



Pickering & District Civic Society

Reg. Charity 502630

Newsletter

Issue No.30
July 2012

The Queen's Jubilee and the Olympic Torch visit are now part of history, but wasn't it wonderful to see how the whole town made such an effort to join in the celebrations. The flags and bunting were out, along with large and enthusiastic crowds. Shops made the effort to dress their windows and the schools joined in with gusto. This is what community spirit is all about and it's essential to the future prosperity of every town and village. Without it we are just a bunch of self-centred individuals with little or no influence over changes and no community facilities, clubs or organisations. It relies on people putting their hands up to volunteer their time and expertise. My experience is that the expression 'if you want a job doing, ask a busy person' is invariably true, as it's often the same people doing everything. They don't last forever and always need new blood and fresh ideas and enthusiasm. We certainly owe our thanks to the hard working organisers of the Jubilee and other community events, which included our committee member Sarah Roberts.

The Civic Society had a stall at the Jubilee community event at the castle. Past experience suggested it could be a long quiet day, but it turned out to be a busy event. Alongside a display of our past and current projects was a detailed map showing potential development sites in and around the town, covering the next 15 years. It was heartening to see the level of interest in this map; not just from the usual NIMBY perspective, but with informed comments about how the town and its infrastructure will cope with up to 750 new houses. These are precisely the points the society (and the Town Council) made in response to the usual 'consultation'. We can but hope that Ryedale DC take our concerns seriously and have the legal clout to implement them. We have yet to see how the new National Planning Policy Framework actually works in practise, where there is a distinct conflict between the presumption of approval for all planning applications, set against the alleged importance of

local opinion. We are the ones who have to live with new developments and we are the ones with detailed local knowledge of their shortcomings, so don't hesitate to make your views known to committee members, so we can include the maximum well informed opinion in our comments.

Best Window Display Award

As numerous local businesses had made such a fine effort to decorate their windows for the Jubilee, Judy suggested awarding a prize to the best one. Based on how creative, original and tasteful (obviously a subjective opinion) we judged them to be, we soon narrowed it down to a shortlist of six: Botham's, Poppies and No1 Castlegate tea rooms, the Pet Store, the Chocolatiers (with a very impressively decorated cake) and Flintoft's. After that it was incredibly difficult to pick the winner, but Flintoft's scraped in by a narrow margin. No expense was spared to produce a winner's certificate on my computer and we popped round to present it as soon as they reopened after the holidays. We were unsure what the reaction to the news would be, but it was so heartwarming to see the genuine delight from all the family. We made sure they received the deserved publicity on the Pickering Blog and in the local press. The simple things are sometimes the best! **MP**

Pickering Town blog

The new Pickering blog is a useful web page that you can use to access information about current and future events around the town, with the ease of access and up-to-the minute immediacy that any good webpage gives, providing you are computer literate of course! Have a look at www.pickeringtown.info. Mike Potter is one of the townsfolk that regularly contribute to the blog, so Civic Society events

and flood scheme issues regularly appear. The blog's creator and editor, Gareth Jenkins, kindly attended our AGM to talk about how to use it. As the chairman's report of our year's activity has already been circulated and the committee was re-elected en bloc, there is nothing earth shattering to report from the AGM.

The Pickering flood project is grinding forward at its usual tectonic pace, but would probably have long since been abandoned without the tenacity of Civic Society representation. Detailed ground investigation is currently under way. Unless this uncovers potentially costly problems, a final decision should be made in October about going ahead with construction of a single large bund above Newbridge in 2013. Keep an eye on the blog for breaking news. **MP**

Lidl

The long drawn out saga of the Lidl supermarket development took on a new dimension recently when contractors started laying and rolling stone. They were it seems preparing the site for use as a temporary car park and Lidl thought this was within their existing planning consent. Ryedale District Council thought differently and the work stopped and eventually the contractors left and took their plant away. Now there has been a planning application for this car park suggesting it will have eighteen months duration. The surface will be stone chippings that will surely cause wind-blown dust in dry weather and mess on Vivis Lane in wet. No improvement of the traffic lights- as outlined in the supermarket consent are proposed even though the car park will generate more traffic in Vivis Lane. At the most, this application would lead to minor tidying of the present site and removal of the unsightly screens. We shall make representations to the council about this matter. Lidl having denied the people of Pickering the funded scheme to realign the traffic light junction, then failed to get a move on and build their supermarket. The site has been left as an eyesore but they keep telling the town council they will build the store- eventually. Yet this application seems to push that time even further into the future. We can perhaps predict that if they get permission for the car park, then in eighteen months time there will be another application for renewal for a further period- ad nauseam. **SH**

Methodist Housing Association

Another possible application looming is that to build 78 retirement bungalows and a residential home on a green field site on the east side of Malton Road. This is only one of a host of sites put in for development

under the Local Development Framework. The problem at the moment is that the LDF has not been completed and the council has not chosen its preferred sites for development. In the meantime we are getting successive applications that are creeping in under the radar and until the plan is ratified we will continue to get them. This one is outside the current town development limits and will have its main access from Malton Road. It will push the town boundary out to near the end of Haygate Lane. If it is successful it would increase pressure to develop the field on the west side of Malton Road- another site already thrown into the LDF consultation for potential development. The proposers say that Pickering has a high elderly population and is therefore ideal for this sort of development. There is a certain false logic in this because it seems they see a market here because we have a lot of elderly people who will potentially buy their houses. Yet those people already have homes and are not likely to move into these new ones- it would essentially have to attract new residents from outside. Moreover the developers don't seem to have done their homework. Some 20 or so years ago Willow Court and the Mill House took an awful long time to sell all the units. Some were in fact let for rent because of that. Now the Mill House has a number of flats for sale that simply aren't attracting buyers. More recently Spire View, an award-winning development, proved a disaster and only one unit was sold. The developer went bust and it is surely only a matter of time before those unsold units will come on the market at a discount. It will have to be a good one to attract buyers. Golden Living with their planning consent to build 48 flats on Eastgate went bust before they could start work and no new developer has been forthcoming. The existing car showroom was demolished- no doubt to save business rates and the site now looks like it had a visit in 1942 from the Luftwaffe! Meanwhile similar things are happening in Kirkbymoorside and until the LDF is finished they will continue to do so. **SH**

The Economic Situation

Interestingly the pulse of economic activity is clear when one checks the weekly planning application list - which we do. It is apparent that there has been a long-term decline in applications that reflect the economic situation. This is a sort of local barometer and hardly anything is being built at the moment. Not good news for the town and it is surely a reflection on what is going on nationally. Business confidence must be at an all time low and investment moribund. This is despite our previous discussions above of possible forthcoming proposals re the Methodist Housing Association plan. Let's hope things pick up soon. Personally this last twelve months, with three trips to

Norway and one to the Faroe Islands, though interesting, have been pretty tough. English Heritage, that looks after much of our heritage sector within which I work, has seen savage cuts and many people I know have been made redundant or taken early retirement. My personal fortunes seem to have improved a jot recently as I am now the archaeological advisor for a rather large Gothic building situated in the centre of York- it's that big thing with three towers. **SH**

Award to our Chairman

Some of you may have heard that Mike Potter was recently given the Service Before Self Award by the Rotary Club in recognition of his selfless work for the society and Pickering in general, particularly in respect of the flood defence issue. Mike was effectively ambushed at a Rotary dinner where he was the guest speaker for the evening. Congratulations to Mike for an award that is well deserved. **SH**

Some thoughts on Hedgerow Trees

Over the last 40 to 50 years many of our hedgerow trees have disappeared due to having become unsafe by old age, disease or damage. You can now travel several hundred yards along a road without seeing a single tree, and it is getting worse. If this continues, the surviving trees will only be in copses or plantations leaving us with fairly boring landscapes.

Up to the advent of the mechanized hedge cutter seedlings could be spotted in the hedgerows and, where practical, be allowed to mature to eventually become splendid specimens to grace the landscape. Some landowners have realized the problem and spent considerable sums of money to provide new trees, and there was even a Government scheme to encourage planting. Others have marked the position of promising saplings in the hedgerows to avoid them being chopped off by the cutters, and in other parts of the country volunteers have helped with the locating and marking of saplings. Is there any point of doing this around this area? If there is, the sooner the better as trees take a long time to grow!

Should trees only be encouraged in boundaries between fields, and not alongside highways? People can crash into wayside trees, leaves can block drains and make the surface slippery and trees or large branches can fall on to roads or vehicles during storms. Perhaps the verge should be at least two metres wide for roadside trees to avoid the worse of these consequences. **JA**

Planting Sites for Trees in Pickering

John's piece above on hedgerow trees brings to mind that we have a small amount of money to buy and plant some trees in Pickering. The problem is selecting suitable sites for them- here we would welcome suggestions from the membership as to where we should plant them. **SH**

Traffic Management at Roadworks

For several months there has been work going on to provide an additional link into Norton from the east end of the Malton bypass – a job that could and should have been done when the road was built.

Many people drive along 70mph dual carriageways, that they have not used before, see a sign indicating they are approaching a roundabout only 300 yards away. Like millions of others they negotiate the roundabout safely, stopping if necessary to give way to traffic coming from the right. Why is it necessary to have a 50mph speed limit starting 1½ miles in advance of the roadworks, and almost immediately be coned into one lane? If we can safely negotiate a roundabout with as little as 300 yards warning, where we may need to stop, why do we need all this palaver in advance of roadworks where we only need to slow down for the length of the works? And why, oh why, do we need it well beyond the finish of the job?

Many people have noticed how much more dangerous it is to use the slip road from the Pickering direction towards Rillington with the outer lane of the dual carriageway unnecessarily coned off. Traffic measures should make roads safer, not more dangerous, but here we have unnecessary coning off of one lane to make merging more difficult.

They say that restrictions around roadworks are necessary 'to protect the workforce', but how many times at weekends do we see no one working, absolutely no obstruction to the carriageway, all the cones removed, but still the speed limit boards in place? The attitude seems to be to cause as much delay and congestion as possible to boost someone's tiny little ego. 'I have power to disrupt the public so I must use it.'

When Prime Minister, Tony Blair said: 'One thing I suspect we can all agree on is that congestion is bad. It's bad for business because it disrupts goods and services. It affects people's quality of life and it is bad for the environment. That is why tackling congestion is a key priority for any government'. Why didn't he tell the Department of Transport then, as congestion is

estimated to cost the country over £15 billion a year? With a sensible look at traffic management at roadworks, a considerable saving could be made to help our dire financial situation. **JA**

Forthcoming Events

Pickering Heritage Group (PCS)

August 27 2012 11 - 3pm

Games ancient and modern for all the family in Pickering Castle

Heritage Weekend

September 6/7/8/9 2012

No Events arranged in Pickering by Civic Society this year.

Time to sample events in Hull, Scarborough, Whitby and York! see Heritageopendays.org/events

London open days are usually a week later.

Francis Nicholson Print Exhibition in Pannett Art Gallery, Whitby

October 19 to November 25 . Not open on Mondays. Free entry to Gallery only.

Many prints not seen at previous exhibitions. (Prof G Bell presentation on October 24 is for Whitby Lit and Phil members only)

FN pamphlet and book still on sale at Beck Isle and local newsagents.

Our Autumn Programme is still being arranged - will be sent out later.

Stop Press! LIDL Update

As our newsletter was being finished we discovered that the works on the Lidl site have recommenced and the blue safety barriers are being dismantled. A large sign stating that this was the 'New Pickering car park £1 per hour' is also being displayed. It appears that they have decided to complete and open the car park without waiting for planning consent. Presumably to make money over the Traction Engine weekend. We are told that Ryedale Planning Department cannot do anything about this and that the works are at the car park companies own risk. Whether the Highways Authority can do anything we shall see in due course. One aspect is of course that the site is beginning to look much tidier than it was. **SH**

Your Committee

Mike Potter

Chair/Flooding

477113

mjpotte@gmail.com

Sarah Roberts

477008

Heritage Group

Stuart Harrison

474979

Vice Chair, Treasurer and Newsletter

sa_harrison@yahoo.co.uk

John Addyman

473594

Committee

jaddypick@btinternet.com

Judy Dixon

Committee

473488

jhd102@pcxinternet.com

Bill Breakell

476570

Committee/Photo Survey

Sam Borman

477325 Website

Hilda Sissons

475784

Committee

Susan Strange

01723859788

Committee

Website

www.pickeringcivicsociety.btck.co.uk

**The closing date for
letters, notes or articles for
the next newsletter is 20th
October**

*Any opinions, beliefs or
views expressed in this
newsletter are not
necessarily those of the Civic
Society*