

CIVIC SOCIETY
GREAT YARMOUTH



4th ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

civicsocietygy.co.uk



INTRODUCTION



Last year I mentioned the troubles we had had due to the Covid Pandemic. How many of you would have thought that those problems would still be with us although now there is a gradual lifting of restrictions?

However, we have been far from idle. Your committee has met regularly via Zoom or Teams and we have produced a report on "The Regeneration of Great Yarmouth" which is available on our website. Some of our suggestions are already underway but we feel it is essential that the local community should take ownership of the report. People need to be listened to and to feel that their views are heard and acted upon. It is all very well refurbishing old buildings and building new ones. What is important is that everyone living here should have a decent home, an excellent education and be encouraged to find a good job. We need to promote good health, to build up a community spirit and develop civic pride. As I have said before we need "to clean up, green up and light up" the town.

As your chair I have had the honour of sitting on the Town Board which has been so successful in obtaining several grants: Future High Street Fund, Heritage Action Zone Fund, Town Deal and now we have shown an expression of interest to be the City of Culture in 2025 (Along with East Suffolk Council). Twenty places around the country have applied and in the next few weeks up to six will be short-listed and given £40,000 to finalise their application for the winner to be announced in the spring. The long term benefits to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft would be amazing and it is essential that all local organisations and individuals work hard to achieve this goal. I also sit on the Cultural, Heritage and Tourism Board which has developed its strategy for the next 10 years and is overseeing many exciting projects.

This is an exciting time for Great Yarmouth and already we are seeing the success of the Waterways, the erection of the Marina and covered market, the building of the third river crossing along with plans for many other projects. It is important that we all work together to promote Great Yarmouth and to develop civic pride. I hope that you will continue your membership of the Civic Society and encourage new members to join.

Hugh Sturzaker, MBE
Chairman



THANK YOU

COMMITTEE

We are very honoured to have the High Steward of Great Yarmouth as our President and very grateful for the enthusiasm and hard work put in by our committee members.

President:	Henry Cator High Steward of Great Yarmouth
Chairman:	Hugh Sturzaker Retired surgeon
Secretary:	Rachel Moore TMS Media
Treasurer:	Michael Muskett Retired accountant and chair of local Macmillan Cancer Relief
Membership Secretary:	John Burroughs Ex Mayor of Great Yarmouth and retired publican

Peter Bondi
Retired hotel manager

Paul Davies
Retired GP, author, Chair of Great Yarmouth Minster Preservation Trust, Chair of Local History and Archaeological Society, trustee of Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, etc.

Anne Edwards
Ex editor of the Great Yarmouth Mercury

David Marsh
Leading light in tourism, local businesses and previously non executive director of Local Enterprise Partnership

Ian McCreadie
Managing Director of SPP Digital, Ex Chair of Enterprise GY, School Governor

Ian Miller
Chartered Quantity Surveyor

Paul Patterson
Recently retired Managing Director of Associated Sourcing Web, Director of ATEC Design, historian and author

Graham Plant
Deputy Leader of Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk County Council

Catherine Richards
Principal of East Norfolk 6th Form College

Bruce Sturrock
Ex Chairman of Palmers and Town Centre Partnership

Michael Zegerman
Retired businessman

SPONSORS AND GRANTS

Michael and June Fuller - £500
East Coast College - £100
Great Yarmouth in Bloom - £100
John and June Rogerson - £40
East Norfolk Six Form College - hosting our Zoom meetings
TMS Media - maintaining our website & design of the Annual Report
Paul Patterson - designing the Regeneration Report
Sainsbury's donated many packets of seeds and bulbs

PROMOTION

TMS Media maintains our website free of charge and Anne Edwards looks after our social media. She will be working with two apprentices at East Norfolk Six Form College to further promote the Society. The apprentices will also be updating the website.

Our chairman has spoken several times on Harbour Radio and Radio Norfolk about the Society and has started a regular column in the Mercury.

Word of mouth is still the best means of promotion and we hope members will talk to their friends and colleagues about what the Society is doing and encourage them to become members.



Some very exciting plans are being developed for the Borough by the Town Board and the chair of the Civic Society sits on the Board and the Cultural and Tourism Strategy Group which has produced plans for the next 5-10 years. The Town Board has been very successful in applying for national grants.

THE FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND

has provided a grant of £13.7M to help regenerate the town centre. This will involve moving the library to the old Palmers building and turning it into a learning and university centre. It is important to increase the number of people living in the town centre and some of the money will go towards building 89 new homes on the Conge and encouraging the conversion of the floors above shops and businesses into flats and apartments. Other works include the development of a heritage centre and the building of a new covered market with extensive planting of trees and plants in the Market Place.

Education and University Centre. Artists impression. Credit GYBC



The Town Deal will provide £20.1M of investment and has 4 strands:

1 Growth, Regeneration and Business Development

Money for this will be going to support the development of a new £18M operations and maintenance (O&M) campus and business incubator on the Great Yarmouth Energy Park as well as helping to start regeneration of North Quay with new homes and businesses.

2 Skills and Aspirations

The grant will help to establish a new Great Yarmouth Learning Centre and University Campus to provide an enhanced route to economic activity and support growth sectors.

3 Arts Culture and Tourism

Grants will help to restore and repurpose the Winter Gardens and lead to the restoration and adaptation of the historic Ice House building as a National Centre for Arts and Circus.

4 Connectivity and Sustainability

Money will go to enhancing digital connectivity, improved cycling and walk ways and improving connections between the seafront and town centre.



Full details of The Town Deal plans are given at

https://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/media/5881/Town-Deal-Brochure/pdf/Town_Deal_Brochure_Final.pdf



Market Place and new covered market. Credit GYBC



THE HERITAGE ACTION ZONE

This includes the area between the Minster and St. George's Theatre and involves local people in repairing, conserving and building a better understanding of the area's historic buildings and sites, working with a range of partners.

A GRANT OF £1.9M HAS BEEN AWARDED

Area covered by Heritage Action Zone from Minster to St. George's Theatre



NORFOLK STRATEGIC FUND

£6.75 Fund provided by government to help the county recover from the Covid Pandemic. GYBC has made 4 applications: Feasibility study to move the bus station, grant for education and skills centre in town centre, money for local cycling and walking infrastructure plan, grant for winter activities programme to encourage people to come into the town centre. The Society was asked to coordinate an Arts Trail in Great Yarmouth during January and February 2001 and we would like to have a similar one in Gorleston. However, this was postponed because of Covid and we are now working on plans to "Paint the Town" in late March 2022.

COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND

This is being coordinated by Norfolk County Council and the application from Great Yarmouth for over £1M to aid mentoring and job creation came top of the applications from the county. We are now awaiting the outcome.



'Our Place is Your Stage'

is the title of the Borough's Culture, Heritage and Tourism Strategy and was launched in August 2020.

Full details may be obtained below.

https://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/media/5670/Culture-Heritage--Tourism-Strategy-Our-Place-is-Your-Stage/pdf/Culture_Heritage_and_Tourism_Strategy_FINAL_14072020.pdf



We have a long history for providing entertainment and the Hippodrome is one of only two purpose built circuses in the country.

Along with the expertise of the Out There Festival developed over recent years we aim to be the country's centre for circus and over a million pounds is going into the development of the Ice House near the Haven Bridge.

We have some excellent theatres and museums and a new art Gallery - The Yare Gallery in the premises previously occupied by the Nelson Museum.

It is essential that we provide entertainment and attractions throughout the year and not just in the summer months. We need to promote our great heritage and the wonderful villages and Broads.



Tourism is worth over £635M annually to the Borough and 36% of employment is associated with the tourist industry. 7.6 million people visit Great Yarmouth annually and one million of those stay for more than a day.



THIS YEAR'S PROJECTS

Flower beds along the Blackfriars section of the town wall and near the Sainsbury's carpark have been created and maintained

This has been led by Ann Hacon, Angie Powley and Clare Southern. They have also taken on the courtyard attached to the new Yare Gallery. Hundreds of bulbs have been planted around the Borough which were donated by Sainsbury's. The planters around St. George's Plaza have been planted with bulbs and flowers. If you would like to help with these projects or to donate plants, seeds or bulbs it would enable us to tackle other areas in the town. If interested please contact annhacon@yahoo.co.uk



Trees on South Quay

We had hoped it would be possible to plant trees along South Quay but soil analysis suggests that the conditions here are too contaminated for the trees to survive. Presumably this is due to the chemicals from the trains that used to run along South Quay. However, Darren Barker is keen on having one more try at growing trees here.

Planting more trees in the town

Last year we carried out a tree audit suggesting where trees may be planted in the town. The Borough has now been given 500 full size trees over the next two years and we look forward to them being planted. They are of benefit in so many ways: their beauty, a habitat for so many birds, insects and animals, absorbing carbon dioxide, producing oxygen, cooling the climate etc.

Cleaning up the town

Each Friday a small group of Society members litter picks mainly along the town wall and associated streets and Rows, although this was stopped at the height of the Covid Pandemic. The solution to litter is to stop people dropping litter in the first place and to encourage home owners and business owners to be responsible for the pavement and gutter in front of their properties. The litter pickers do have a positive effect on the neighbourhoods and we are working with various agencies to try and obtain the support of home owners.

Lighting up the town

Since the Society was formed we have been promoting the idea of lighting up historic buildings in the town and we are delighted that funds are now available for this to be done to six of them. They will include the Minster, the Town Hall, St. George's Theatre and the Tolhouse. It will make such a difference to the town at night but we need to carry on the campaign to light up other buildings, the Town Wall and the bridges leading into the town.

Regeneration of Great Yarmouth Report

Many reports have been written about different aspects of Great Yarmouth and we thought it would be worthwhile putting forward our own ideas. There are many and if we had gone into great detail with each then it would have been a large volume which few people would read. It therefore details what we see are the problems and how they may be tackled mainly as bullet points. We hope it will result in further discussion as to how these ideas may be taken forwards. We thought that good living conditions for all, promoting health and education and the provision of jobs were essential and that the ideas of local people should be listened to so that the community will take ownership and support the changes proposed. The report is available on our website at www.civicsocietygy.co.uk

Hanseatic League

This organisation was founded by North German towns and German merchant communities abroad to promote and protect their mutual trading interests. It dominated commercial activity in northern Europe from the 13th to the 15th century. Great Yarmouth was one of its trading posts. In recent years many of the towns and cities which belonged to the League have joined together to promote friendship and tourism. Through the generosity of Henry Cator and Michael Muskett our initial membership fees have been paid and, if membership of the League can be shown to be beneficial to the Borough, the Council will pay the membership fees in future years. Kings Lynn has shown how much its membership has benefitted the town and we hope that this will be the case for Great Yarmouth.

Uniform for our High Steward

Michael Muskett noted that the High Steward did not have a uniform for his official duties and arranged for several members of the Society to pay for the uniform to be made. However, the Borough Council on hearing about this decided that it would pay for the uniform.



2020

Friday 13 November

Presentation on the Regeneration of Great Yarmouth by Sheila Oxtoby, Chief Executive of Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Darren Barker, Culture Heritage and Design Manager and the Managing Director of the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust. They covered the plans and aspirations of the Town Board in regenerating the town and the success they were having in obtaining grants to do the work.

2021

Friday 12 February

Third River Crossing An excellent virtual presentation by the team from BAM Nuttall Ltd, who are building the bridge, and Norfolk County Council. They showed in great detail with amazing graphics how the new bridge was going to be built.



Thursday 11 March

Update on Heritage Projects in Great Yarmouth. Darren Barker, Project Director of Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust and the Borough's Culture, Heritage and Design Manager gave an excellent virtual presentation which included an update on various projects such as the former Nelson Museum, 160 King Street, Greenwood, Pinnacle and North West Towers.

Thursday 31 March

Presentation by John McKiernan This was a novel, interactive presentation involving several professors from around the country and abroad lasting two hours. After an introduction by John of his impressions of Great Yarmouth there was a general discussion and then participants were able to join separate "tables" for more specific topics. It challenged our present views and made us look at the consequences posed by new technology which John calls the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Saturday 7 August

Open Day of the Gardens around the Blackfriars section of the Town Wall. Adrian Thompson, Deputy Mayor, and his wife graced us with their presence. Apart from seeing the transformation of the area, people were able to partake of delicious cakes and to take away plants and gardening equipment made by the organisers. He also spent some time with Bridget Heriz viewing her sculpture of a Fisher Girl which is the first of what is hoped will be a trail of 100 sculptures round the town.



Awards to shops, businesses and market stalls in the town centre

This was cancelled last year because of Covid but we are planning to assess these premises next spring and award prizes.

Arts Trail

Last year the Society was asked to coordinate an Arts Trail in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston to encourage people into the towns but Covid put a stop to this. This is now planned for the latter part of March 2022. We plan to have various exhibitions in the Minster, Yare and Skipplings Art Galleries, the Gorleston and Great Yarmouth Libraries, with music and dance in several locations along with activities for children.

Propagation of Plants

Buying plants is expensive and if are going to increase the number of plants in the town we need a greenhouse or poly tunnel to grow them. We would hope that this would encourage more volunteers to help us with these projects. It would also be a wonderful way of introducing youngsters to the joy of growing seeds, taking cuttings and watching plants grow. These activities also have great benefits for people's well being. Discussion are underway to obtain a piece of land and apply for grants to purchase a greenhouse and equipment.

Mediaeval Fayre

We hope to put on this event over the weekend of 28/29 May 2022 with activities taking place in the Minster grounds and the Market Place.

FUTURE MEETINGS

At Christchurch, King Street, NR30 2HL. starting at 7.30pm unless stated otherwise.

2021

Wednesday 22 September

AGM and Presentation by Carl Smith, Leader of the Council and Sheila Oxtoby, CEO of Borough Council, about the exciting projects taking place in the town.

Tuesday 12 October

"Filby in Bloom: Secrets of our success" by the Mayor, Adrian Thompson. He has been the inspiration behind the highly successful Filby in Bloom winning numerous prizes over the years. We hope to learn from him how we can continue to "green up" Great Yarmouth.

Tuesday 14 December

"Culture, Heritage and Tourism Strategy of the Borough" by Paula Boyce, Strategic Director of the Borough's Executive Leadership Team. If we have been shortlisted for City of Culture for 2025 this will also be covered.

2022

Tuesday 5 April

"A Future for our great historic buildings" by Kit Martin CBE, British architectural designer and country house property developer who converted the old St. Nicholas Hospital site into housing.

We are also planning talks about the Winter Gardens, The Waterways and The Heritage Action Zone.



The following are our priorities:

- **ROUNDAABOUTS**

Work with the Borough Council, Norfolk County Council and Highways England to improve their appearance. Install a prominent sculpture on Vauxhall roundabout designed by Paul Patterson. Treat the weeds along the A47 effectively and clear the litter.

- **LITTER**

Encourage people and businesses to look after the area in front of their properties.

- **PAVEMENTS**

Work with the Council and Norfolk County Council to develop decent pavement surfaces which are well maintained and that utility services which dig them up are responsible for returning them to how they were.

- **ATTRACTING YOUNGSTERS**

Work with Schools and Colleges to encourage students to get involved with our various projects.

- **MOTIVATING COMMUNITIES**

Work with community workers and the community to develop civic pride.

- **GREENING UP THE TOWN**

Work with GYBC, GY Preservation Trust, Great Yarmouth in Bloom and other organisations to green up the town and increase the number trees in the Borough.

- **LIGHTING UP THE TOWN**

Work to achieve illumination of all historic buildings, the town wall and all the bridges leading into the town. Make sure the Rows are properly illuminated.

- **TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN**

Work with the Town Board and the Council on the development of this plan.

- **AWARDS**

Make annual awards to encourage shops, businesses and individuals to take pride in their properties.

- **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Review planning applications and make our views known to the Council. Ensure that the Council revokes licences where Homes of Multiple Occupancy are not kept up to standard.

- **TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE IN TOWN CENTRE**

Continue to press for the establishment of a Tourist Information Centre in the Town Centre. Hopefully this will be in the new Heritage Centre.

- **REBUILD NEW GATE**

This will enable people to see what one of the town wall gates looked like. The construction will be educational for school children and will help to bring the community together.

- **HANSEATIC LEAGUE**

Work with other New Hanse towns to encourage visitors to the town.

- **GRANTS**

Apply for grants to help us achieve our goals.

- **ARTS TRAIL**

Work with local art societies and other groups to arrange an Arts Trail in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston to attract visitors in March 2022.

- **REGENERATION OF GREAT YARMOUTH REPORT**

Publicise this report and obtain the support of the community for it so that many of its suggestions may be implemented and civic pride is generated. Report available on our website.

- **MEMBERSHIP**

Continue to increase membership. Encourage each member to get at least two members to join.



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