



# Pickering & District Civic Society

Reg. Charity 502630

## Newsletter

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### From the Chair

We are living in interesting./dangerous times. Democracy and freedom are being demanded in northern Africa and the middle east and in some countries political parties and ways of listening to people has yet to be developed at all levels. On another level, the situation in these far away places will effect us if the supply of oil becomes short which of course we paid for by supplying weapons for external defence and the means of suppressing the populous.

We may look on this in a superior way from a democratic country but ours is still developing. We have elections for various levels of local and national government and a different kind of election for the European Union but for many other institutions –school governors a combination of elected and appointed. In the UK the government has recently proposed some major changes which were not in either coalition party's manifestos and the people have spoken against these proposals and they have been kicked out of touch but for how long? And now we have a referendum on local elections day May 5 on either no change to first past the post or a new particular Alternative Vote system for electing Members of Parliament.

Does the Civic Society have a role in all of this as civic organisation but non political organisation ?

At the Yorkshire and Humberside Civic Society's AGM last month, the chairman of Civic Voice urged members to participate in the Local Development Framework consultation. Arising from this there was discussion on the governments as yet unpublished proposals for bringing planning closer to local people. We heard that some of the councils were better than others in having open meetings about new proposals and although we may grumble actually Ryedale is better than many. For the future would this mean that Pickering Town Council rather than Ryedale would have decided recent controversial planning proposals up Swainsea Lane

for Housing Association housing or the Park St/Burgate development or the Lidl development? We have to wait and see.

We have invited **Peter Cooper** who has been the chairman of the Yorkshire and Humberside Civic Societies and is now the President to be **the AGM speaker 17 May**. We haven't asked him to speak on a specific topic but he will address the burning issue at the time. He has had many years of experience and hopefully he will be able to answer questions or at least be able to pose the questions which need asking!!! **JD**

### The Problem with Dog Owners

many of you will have seen the complaints in the press about dog faeces being deposited just about everywhere and not picked up. In the Mill Lane area it has been particularly bad and over a four-week period we cleared 40 deposits from a relatively short length of grass verge. Following advice from the Town Clerk I put up warning notices pointing out the anti-social aspect and the possibility of a £1000 fine. This seems to have acted as an effective deterrent. I understand that moves are afoot to give the Police Community Support Officers powers to hand out fixed penalty notices to offenders they catch. Hopefully this will deter the miscreants even more. Besides Mill Lane the Public Open Space adjacent to Vivis Park estate has been badly affected. The offences committed in an area with two dog bins and a bag dispenser. There is a very serious public health issue behind such anti-social behaviour because dogs can carry the Toxocara Canis worm. Worm eggs are deposited in the faeces and can remain active for years. Though rare there are instances in which children have gone blind from Toxocara worm infection. To leave dog faeces in a Public Open Space frequented by children is a gross anti-social act verging on the criminal. **SH**

### **Royal Mail Parcels.**

Since about six months ago our postmen have not been allowed to leave parcels in our 'nominated safe place', if we are out, even though we had signed a declaration permitting them to do so. If out their customer now has to trek to the sorting office on the Thornton Road Industrial Estate to collect it. The office closes at 1-30pm, and it is quite likely that the package has not been returned there by the postman, so a wasted journey and another day's delay will happen. For people living in villages the picking up of a parcel can result in a 20-mile round trip. However, if your village has 'a participating local post office' you can pay an extra £1-50 to have it delivered there. How many villages have post offices these days?

The decision not to leave parcels is an arbitrary one made by Royal Mail head office without any public consultation, and is causing a great deal of inconvenience to many of their customers. When Central Government has been hauled over the coals recently, by the High Court, for failing to consult on the school replacement programme, should an organization like Royal Mail be allowed to impose stupid rules upon us without any consultation?

One explanation given by Royal Mail Customer Services was that they would be liable to pay compensation if the package was stolen from the 'nominated safe place', but the Chief Executive of Royal Mail accepts that even if 'the customer requests the item is to be left at their [sic] own risk' the postman is not permitted to leave it. Other mail delivery firms are still quite happy to leave things when we are out. Oh, and by the way, if the sender does not have a certificate of postage you will not get compensation for anything that disappears in the mail anyway! **JA**

My postie informs me it is a sackable offence to leave parcels when the householder is out. **SH**

### **Potholes**

A recent news item told us that the cost of repairing an average pothole is £75. There are millions of them in North Yorkshire, and on some roads average about one pothole for each metre of the road's length. At £75,000 per kilometre it will be a lot cheaper to totally resurface the road rather than to patch it with material that will probably break up into another, larger pothole next winter. However, we are told we haven't got the money though they can waste it on speed humps that nobody wants! **JA**

### **Burgate Development**

The controversial proposed housing development between Burgate and Park Street was thrown out by the RDC planning committee recently, despite

recommendation for approval by the officers. It included the realignment of the footpath in Burgate that would have destroyed the nice stone curbing on the east side. Many protestors could not understand why the Conservation Officer was prepared to countenance such a fundamental change to the street scene in a Conservation Area. Since the decision two PDCS committee members checked out the proposed site entrance and established that the drawings submitted in support of the application were wrong. It was also beyond doubt that even with changed pavements the statutory sightlines for exiting traffic could not be attained. In the first submission of this development it was turned down on appeal for this very reason. This raises the serious question of why the officers at RDC were prepared to approve a scheme that would have an illegal exit? Thankfully the members did not approve the scheme. Should it go to appeal again the officers will be in the embarrassing position of defending a decision taken against their own recommendation for approval. If an appeal is made we shall be pointing out the illegality of the proposed exit to the Planning Inspectorate. **SH**

### **Parking on Pavements/ across Pavements**

The committee have been having a dialogue with Police Community Support Officer Andy Hugill on this matter and the law is most complex! Usually the car drivers who do this believe that they are helping to keep the road clearer for vehicle drivers! The upshot is that if we see there are persistent offenders who are blocking the pavement for pedestrians, pram pushers or invalid chairs then we should report this to the Community Police officers who will have a word. Presently they are monitoring Kingfisher Drive. Ruffa Lane parkers on pavements appear to have got the message. If you have problems in your road. please report to Andy Hugill at [Andrew.hugill@northyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Andrew.hugill@northyorkshire.pnn.police.uk) or leave a message on 08456060247

The centre of town is even more complicated!! Only in London by the way is parking on pavements totally illegal. Persistent offenders can be prosecuted but only if police actually witness the obstruction.

**JD**

### **Francis Nicholson Project progress...**

We are delighted to report that Beck Isle Museum now has a display cabinet for Francis Nicholson. Ryedale Folk Museum will be hosting a display of some of his watercolours and lithographs on loan from round the national collections from 31 March to 20 May. This will be the launch of a more substantial book/catalogue about his life and work and place in the watercolour and artistic endeavour in the Georgian Art world, edited by Gordon Bell published by

Blackthorne Press. 2012 is the two hundredth year since Francis Nicholson was President of the Old Water Colour Society. In the meantime, research moves on apace locating his work round the country and about his life and times in Yorkshire at the end of the 18th century.

His parent's home in Pickering has now been verified as no 1 Hungate which is now the staff quarters of the Forest and Vale Hotel. Although it must be now the ugliest grade 2 listed building in Pickering because of extensive alterations, the Civic Society is presently applying for planning permission for a blue plaque to be placed there.

We are also working on a website to be launched this summer. Meanwhile if you are in Scarborough, the Art Gallery has two early pictures by him of the "Spaw" and Sandgate at about 1790 on view along with a collection of later wonderful sea and ship pictures by Grimshaw, Carter and others. Ask in the reference section of Whitby and Scarborough libraries for the book "Whitby Prints" volume 2 published 1931 which has some of his prints of Whitby and Robin Hoods Bay. And do tell us if you find an FN picture anywhere! Usually prints signed FN and a date but sadly paintings are signed on the reverse side.

Copies of Colin Coulson's illustrated booklet are still available in local newsagents, tourist information centre and Beck Isle Museum - excellent gift for visitors. **JD**

### **Flood Defences Update**

Only six weeks before the proposed start date, the Environment Agency (EA) announced that the bund scheme has been delayed once more. Due to the classification of the bund being a category A reservoir (i.e. capable of holding more than 10,000 cubic metres of water), additional flood modelling has been required and the plans need modification, thus delaying their submission to the planning authorities. Additional cost of around £150,000 will be incurred at a time when it is a gross understatement to say that money is tight. Despite RDC initially stating that no overspent would be tolerated, the EA have approached them with the begging bowl and we await their response.

As the plans went to the inspector of reservoirs about 2-3 months ago, I am extremely perplexed as to why this news has only just been made available. I have asked questions, but no response has been forthcoming from the EA. There is no explanation why such a huge extra sum is required for what appears to be a rise in bund height. Remarkably expensive clay! The start date has slipped yet again

to summer 2011 from the initial summer 2010. Alone among the numerous partners in the Slowing the Flow (STF) scheme, the EA choose to act as an autonomous secret society. Apparently, there was even some annoyance when I passed this news to my regular distribution list of councillors, local press and various interested parties. The Yorkshire Post was certainly an interested party and has since included a couple of very well written articles. One can but wonder how the EA were going to explain the total lack of activity on the scheduled start date of (ironically) 1 April. 'No comment' perhaps?

The next phase of debris dam building began on 15 Feb, with at least 50 more in Pickering Beck (PB) catchment and around 50 in R Seven catchment planned. All other strands should be getting under way soon too, such as riparian planting, moorland drain blocking and heather restoration. All have firm plans, which have jumped the various hurdles and have funding in place. They were only waiting for the weather to improve. Progress is still being made for more debris dams on NP land below Hole of Horcum and a couple in the main PB. There is still a distinct possibility of a couple of mini bunds being trialled in the R Seven (Sinnington) catchment, but there are a few hoops still to jump through. David Rees continues his excellent 'catchment sensitive farming' work, which may well have a direct relevance to the surface water floods in Manor Vale, Kirkby Moorside. The official end of the DeFRA funded STF project at the end of March is fast approaching. This will not mean an abrupt end to the scheme, as the strands will continue as planned and there is scope for expansion by individual partners, who have pledged to coordinate where possible. The manager, Simon Marrington, should also have some facility time available when he changes posts as his contract ends. The proposed forestry sell has just been abandoned (perhaps only postponed?), thus safeguarding the excellent work the FC have done on public land for the time being. There will be extensive reports and evaluations to write. Hopefully, the blarney will not run to the customary unreadable (and unread?) volumes and will provide valuable lessons for other similar projects nationwide. I will be submitting my own frank and honest feedback, unfettered by any continued need for diplomacy or confidentiality.

Further afield in Ryedale, there is more interesting work by Chris Bowles on the joint IDB/EA/RDC channel management study. An additional reach will be surveyed from Rye mouth to Kirkham Sluice.

Depth of sediment build up (estimated at over 6 feet in places) will be an important aspect and will provide valuable evidence in terms of both flood risk and damage to the ecology of the SSSI. The EA are gradually coming to accept the damage from their policy of allowing sediment build up, although they remain adamant that no dredging is possible in the SSSI. However, Chris has been in contact with a contractor in Cambridgeshire that has a method of doing exactly that and will be taking this up with the EA locally. Chris has put forward a preliminary concept idea for a sediment settlement area alongside the Derwent near Espersykes farm (in the region of GR 827751). Portions of the flood bank could be removed to allow an area to flood with slow moving water (possibly slowed with low bunds), from which the sediment could settle. Early days, but a promising concept. I hope recent advances in relations between the community, IDBs and EA are not reversed by the financial squeeze and inevitable pressure on the remaining staff. Will their priorities match ours? MP

#### **The Latest Flood News**

Council Leader Keith Knaggs of RDC is urging councilors to approve the EA request for an additional £150,000. Like Mike I do wonder about this 'problem' that has brought about the need for a redesign of the bunds. One would expect that the EA could and should have foreseen this. SH

#### **Civic Society Events**

March 13 John Steele of the Beck Isle Museum "Hammer and Tongs" John retired from a life of Blacksmithing and teaching to activate the Beck Isle Smithy and has a fascinating story to tell Memorial Hall- bring your friends along. Arranged by Heritage Group 2.00pm followed by cup of tea.

April 8 -10 Walkers Welcome Weekend - see their programme of town and country walks in TIC - must be booked.

April 25 Easter Monday Heritage Group 11 - 2pm Easter Activities in the Castle with Egg Roll at 1.00pm

April 25 Easter Monday to October 31 Town Guided Walks begin and continue every Monday 10.30 am from Tourist Information Centre.

May 15 and May 22 Two films about Community arranged by Civic Society Environment Group 7.30 Friends Meeting House

May 17 7.30 pm PICKERING CIVIC SOCIETY AGM Memorial Hall followed at 8.pm Peter Cooper YHACS President on Civic Issues of Today.

May 30 tbc Springtime Nature Day In the Castle Heritage Group 11 - 3pm

June 12 Music in the Castle Heritage Group 12 - 4pm

June 7 Pickering Civic Society - evening visit to Robin Hood's Bay Museum arranged by Mark Sissons 01751 475784 this museum is only open occasionally so this is a great opportunity to visit and view the fascinating contents. Lifts arranged. Cost £2/3pp plus car share.

### **Your Committee**

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#### **Website**

**[www.pickeringcivicsociety.btck.co.uk](http://www.pickeringcivicsociety.btck.co.uk)**

**Heritage Group** supporting and promoting the heritage of Pickering Castle.

This group has worked hard during the winter planning a summer programme and when verified by EH will be available.

**Environment Group** has arranged two films details on left.

Both groups would welcome extra help either in planning or on the day of events - do be in touch.

**The Pickering Guided Walks** group would also welcome new guides - training will be given. **JD**

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

