

CIVIC SOCIETY
GREAT YARMOUTH



**5th ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022**

www.civicsocietygy.co.uk



INTRODUCTION



Gradually we are coming out of the shadow of Covid although many people are still catching it. However, in the majority of cases the symptoms appear to be not so severe. Nevertheless people have become used to staying at home or are reluctant to go out. As a result the attendance at Society meetings has been much reduced and this seems to be the case with most organisations.

As chair of the Civic Society I have the honour of sitting on the Town Board which has successfully obtained funds from the High Street Fund, Town Deal, Heritage ActionZone among others. As a result the first stage of the Covered Market is complete, preparations are underway to turn the old Palmers into a University Learning Centre and will include the Library. The Marina is now open, the Ice House is being purchased as one of the centres for circus, plans are progressing for housing on the Conge and North Quay, the Heritage Action Zone is attending to historic buildings and the Mediaeval Town Wall, work is

progressing on providing start up and servicing units by the outer harbour and the Third River crossing is progressing well.

The first of 505 mature trees were planted in the spring and the rest will be planted this autumn. Not only will this improve the town's appearance it will also have environmental benefits.

As a member of the Culture and Tourism Board I was delighted to see the Board's strategy accepted one of whose aims is to extend tourism to an all year round facility.

Although there is much gloom as we escape from the Covid pandemic and struggle with rising prices there is much to be positive about what is happening in Great Yarmouth. We very much value your comments and suggestions about what your Society should be doing to improve Great Yarmouth. We could do with more active members on the committee and please encourage new members to join.

We are beginning to see the fruits of the millions of pounds of investment in recent years and it is important that the community comes together to celebrate these achievements and help to develop civic pride. Your input would be welcomed.

Mr. 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 & Chair of Local Macmillan Cancer Relief
Membership Secretary:	John Burroughs , Ex Mayor of Great Yarmouth and retired publican

Peter Bondi
Retired Hotel Manager

Dr. Paul Davies
Retired GP, Author, Chair of GYMPT, Chair of Local History and Archaeological Society, 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
Mayor of Great Yarmouth, Deputy Leader of Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk County Council

Dr. Catherine Richards
Principal of East Norfolk Sixth Form College

Bruce Sturrock
Ex Chairman of Palmers and Town Centre Partnership

Michael Zegerman
Retired Businessman

SPONSORS AND GRANTS

We are most grateful to the following:

Stardrop Ltd towards cost of printing of Annual Report £200

Great Yarmouth in Bloom £100

East Norfolk Sixth Form College for hosting our Zoom meetings & Maintaining our Website

Sainsbury's donated many packets of seeds and bulbs.

PROMOTION

Two apprentices at East Norfolk Sixth Form College have maintained our website. We could do with some help with publicity via social media

Our Chair writes a weekly column in the Mercury about various aspects of the town and its people and has spoken several times on Harbour Radio about the activities of the Society.

Word of mouth is by far the best means of publicity and we hope that members will speak to their friends and colleagues about what the Society is doing and urge them to become members.



TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

For full details of the Town Deal plans are accessible via:

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

- **Covered Market** - The first stage is now complete, and the stallholders appear to like it. When it is completed the whole Market Place will be landscaped with trees and plants. The old Palmers department store has been purchased and funding is in place to turn it into a University Learning Centre. It is intended that education will be available for people of all ages which should help people into better jobs. It is planned that the library will move into the building, and this will result in a greater footfall for the town centre.
 - **The Marina** opened on 5 August after an investment of £26M and let us hope it will lead to an improvement in the health and wellbeing of local people and will be enjoyed by visitors.
 - **The Icehouse** on the west side of the Haven Bridge is being purchased and will be developed into a training and performance area as part of making Great Yarmouth the country's centre for circus. The aim is to encourage performers to come and train here and in return they will be putting on performances around the town.
 - **Housing** - It is important that more people live in the town centre and there are plans to develop housing above shops and businesses as well as to develop high quality housing along the Conge and on North Quay. With more people living in the town centre there will be greater footfall and hopefully this will encourage small shops, bars and restaurants to open in the area.
 - **Culture and Tourism Board** - As a member of this board I am delighted that its strategy was published last year and one of its aims is to develop tourism throughout the year. At short notice a bid was put in, along with East Norfolk Council, to become the City of Culture. Although not successful much was gained by the exercise as well as improved working with our neighbours which could put us in a good place for another application in four years time.
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New Marine Centre Credit Andrew Turner/BBC.



Architect's view of New Covered Market. Credit GYBC.





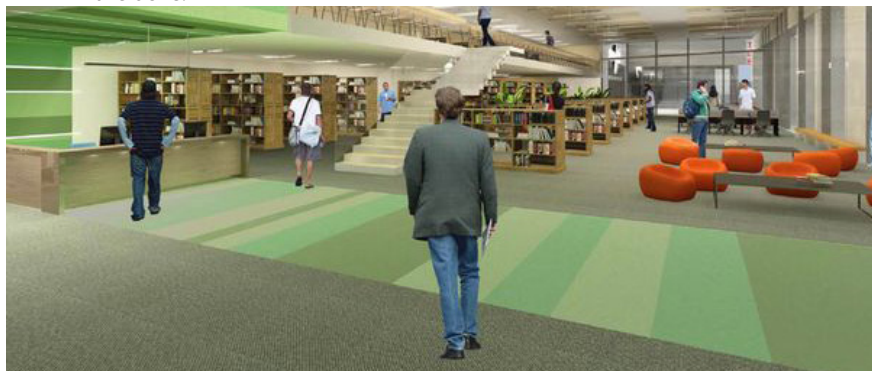
TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

- **Heritage Action Zone** is funded by a grant of £1.9M to improve ancient buildings and increase people's understanding of their heritage. Work is underway on the Mediaeval Town Wall, the iron railings outside St. Nicholas Primary School, ancient buildings in King Street and the Rows.
- **The Third River Crossing** is progressing well which should help traffic problems around the town and allow easier access to the outer harbour and startup units there. The Society is keen to see bridges into the town lit up and we had hoped that it would be cheaper to install lighting on the new bridge as it was being built. Unfortunately this suggestion was not taken up.
- **The Winter Gardens** - They were closed in 2008 for safety reasons and after many years funding has been obtained to completely refurbish the last surviving seaside Victorian Winter Garden. This will be a mammoth task which is due to start next year and will reopen in 2026. The plan is for a Mezzanine floor to be inserted and for it to house many plants. At the age of 21 James Paget produced a book on the plants and animals in the Great Yarmouth area and it would be good to have some connection with some of his work.
- **The Rows** - Yarmouth is famous for its Rows and although many were bombed during the war and later cleared, many remain. Most are in a very poor state with inadequate lighting. Over two years ago the Society did an audit of lighting in the Rows for the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust showing how poor it was. This year grants amounting to £240,000 have been awarded to improving the lighting, cleaning up many of the Rows providing a community safety officer and a new specialist cleaning machine. Most of the funding came to the Borough Council from the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk.
- **Lighting Up the Town** - For several years the Society has been promoting the lighting up of ancient buildings in the town, the mediaeval Town Wall, the bridges leading into the town as well as lighting up certain trees and shrubs. Not only would this make the place look more attractive, it would draw people's attention to heritage buildings and would lead to greater safety at night. Fortunately, some grants were obtained to start on this although the ultimate appearance was not as good as was hoped for.
- **Paint the Town** - In an effort to extend the season the Society worked with the Borough's Events Team to put on a series of cultural activities and exhibitions in Yarmouth and Gorleston at the end of March. It was combined with a food fair and hopefully both will become an annual event.
- **Tree Planting** - Two years ago some members of the Society did an audit of trees with the Borough's Tree Officer and made suggestions where new ones could be planted. Unfortunately, Norfolk County Council objected to some of our suggestions and said there was no money to carry out the scheme. Fortunately, Darren Barker of the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust, has obtained funding for 505 mature trees and the first few of these were planted in the spring. The rest will be planted later this year and there is funding to encourage local people to help look after the trees in their area. This is really great news as trees improve the appearance of an area and add so much value to the environment.
- **Litter Picking** - Each Friday a small, dedicated group of members litter picks around the Town Wall and associated streets. The group meets at 10.30am and is always keen to have new members. If you are interested equipment is available down the Row besides Skipplings Art Gallery.



TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

- **Priory and Old Rectory** - Last year Rob Haslam, an architect from Essex who was born in Gorleston and grew up in Great Yarmouth, bought the Priory and Old Vicarage adjacent to the Minster. It is amazing what he has done in the last year with both buildings being redecorated, new kitchens being put into the Priory, Kirsty's Bakery moving from Anna Sewell House into the Rectory and all rooms being let out to various charities and businesses. The buildings are now open for weddings, receptions and other functions. Rob, who is a member of the Civic Society, also has an interest in ground source heating and we introduced him to the Borough's Chief Executive to discuss heating of blocks of flats and houses. In addition he and his team have made suggestions for heating the Minster.
- **Local Government Awards 2022** - Great Yarmouth Borough Council was one of five Local Councils which were short listed as the Council of the Year and the Society was pleased to write a letter of support. Being in the top five is an achievement in itself. The award went to Manchester City Council and Great Yarmouth was highly commended. GYBC was also short listed as the Most Improved Council where it was also Highly Commended. We were also shortlisted in the Public Health Category. These awards are really well deserved.
- **Greening Up** - The planters on St.George's Plaza have been maintained with bulbs and flowers throughout the year as have the flower beds created around the Blackfriars section of the Town Wall and the raised bed near Sainsbury Carpark. The gardening team are also looking after the courtyard at the Yare Gallery. Anyone interested in joining the team should contact annhacon@yahoo.co.uk.
- **Awards for Shops, Businesses & Marketing Stalls** - The Covid Pandemic prevented us from making these awards over the last two years. Assessments will be made in September with prizes awarded in the Town Hall in October. These awards are based on the appearance of the building, the window display and the area in front of the building. This year we hope to have a category for gardens and patios in front of houses.
- **Parking in Front of Christchurch** - For over two years Norfolk County Council and the Highways Authority have prevented people parking their cars in front of Christchurch. Many of their customers are infirm and are unable to walk from carparks further away. Consequently Christchurch's income has decreased dramatically to the point that it might have to close permanently unless parking in front of the building is re-instated. We have been part of a campaign to try and get this done.



GYBC Copyright



Impression of reconstruction of New Gate .

Copyright, Paul Patterson



MEETINGS

2021

Wednesday 22 September, 2021

Talk by Carl Smith, Leader of Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

Carl Smith gave an upbeat talk about developments in the town over the last two years and future development plans. He preceded his presentation by stating that prior to the Covid Pandemic there were 18 rough sleepers in the town which went up to 84 with the Pandemic. The Council provided all of them with accommodation although there were a few who did not take up the offer. Following his talk many topics were raised such as lack of toilets at the bus station, inadequate signage in the town, poor state of the roads leading into the town, need to support bands on Gorleston Bandstand, future of The Iron Duke and poor state of Market Row.

The AGM followed and the report of this is in Newsletter 18 which can be seen on the website.

Tuesday 12 October, 2021

"Filby in Bloom: Secrets of Our Success" by Adrian Thompson, Mayor of Great Yarmouth and Chair of Filby in Bloom.

He gave a fascinating talk about the history of Filby in Bloom and some of the secrets of its success which has resulted in prizes both regionally and nationally. It has also brought amazing benefits to all the residents of this Norfolk village.

At the age of 21 he started Filby in Bloom but their first entry for Anglia in Bloom in 1995 was unsuccessful. Two years later they were voted the best kept village in East Anglia and since then have won the national title twice and been East Anglian champions six times. The judges give points for horticulture (40%), Environment (30%) and Community (30%).

Each Saturday a group of up to 12 volunteers meets to do some work and then make some decisions over a cup of coffee. Each year they grow 23,000 bedding plants from plugs and use 5 tons of compost. The plants are watered daily with 1000 gallons of water containing tomato feed. There are 160 flower baskets and the workers cut the grass verges and clean and paint the street furniture. They buy 10,000 bulbs annually and share these with four neighbouring villages.

Filby in Bloom costs £9000 annually and money is raised by selling plants, waste paper, quizzes and accepting donations and grants. Over the years they have re-established 17 allotments, planted an orchard - from which the villagers can collect the fruit - and have recently planted a woodland on an acre of land they have purchased. He stressed the importance of planting trees to improve the environment and reduce global warming.

Tuesday 14 December, 2021

"Culture, Heritage and Tourism Strategy". Paula Boyce, Strategic Director of the Borough's Executive Leadership Team.

Paula gave an enthusiastic outline of the developments arising out of the Culture, Heritage and Tourism Strategy. At very short notice it was decided to put in a joint bid with East Suffolk Council to be City of Culture in 2025. Unfortunately we were not shortlisted but we received some very positive feedback and it is planned to continue working with East Suffolk Council and to put in another bid in 4 years time.



MEETINGS

2022

Tuesday 18 January 2022

"Community Champions for Great Yarmouth" James Dudley, Community Champion Programme Co-Ordinator.

Unfortunately a few days before the meeting the Ambassadors Programme, which was appointing people to publicise the new developments and events happening in the Borough, was stopped so Jade Martin was unable to give her talk.

James Dudley spoke about the Community Champion Programme which was set up in February 2021 to reach out to various ethnic communities to encourage them to be vaccinated against Covid and help them with other health issues. Over 100 Champions have been appointed and their job is to talk to their friends and contacts about these issues and to have weekly webinars. They spread information about fraud and help people who are lonely. They also have a part to play in referring people to the local mental health service. They work closely with the multicultural and faith network.

Tuesday 8 February 2022

Bruno Peek, LVO, OBE, OPR, Pageant Master said that in November 2020 he had been asked by Buckingham Palace to make arrangements for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. He had arranged for beacons to be lit in all capital cities of the Commonwealth and there would be many other beacons lit in other places in each country. In addition many other countries not in the Commonwealth would be lighting beacons. He aimed to have 70 beacons in Norfolk and already had 68 signed up. The Beacons would be lit at 9.45pm and this would be preceded by an official proclamation by Town Criers at 2pm, Bagpipers playing a specially written tune at 9.35pm buglers playing at 9.40pm and choirs singing a song - chosen from 500 submitted in a competition - as the beacons are lit. He hoped these activities would bring communities together. He also described a commemorative jewel he had had commissioned which will be guarded in the Tower of London from April onwards but would not say when it would be presented to the Queen.

Tuesday 8 March 2022

"Market Place Development, Rows, Trees, Middlegate Regeneration". Jon Barnard, Director and Steve Logan, Project Manager of Greyfriars Project Management.

This was a joint presentation giving an update on progress in building the covered market and the landscaping of the Market Place. Information was given about the improvements in the lighting of the Rows, how they were to be tidied up and that a community liaison office was being appointed along with provision of a special cleaning machine.

Middlegate Regeneration is funded by Housing and Communities Estate Regeneration Fund to the tune of £850,000 and aims to create new play spaces and communal garden spaces. It is part of a wider Middlegate scheme of up to £10M. Maps showing the position of where trees were to be planted were shown.

Below is the link to see the slides for the PowerPoint presentation (Via Dropbox):
https://www.dropbox.com/s/cl/fi/w98erigzyjvniwjphu2wh/GP22_Presentation_GY-Civic-Soc_20220308.pptx?dl=0&rlkey=ytea2icabgav6pbtucyg74i30



MEETINGS

Tuesday 5 April 2022

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

Kit Martin said that he had converted a barn into housing when he was an undergraduate and since then had converted a dozen old stately homes into apartments and smaller dwellings. Between 1996 and 1997 he did the same for St. Nicholas Hospital in Great Yarmouth. Many of these buildings faced being pulled down and he illustrated with pictures how they had been saved.

Tuesday 10 May 2022

"The Future of Great Yarmouth and other Seaside Resorts". Asa Morrison, Chief Executive of Greater Yarmouth Tourism and Business Improvement Area.

Asa Morrison covered the problems facing British seaside resorts and how Great Yarmouth fared against the rest. In the last year the Borough had received large amounts of national publicity. He stressed the importance of talking up the resort rather than talking it down. Visitors' interests are changing and it is important to match interests with expectations. In Great Yarmouth 83% of visits are repeat visits. After the presentation he answered a large number of questions covering a wide variety of subjects.

Tuesday 19 July 2022

"The Heritage Action Zone. What it means for Great Yarmouth above and below ground." Lou Robson, Heritage Action Zone project manager, Great Yarmouth Borough Council.

Unfortunately, an hour before the meeting Lou Robson heard that her father had been taken seriously ill and had been admitted to Lincolnshire Hospital and we agreed that she should visit him. Instead we had a discussion about what the Heritage Action Zone was doing, suggestions about further speakers, what was as happening to the suggestions made by the Society after assessing the town's Conservation Areas and the plight of Christchurch with its decreased revenue from its cafe as a result of car parking not being allowed in front of the building.

Tuesday 16 August 2022

Talk about Great Yarmouth Mercury and its place in the Community. Anthony Carroll, Community of Editor of the Mercury.

He started his talk about the life of a journalist. He grew up in Harrow, north west London and took a degree in Politics and History. A journalist tends to learn on the job and needs to pass several exams. There is great variety, many frustrations and you need to have a thick skin. Pay is low and the hours are long. He had previously worked for the paper in Bury St. Edmunds, and the Eastern Daily Press and was delighted to be appointed Community Editor of the Great Yarmouth Mercury nearly a year ago.

In the last year national paper circulation had gone down by 9-19% and the Mercury was bucking the trend at 8.7%. The heavy cost of printing had made the publication of the Advertiser non viable and this is no longer printed. Most interest is now in on line news. 22,791 people look at the Mercury Website.

The Mercury is put together by himself and two reporters all of whom work from home as there is no longer a central office... *(Continued on next page)*



OTHER NEWS

... His talk was followed by many questions and a decision to consider setting up a petition to allow parking in front of Christchurch as the lack of it was seriously affecting the income from its cafe and there was the threat that Christchurch would have to close.

MEDIAEVAL FAYRE

We had hoped to hold this at the end of August/beginning of September along with the Events Team of the Borough Council. However, lack of sufficient people to run it made it not viable and we hope to put it on next year.

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA AS A CIVIC UNIVERSITY

UEA is keen to work in the community and not just on the Norwich campus. To obtain views from the local population it held an open meeting in the Drill House on Saturday 30 April which Dr. Catherine Richards, Principal of East Norfolk Sixth Form College (ENSFC), and Mr. Hugh Sturzaker attended. We learnt that there was already an active outreach department which had contact with all schools. There was enthusiasm for the development of the University Learning Centre in the old Palmers building and all present felt there was a need for more university activities in the Borough.

HERITAGE FAIR

This was held on Saturday 9 July in St.George's Theatre as part of the Great Yarmouth Arts Festival. It was organised by the Great Yarmouth Local History and Archaeological Society and the Civic Society had a stall there. It was an opportunity for local organisations to show what they do.

REGENERATION REPORT

This was produced by the Society last year and to encourage wider distribution of its contents the Society's Chairman has covered many of its suggestions in his weekly column in the Mercury.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

During the year we have written letters of support for the following:

- Application for grant from the National Lottery for the Winter Gardens
- The work done by the Council in support of being the best local council in the country
- Application to be short listed for City of Culture
- For the Great Yarmouth Preservation Trust in applying for funding for the refurbishment of the Iron Duke Public House.



Old Rectory / Credit: H Sturzaker



OUR PRIORITIES

AWARDS

Make annual awards to encourage shops, businesses, market traders 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.

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.

GRANTS

Apply for grants to help us achieve our goals.



Newly planted trees in Blackfriars area.
Photo: Ann Hacon



OUR PRIORITIES

ROUNABOUTS

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.

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.

LITTER

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

LIGHTING UP THE TOWN

Work to achieve illumination of all historic buildings, the town wall and all the bridges leading into the town illuminated.

MEMBERSHIP

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

TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN

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

IMPROVING THE ROWS

Make sure the Rows are properly lit and kept clean and tidy.

PARKING IN FRONT OF CHRISTCHURCH

Work to reinstate parking in front of Christchurch.

THIS ANNUAL REPORT WAS DESIGNED BY:
Lewis Ashdown • www.lewisashdown.co.uk



Flower Beds in Blackfriars Area, Great Yarmouth

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



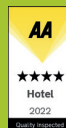
The Prom Hotel, Great Yarmouth, Golden Mile

One of only two four-star hotels in Great Yarmouth, the 50-bedroom Prom Hotel sits on the Golden Mile, directly opposite Britannia Pier.

Facilities

- Great bedrooms • 24-hour room service • Strollers Restaurant
- Private dining available • Function suite • Games room
- Popular public bar with fantastic selection of drinks from real ales to cocktails • Food served all day • Parking
- Lift to all main floors • Free wifi

www.promhotel.co.uk • info@promhotel.co.uk
01493 842308



The Pier Hotel, Gorleston-on-Sea

The Pier Hotel sits beside the entrance to Great Yarmouth's historic port and looks out over one of Norfolk's most magnificent beaches, with a view all the way to Ness Point, Britain's most easterly point.

Facilities

- 20 en suite bedrooms
- Food served all day
- Popular bar with real ales • Wine bar
- Parking • Free wifi

www.pierhotelgorleston.co.uk
bookings@pierhotelgorleston.co.uk
01493 662631

★★★★
**Proud
members of the
Great Yarmouth
Civic Society**

★★★