue plaque' (pictured), which will go with us to our new home when we move. We'll still be around for a while with some working groups and via Pontefract Voice, before we disappear into the sunset, even so, we will return to the place where we've spent all our lives.



## **Paul Cartwright – Outgoing Chair**

### **Peter Cookson – President (2015-2026)**

It is with thanks for service given by Peter that we are sharing this with you now following Peter's offer over recent years to stand aside from being President when the time was right.

Peter joined the civic society around 1996, and only became chair in 1998 as no one else was prepared to pick up the mantle. His main interests have continued to support our work through both the rail group and highways group, as well as taking a general interest in how the town functions in his role as chair, which he did up to 2015. Throughout his time on rail, Peter has maintained contact with Mick Sasse (West Yorkshire Combined Authority – a supporter of our efforts) and others across the rail community.

When Paul Cartwright became chair, Peter was elected president, which was a role that had been dormant for some time, though Allan R Blaza had been president, and our notable first president was Lady Rosse of Womersley Hall.

Peter has also delivered a number of illustrated talks on rail and our local short-lived tram network, as well as maintaining continued scrutiny of the Prince of Wales estate and the promised country park by attending meetings when called by the Harworth Group.

We owe Peter a lot for volunteering to be chair in the first place, steadying the ship, and for his continued support at our monthly talks, AGM and design awards.

Thank you, Peter

## **Part 2 AGM**

### **Kelvin Wilkins - Incoming Chair.**

Firstly my thanks go to Paul and Christine for all their efforts over the years to create the society we see today. I wish them well for the future.

A transition of leadership is always an opportunity to review all aspects of the organisation to ensure it continues to be fit for the future. The first part of this is to review and revise the constitution. With the experience and knowledge of Fr. Ian we have rewritten the constitution using current best practice and once discussions with the Charity Commission are completed ensuring their satisfaction we will be offering this for affirmation to members at an EGM.

It is my intention to increase member participation and with this in mind I have merged the Planning and Highways into a single group but with a much wider scope. What I want is for them to consider how the visitor experience to Pontefract could be improved, both for locals, and for tourists. I would encourage members to consider where things could be worked on so we can present these ideas to the officers at WMDC to consider. If you have any suggestions please email them to me at [chairman@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:chairman@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

I look forward to working with you all our groups and members and thank you for your support.

## Trustee wanted

Based on the AGM elections, we are on the lookout for men and women of all ages to help provide direction for Ponte Fract Civic Society whilst remaining true to our constitutional objectives.

Whether you have a specific interest or skills to offer, do get in touch.

Specific roles:

- Honorary Secretary
- Talks & Tours Group Coordinator

If you care about Ponte Fract and what we do to make Ponte Fract a better place, then become a charity trustee. Contact Kelvin Wilkins for a chat on 07760 660071 or [chairman@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:chairman@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

Kelvin Wilkins – Incoming Chair

## VICE CHAIR'S REPORT

AED training in Darrington is completed for their scheme, which we are supporting, and we've had a request from a scheme in Carleton also seeking our support.

Yorkshire Ambulance Service have changed their dispatch procedures so less calls are being responded to, the result being that any defibrillator will only be dispatched to confirmed or high likelihood of a heart attack and not as before to most calls within a reasonable distance.

I was pleased to announce at the AGM that major events sponsorship for Liquorice Shoots 2026 from Valeo Foods has been confirmed.

I attended the Best Bar None Awards in Wakefield with Cllr Brian Mahew with view of options for Ponte Fract's hospitality sector, though I need to meet with Wakefield BID to understand more about the scheme.

I've also attended meetings with The Prince of Wales Club 5 business network, Friarwood

Festival, and our own events team supported by KLH Events.

Phil Cook – Vice Chair

## MEMBERSHIP

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Wild Camper Vans – Gold business member

Pomfret Gin – Bronze business member

Smiles for Miles Uniform Bank – Community Group

Martin Wallace

Patricia Butler

David Robertson

Stuart & Lisa Nicholson

Gordon Stanley

Amy Billington

Aaron Stapleton

Tom Dragisic

It couldn't be simpler to join online, NOW, with no renewal needed until 1 Jan 2027:

<http://www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk/product-category/membership/>

We would very much like to find out how we can support and help our business members so it would be great to have a chat to better understand your business better.

As part of improving member engagement we would love to better understand what our members would like from us so please feel free to contact us at [info@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk) and we can set up a chat.

## BUSINESS FOCUS

### INTRODUCING WILD CAMPING VANS

A Pontefract-based campervan conversion company with over 15 years in the industry. We design and build bespoke campervan interiors from our workshop here in WF8 — everything from compact day-to-night conversions on short-wheelbase vans right through to full luxury builds on larger vehicles even Uni Mogs . Every conversion is engineered and built by us to a professional standard, covering electrics, furniture, insulation, and gas systems where required. We've spent years supplying conversions and our own unique components to dealers and rental fleets behind the scenes ( non-disclosure agreements in place), and we're now building under our own name Wild Camping Vans— bringing that same quality direct to customers. We're proud to be a Pontefract business, and we're equally proud to support local causes and charities. If you're curious about van life or thinking about a conversion, we're always happy to have a chat.



LWB Vauxhall Movano  
PRACTICALITY MEETS ★★★★★HOTEL LUXURY



PAINT CORRECTION

### INTRODUCING POMFRET GIN



I joined the Pontefract Civic Society because I'm passionate about supporting the town and building stronger connections with local businesses and organisations. Through Pomfret Gin, my aim has always been to celebrate Pontefract's heritage and help promote the town in a positive way. Being part of the Civic Society felt like a natural step to contribute to the community, support local initiatives, and play a small role in helping Pontefract continue to grow and thrive.



## WORKING GROUP REPORTS

### HERITAGE GROUP

Since becoming Heritage coordinator I have had several meetings with WMDC Officers who are responsible for Conservation, Museums and Heritage to see how we can further cooperate to promote the heritage of the town. I was happy to become the voice on the Audio description of Pontefract museums Picturing Pontefract exhibition.

#### Heritage Open Days 2026



2026 theme: Everyday histories of working lives

The butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker - what did your ancestors do? From factory floors to kitchen counters, school desks to sailors' docks, serving halls to vegetable gardens. The exploration of the daily routines of different jobs, the skills required, the people that did them and the places that housed them all.

To our regular partner venues, hosts and tour guides, this announcement gives you plenty of time for planning your HOD2026 event or activities.

To any venue or host tour guide that's new to Heritage Open Days and thinking of participating, get in touch with Phil Henfrey or Paul Cartwright

Kelvin Wilkins – Heritage Group Coordinator

## TALKS & TOURS GROUP

Talks group meet to review recent talks and plan staffing for the next three talks/performances, as well as initial selection of speakers and topics for the 2027 programme. Please contact us if you have a talk or performance you would like to present in 2027.

In January, Katie Town, **Wakefield Theatre Royal** CEO delved into the origins of the theatre on the Drury Lane site, which dates back to 1776. The talk was reasonably interesting, well-presented and locally themed attracting an above average audience of 42; the highest attendance of the four talks / performances carried out in the year to date.

In February, we turned our attention to a charity talk, which we do on an annual basis for one local good cause. This time it was **Tiny Tickers**, and our member Linda Atkin delivery the talk based on first hand family experience. We learnt that only 20% of babies with heart defects are detected, and was more alarming was that detection is not part of the training for NHS stenographers, this is where Tiny Tickers comes in.

Linda has done a wide variety of fundraising initiatives from a celebrity cookbook to tombola stalls are local galas, which in total over the years has raised £19,000.

**Our Heritage, Our Stories** is a three year Heritage Lottery funded council project led by Dr Tegwen Roberts who gave us an update on the districtwide work for our March talk.

Heritage groups from all over the district have come together for workshops, and as well as smaller gatherings in localised zones. Digital content has been created by One t One Development Trust and you can view Roman Castleford Uncovered (free online), with similar work underway for Pontefract's Dispensary and Hermitage.

Discover Our Pontefract is a simple foldout map of the town with facts for non-English speaking residents and visitors. Wakefield Council has also launched two new conservation areas, one

in Felkirk and one in Castleford. Tegwen believes that heritage should be accessible for all ages.

Chris Cade, actor, educator, and entertainer – **Just Three Words** - was on fine form in April from the first note of the harmonica for his costumed performance from WW2 of a butcher turned Home Guard (local defence volunteer), which included costume changes and excellent vocal portrayals of politicians with Churchill's famous words ringing out several times. As he told the moving story you could hear a pin drop, with our audience hanging on his every word. Bravo, Chris.

The group has met once this year to plan the 2027 talks programme, and those discussions will continue at the end of May/early June to ensure that the all speakers booked by the end of July this year.

Additionally, there remains a vacancy for a coordinator for this group.

Paul Cartwright – Interim Talks & Tours Coordinator

### COMMUNITY CONNECTORS GROUP

Work is progressing nicely for WheelFest26, 1940's Ropergate and Liquorice Shoots with almost all entertainment now booked. However we are still looking for sponsors so if you would like to help please email [events@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:events@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk) for more information.

Our Community Showcase this year transferred to a new location, namely St Giles Church, and was fully booked with 18 exhibitors, who all enjoyed the networking opportunity on top of the chance to promote their services and opportunities to members of the public. We thank St Giles Church colleagues in helping to stage this event.

One notable success from this event was the introduction of the Local Masons to the Holy Family Hub project. This has resulted in several members of the Masons becoming trustees and bringing with them very valuable resources, [www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

experience and connections to really get behind this fabulous project.

Making these connections is where we feel we can really help community groups and we want to better understand your needs so let's have a chat and see where we can help.

### SOCIETY SOCIALS

February saw the first social of 2026, where around 26 members ventured out to The Hidden Tea Rooms in Birkin, so hidden, two members struggled for a while to find the car park and building entrance, though that was resolved. A good meal and informal chat was enjoyed by most members.

On Wednesday 11th March, 25 of us enjoyed a lovely meal at The Carleton for our monthly social. With excellent service from Kiera and Pam—who managed to serve us all in record time—we spent more than two hours enjoying great company, conversation, and a very pleasant evening together.

Our April Society Social took place today at The Brown Cow in Ackworth. We had a great turnout with 26 people attending – it was especially nice to see some new faces join us! We enjoyed a nice mix of both hot and cold lunches, which went down a treat. A big thank you to Claire, Heidi, and Kayleigh for the excellent food and fantastic service. We really appreciate all your hard work in making the afternoon so enjoyable.

Our socials are open to everyone, so if you'd like to join us on Wednesday 13 May at Rockello, Glasshoughton, please contact me at [societysocials@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:societysocials@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

Karen Haddock

## Ponte Fract Town Crier



It is almost eight years since I first put on my town crier coat, and I can honestly say that time has flown by. It really is a pleasure to share with you my stories, or my editor would say my exploits.

Ponte Fract Civic Society 2025 Design Awards is the first big event of the year; I welcomed visitors to Pontefract Town Hall for the awards evening. Not a red carpet like the Bafta's or the Oscars but the Design Awards are highly prized and only given to worthy winners. The winter was over and Spring had arrived with design quality and innovation to make Pontefract proud.

The major events for the first quarter of the year were the Community Showcase and the Annual General Meeting of Pontefract Civic Society. Both on the same day and the same venue - The Parish Church of St Giles, Pontefract. From 9am 'til 1pm I made proclamations around town encouraging everyone to visit the Community Showcase. I had to stop at 1pm to rest my voice as I had a small speech to make at the AGM. I was asked by Phil Cook to read out messages for Paul Cartwright who was retiring from the role of Chair and taking up being President of Pontefract Civic Society. It was an honour to be part of the celebration of Paul's achievements with the Society. For the first time ever as Town Crier I lived up to my name and was emotional and shed a tear as I thanked Paul for what he had done for me personally over the years. I will treasure the memories.

Eight years ago, I would not have thought that I would be spending every Wednesday morning in Pontefract Library in my role as Town Crier. It was one of my best decisions to start every [www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

Wednesday morning with an 8.20am proclamation beside The Buttercross. Pontefract Library displays the weekly proclamation and Pontefract Museum offered to keep all my proclamations. They are in a folder on the table in the reference room.

Every time I wear my Town Crier livery people stop me and ask questions. Questions vary from "Are you a pirate?", or "Are you the Lord Mayor?" or they ask me if I am a councillor. The answer is no to all, but councillors do sit near me in the library. Best of all I like to hear all the stories as well as the questions from visitors which includes children as well as adults. Every week is different for me as Town Crier of Pontefract. It is the job that gives me joy every day and I aim to make everyone smile as we talk about Pontefract – present, past, and future.

John Turner – Pontefract Town Crier  
[towncrier@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:towncrier@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

## JUNIOR CIVIC SOCIETY

### Great British Spring Clean

At the end of March, seven primary schools in Pontefract joined in our annual litter poster competition during Keep Britain Tidy for the Great British Spring Clean campaign. Those involved were Halfpenny Lane, De Lacy Primary, Orchard Head, Larks Hill, The Rookeries, St Giles C of E Academy, & Holy Family & St Michael's Catholic Primary School.

Schools were asked to hold their own competition and submit the best five entries for civic society members to judge. Schools were also encouraged to register with Keep Britain Tidy during the campaign, and do litter picking and recycling projects.

Our judges picked one winner from each school with a trophy and a certificate being presented in Pontefract Library. A participants' certificate was issued to schools to be presented to all pupils taking part.

The competition and ceremony was organised by the outgoing chair, Paul Cartwright, and Christine Cartwright created the poster display,

which now has an extended run until Saturday 9 May. Refreshments were provided by the library, with cake from Karen Haddock. Please go and take a look at the pupils impressions on litter which blights our community.

Judges: Phil Cook, Karen Haddock, Joanne Smillie, Mike Farrell, Christine & Paul Cartwright

Phil Cook – Community Connectors Group Coordinator

## RAIL GROUP

Pontefract Civic Society's Rail Group has been a member of the Community Rail Network organisation since 2023 when all three of our stations joined their station adoption scheme. By doing so this enabled us to apply for up to £1,000 per annum per station from their Grant Fund together with access to various networking and training opportunities.

I recently joined their Tourism Network Group and was privileged to join their in-person trip with Community Rail Partnership representatives from around the country on the Yorkshire Coast line from Hull to Bridlington on Thursday 9th April. □



We were hosted by Rachel Osborne from the Yorkshire Coast CRP who have recently won the Outstanding Contribution to Community Rail Award at this year's Community Rail Network Awards. The Yorkshire Coast CRP deliver a vast range of events and activities to connect communities with their railways. The partnership has shown real passion in supporting its network of station adopters. I was struck by the positive energy and high vibration that Rachel displays.

Our trip began by boarding the 11.20 Hull to Bridlington train where we were invited to experience the Yorkshire Coast CRP's Traxplorer app. Traxplorer is an interactive app that enriches train journeys with live maps, travel information, station and line guides to help passengers explore learn and travel by rail. I was particularly impressed with this.

On arrival at Bridlington shortly after 12 noon, we were given a tour of the impressive Grade 2 listed station including station history and details of CRP projects along with an opportunity to take photographs. This was followed by lunch at a nearby local cafe where there was an opportunity to network with representatives from Community Rail Network and the other guest participants. After lunch some of the participants went on an optional walk to the Harbour before boarding the 14.39 return train to Hull.

It was a particularly interesting and enjoyable day and I am hopeful that some of what I learned may possibly be applied at our stations. I also hope to participate in future on-line or in-person events that the Tourism Network are planning.

Ian Wood – Rail Group Coordinator

## PLANNING GROUP

### Design Awards 2025

We recently hosted our Design Awards for 2025 where Pontefract Town Hall was packed with guest nominees, in fact, the biggest event in its long history, with awards being presented by returning guest speaker, Cllr Darren Byford, Wakefield Council. Civic Society Chair, Paul Cartwright gave a brief welcome before handing over proceedings to Planning Group Coordinator, Canon Andrew Sage, who said "These awards are about more than buildings. They are about place, people, and pride. Pontefract is a town with a rich architectural heritage – from medieval structures and historic yards to modern civic buildings and new residential developments. How we care for, adapt, and design our buildings today shapes how future generations will experience the town.

The Pontefract Civic Society Design Awards recognise projects that respect our past, serve present needs, and contribute positively to the town's future". The civic society presented the Countess of Rosse Façade of the Year award to Taylored Holmes for a strong contemporary design enhancing the shop frontage on a busy artery through the town. Christine Peacock, Taylored Holmes said "we are delighted and honoured to have been awarded Facade of the Year 2025. Restoring the much loved Tordoff's shop with the respect it deserved has been hard work, but amazing at the same time. We are proud to have retained its warm homely character which it deserves. This award means the world to us and reflects our commitment to the building and Pontefract. We extend our sincere thanks to the civic society for recognising our efforts and hard work".

Other awards presented on the night were:

Residential Award and Improvement Award – Priestbridge Cottage, Mayor's Walk

Special Commendation – The Cube, New College, and House of Ales

Regeneration Award – The Elizabeth Love Museum

Heritage Award – The Counting House

Commercial/Civic Award – Fairwood Fields Care Home

Environmental Sustainability Award – Fairwood Fields Care Home, and Carleton High School



Whilst we have a list of potential projects carried over from 2025, if you have a 2026 project for our team to consider, please contact Mike Farrell.

[www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

## February meeting

26/00152/FUL – Bar Liquid, Shoe Market; bar to nail & beauty salon, 1st floor flat – Support

26/00153/ADV – Bar Liquid, Shoe Market; installation of non-illuminated signs – Support

25/02212/FUL – Prince of Wales WMC, Ferrybridge Road; car park to siting of 10 containers – continue to monitor public feedback

26/00049/FUL – Ponte RUFC; 4 floodlights on training pitches – Neutral

24/01728/S730 – Land East of Cobblers Lane; Variation of Condition of application (approved) Reference 24/01728/FUL, to develop fewer – no need to comment further

## April meeting

25/00712/S730 Wetherspoons Horsefair, application to extend usage hours of newly extended beer garden - Object

26/00327/FUL Olde Tavern, Baileygate, application to change use from public house to a hub for community support and supported residential accommodation (St Saviours) HMO - Object

26/00517/FUL NatWest Bank 3 Ropergate, closure and removal of signage, logo, ATM and night safe - Neutral

26/00493/FUL 30, 32 and 34 Micklegate (Bede House Villas) conversion of 3 dwellings to 4 almshouses, Pontefract and Ackworth Almshouse Trust – finalise our comments at the next meeting

26/00318/FUL Land off Wakefield Road/Mill Hill Lane; Children's play area – Support with recommendation to move next to changing rooms

25/02212/FUL – Prince of Wales WMC, Ferrybridge Road; car park to siting of 10 containers – Object

Canon Andrew Sage – Planning Group  
Coordinator (to March)

Mike Farrell – Planning & Highways Group  
Coordinator

### **JUNIOR CIVIC SOCIETY - SCHOOLS REPORT.**

#### ***Spring Term Highlights at De Lacy Primary School***

This term has been a busy and exciting one at De Lacy Primary School, with pupils across all year groups enjoying a wide range of enriching experiences both in and out of the classroom.

##### **Outdoor Adventures at William's Den**

In January, our KS1 children had a fantastic visit to William's Den, where they took part in a variety of engaging outdoor activities. The day offered valuable opportunities for exploration, teamwork, and imaginative play in a safe and stimulating environment. The children showed great enthusiasm and resilience throughout, making it a truly memorable experience.

##### **Residential Visit to Marrick Priory**

Also in January, pupils enjoyed an unforgettable residential trip to Marrick Priory. From the moment they arrived, they embraced a wide range of exciting and challenging activities. The experience helped them build confidence, develop new skills, and strengthen friendships. It was wonderful to see so many children stepping out of their comfort zones and supporting one another.

##### **Young Voices Concert 2026**

Earlier in the year, on 28th January, the school choir delivered an outstanding performance at the Young Voices Concert in Sheffield. After weeks of dedicated rehearsals, the pupils took to the stage with confidence and energy, showcasing their hard work and talent. The

concert proved to be a memorable and magical experience for everyone involved, and it remains a highlight of the school calendar. De Lacy is proud to continue its participation in such an inspiring and large-scale musical event.

##### **National Storytelling Week Celebration**

As part of National Storytelling Week, we were delighted to welcome parents and carers into school on Friday 6th February for a special reading session. It was a lovely opportunity to share the joy of reading together, and we greatly appreciate the continued support from families.

##### **Learning to Care for the Environment**

On Thursday 26th February, KS1 pupils took part in an inspiring English experience led by Fair and Funky. The children listened to the story *Rosie Revere, Engineer* and were inspired to become young engineers, creating their own designs using recycled materials while learning about sustainability.

##### **Scholastic Book Fair**

In February, the school proudly hosted its annual Scholastic Book Fair in celebration of World Book Day and a shared love of reading. The event ran for a full week and saw a fantastic turnout, with many parents and children attending throughout. A wide range of books were purchased, helping to inspire a continued enthusiasm for reading among pupils. The fair was also a great success in raising valuable funds for the school, which will contribute to future learning resources.

##### **World Book Day Fun**

World Book Day was, as always, a highlight of the term. Pupils and staff came dressed as their favourite book characters, creating a vibrant and exciting atmosphere across the school. The day was filled with activities that celebrated reading and encouraged a love of books.

### Cross Country Success

We are incredibly proud of three of our pupils who represented the school at a cross-country event on Wednesday 5th March. They demonstrated determination, effort, and excellent sportsmanship throughout the race—well done to all involved!

### WOW Walk to School Challenge

We are excited to launch the WOW Walk to School Challenge starting Monday 16th March. This pupil-led initiative encourages children to travel sustainably to school. By logging their journeys using the WOW Travel Tracker, pupils can earn collectable badges each month. This initiative promotes healthier lifestyles and helps children arrive at school feeling refreshed and ready to learn.

### Science Week

During Science Week, Lower Key Stage 2 pupils explored the fascinating question: “*Can you grow food on the Moon?*” To investigate this idea, they carried out a simple but effective experiment using cress seeds.

The children planted the seeds in two different environments to compare how conditions affect growth. One set of seeds was placed in a very cold setting to replicate the extreme low temperatures found on the Moon, while the other was kept at room temperature to represent conditions on Earth.

By observing the differences in how the seeds developed, pupils were able to think more deeply about what plants need to grow and whether it would be possible to produce food in such a harsh, unfamiliar environment.

### Red Nose Day

Each year, we proudly support Red Nose Day by coming together to raise money for this important cause—this time by wearing red and

taking part in a creative “Design a Nose” competition.

We were thrilled by the effort and imagination shown by all participants, and it was fantastic to see so many unique and colourful designs. Congratulations to the winners from each class, whose creations truly stood out!

Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of everyone involved, we are delighted to share that we raised over £300 for the charity. A huge well done to all who took part and contributed to making this event such a success

### DT Shelter Making

KS2 had a fantastic time on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March as pupils teamed up with their parents and carers for an exciting Design and Technology project. Together, they worked collaboratively to design and build shelters, showcasing creativity, problem-solving skills, and teamwork. A big thank you to all the parents and carers who joined us and helped make the experience so enjoyable and successful.

Overall, it has been a fantastic term filled with learning, adventure, and achievement. We look forward to many more exciting opportunities in the months ahead!

On behalf of Pontefract Civic Society, I'd like to thank De Lacy for submitting such a comprehensive report, which I'm sure is representative of many other local schools. We'd like to hear from more schools in future, though we may need to limit the space in our newsletter.

Phil Cook – Community Connectors Group Coordinator

## EVENTS CALENDAR 2026

All PCS Talks take place at Pontefract Town Hall

| PCS Talk & Events                                                                   | Other Events                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>January</b>                                                                      |                                                      |
| 16 Wakefield Theatre Royal   Katie Town                                             | 11-17 Pantomime Pontefract Town Hall                 |
| 26 2025 Design Awards Town Hall                                                     |                                                      |
| <b>February</b>                                                                     |                                                      |
| 17 Tiny Tickers (charity) Linda Atkins                                              |                                                      |
| <b>March</b>                                                                        |                                                      |
| 21 Community Showcase Annual General Meeting St Giles Church                        |                                                      |
| 17 Our Stories (Wakefield Council District Heritage Talk) Dr Tegwen Roberts         |                                                      |
| <b>April</b>                                                                        |                                                      |
| 21 Just 3 Words (performance) Chris Cade                                            | 7-21-29 Pontefract Races                             |
| <b>May</b>                                                                          |                                                      |
| 19 Model Villages Eric Jackson                                                      | 17 Pontefract 10k The Prince of Wales Hospice        |
|                                                                                     | 22 Pontefract Races                                  |
| <b>June</b>                                                                         |                                                      |
| 13 WheelFest/1940's Ropergate Town centre                                           | 2-8-21-29 Pontefract Races                           |
| 16 Performance What's that got to do with the price of fish? Ray Roberts (magician) | 13 KLH Events St Giles Church                        |
|                                                                                     | 20-21 Proms Weekend Pontefract Castle                |
| <b>July</b>                                                                         |                                                      |
| 11 Liquorice Shoots Town centre                                                     | 4 Armed Forces Day Pontefract Park                   |
| 21 Friends of Waterton Wall   Barbara Phipps                                        | 11 KLH Events Pontefract Town Hall                   |
|                                                                                     | 12 Liquorice Festival Pontefract Town Centre         |
|                                                                                     | 7-17-26 Pontefract Races                             |
|                                                                                     | 25-26 FarmTrax Country Music Festival Farmer Copleys |

| PCS Talk & Events                                                | Other Events                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>August</b>                                                    |                                                                          |
| 18 Talk                                                          | 1 Yorkshire Day Friarwood Valley Gardens                                 |
|                                                                  | 5-18 Pontefract Races                                                    |
|                                                                  | 8 Friarwood Festival Friarwood Valley Gardens                            |
|                                                                  | 9 Family Fun Day The Prince of Wales Hospice                             |
|                                                                  | 30 Ackworth PramFest The Prince of Wales Hospice                         |
| <b>September</b>                                                 |                                                                          |
| 11-20 Heritage Open Days                                         | 11 KLH Artisan Craft Fair Market Place*                                  |
| 15 World War II Spy from Fryston   Dave Smith                    | 17-24 Pontefract Races                                                   |
| <b>October</b>                                                   |                                                                          |
| 20 The Mobile Police Museum David Hardcastle                     | 5-19 Pontefract Races                                                    |
|                                                                  | 16 KLH Artisan Craft Fair Market Place*                                  |
|                                                                  | 24 KLH Events - Pontefract Town Hall - Halloween                         |
| <b>November</b>                                                  |                                                                          |
| 17 Setting Up The Commonwealth War Graves Commission David Jones | 8 KLH Events - Kings Croft Hotel - In aid of the Prince of Wales Hospice |
| 30 Performance of A Christmas Carol Chris Cade                   | 8 Remembrance Sunday Town Centre                                         |
|                                                                  | 11 Armistice Day Town Centre                                             |
|                                                                  | 13 KLH Artisan Craft Fair Market Place*                                  |
|                                                                  | 29 Pontefract Light Up Town Centre                                       |
| <b>December</b>                                                  |                                                                          |
| TBC Christmas with the Liquorice Singers King's Croft Hotel      | 11 KLH Artisan Craft Fair Market Place*                                  |
|                                                                  | 5 KLH Events Ackworth Quaker School Dickensian Christmas                 |



Scan the QR Code to go to the Pontefract Civic Society website

\*Weather permitting

**A VEHICLE SHOW WITH A DIFFERENCE**  
**PONTEFRACT CIVIC SOCIETY** **KLH EVENTS**

Over 100 Vintage, Classic, Performance, Bikes, 999 & HGV •  
 Artisan Craft Market • Children's Rides • Live Music • Street  
 Entertainment • Street Food • Face Painting • Costumed  
 Character Parade and much much more!



**WHEELFEST26**  
**13TH JUNE 2026**

VEHICLE DISPLAY OR ACTS PLEASE CONTACT STALL BOOKINGS PLEASE CONTACT  
 EVENTS@PONTEFRACTCIVICSOCIETY.ORG.UK KLHEVENTS@MAIL.CO.UK

**Two free events in the same place**  
**13TH JUNE 2026**  
**1940's Ropergate**

military vehicles &  
 equipment displays,  
 businesses dressed  
 1940's cafe food, live  
 entertainment and  
 dance



**Look who's coming to WHEELFEST26** **PONTEFRACT CIVIC SOCIETY** **KLH EVENTS**



**PONTEFRACT TOWN CENTRE 13TH JUNE**

**WF26 ENTERTAINMENT**

| Buttercross<br>Hosted By Rhubarb Radio | 1940's Ropergate<br>Hosted by Want 2 Jive | Cornmarket               |
|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 10:00 Mayor opens                      | 10:00 George Formby*                      | Street food available    |
| 10:15 Encore *                         | 10:30 Want 2 Jive                         | Children's rides         |
| 10:45 Cerys Langley*                   | 11:15 Liquorice singers *                 | Ukembe* busking          |
| 11:15 Fishing for compliments *#       | 12:00 George Formby*                      | throughout the day       |
| 12:00 Character Parade                 | 12:30 Want 2 Jive                         | Balloon modelling , Face |
| 12:15 Katie Cooke *                    | 13:30 Lady Lindy*                         | painting & Children's    |
| 13:00 Red Sparrows DL Dance            | 14:30 Want 2 Jive                         | crafting sessions        |
| 13:30 Sofia Lester *                   | 15:00 Lady Lindy*                         | 16:00 Close              |
| 14:15 Ivory *                          | 16:00 close *live music                   |                          |
| 15:00 trophies presentation            | all day infill no specific times          | Roaming and surprise     |
| 15:15 Hot Wyre*                        | Want 2 Jive                               | entertainment throughout |
| 16:00 close *live music                | Winston Churchill                         | the event                |
|                                        | ARP Wardens                               | in various areas         |

Library - 10:00 -15:00  
 Model railways and crafting

St Giles' Church  
 KLH Craft Fair 10:00 -15:00

We are grateful to  
 Little Bellows for the acts# and support  
 from Want 2 Jive for our  
 Ropergate compere The Old Post Office for  
 the ropergate stage management

**PONTEFRACT CIVIC SOCIETY**

**WHEELFEST26**  
**SAT 13TH JUNE**  
**PONTEFRACT TOWN CENTRE**  
**FREE! FREE CAR SHOW STAGE AND MORE**

**1940's DAY**  
**Ropergate Pontefract**  
 Part of WheelFest26  
 13th June

**Meet our sponsors**

**BETTA LIFE** **UK** **BETTA LIFE** Sponsoring our mainstage  
 for WheelFest26 at the Buttercross

**Wild Camping Vans** **Wild Camping** Sponsoring Cornmarket - HGV, car  
 clubs, bicycles and childrens rides/entertainment

**HANNAH DAVIES** **estate agent** Sponsoring Beastfair-  
 American, Performance and Film and also our character  
 Parade

**HUNTERS** **Hunters Castleford estate agent** Sponsoring Salter Row  
 & Woolmarket - Motorcycles and trikes and more

**CARTNERS No5 BAR** Sponsoring Shoemarket -  
 vintage and classics

**Picson** **Picson Printing & Embroidery** Sponsoring Market Place -  
 Modern Military and Emergency Services

**Michelle's Flowers Limited** **Michelles flowers** Sponsoring Ropergate 1940s Day,  
 along with military displays and Pontefract' in WW11

Other sponsor options available to discuss contact  
 vicechair@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk

**PONTEFRACT CIVIC SOCIETY** **KLH EVENTS** **wakefieldcouncil**  
 working for you

**PONTEFRACT CIVIC SOCIETY** **PONTEFRACT CIVIC SOCIETY, KLH EVENTS, WMDC EVENTS & MARKETS ARE WORKING TOGETHER**

**JOIN US FOR**  
**Liquorice Shoots**

**KLH OUTDOOR ARTISAN CRAFT MARKET** **SATURDAY 11TH JULY**  
**10AM TO 4 PM** **KLH EVENTS**

**The warm up day for Pontefract's famous Liquorice Festival**

Join us for lots of fun including:

- dog show • children's rides
- children's craft activities
- Thomas the Tank Engine
- face painting • dance
- stage entertainment
- food stalls • STAR WARS
- character costume parade and much much more!

**PONTEFRACT TOWN CENTRE**  
 FOR INFORMATION CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA @PONTEFRACTCIVIC  
 AND PONTEFRACT COMMUNITY PAGE

Gold Member



Gold Member



Gold Member



Gold Member



Gold Member



Gold Member



Gold Member



Gold Member



Gold Member



Gold Member



Silver Member



Silver Member

Silver Member



Silver Member



Silver Member



Silver Member



Bronze Member



Bronze Member



Bronze Member



Bronze Member



Bronze Member



We would like to thank all our business members for their support.

Ponterfract Civic Society is here to help your business through local networking and enabling business support.

Email us at [info@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:info@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk) to find out more. We would be delighted to get to know your business better.

## VISIT OUR ONLINE SHOP

We offer a range of books and souvenirs of Pontefract through our online shop or at our stall when attending events.

There are pens, badges, mugs, bags, gift jars of Pontefract cakes, T shirts and even a model of the Buttercross!

Most of the books we offer are not available from other sources and they cover various parts of Pontefract's ancient and industrial history including the Railways.

## DONATIONS, SPONSORSHIPS & 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, then additional active members are always beneficial.

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, sponsor an event or a bequest.

Both the Chair and Vice Chair are available if you wish to discuss this in more detail.

## CONTACT US:

We would be delighted to discuss any aspect of Pontefract with you to see how we could help or if you would like to know more about personal membership, Community membership or Business membership.

Kelvin Wilkins - Chair & Heritage Coordinator  
Tel: 07760 660071  
[chairman@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:chairman@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

Phil Cook - Vice Chair and Community Connectors Coordinator. Tel: 07931 700021  
[vicechair@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:vicechair@pontefractcivicsociety.org.uk)

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## MEMBERSHIP & PARTNERSHIPS

