

# HEREFORD CIVIC SOCIETY

(Registered Charity No. 503504)

## Chairman's Report for the twelve months period ended 31 August 2023

### Reference and Administrative details

Hereford Civic Society, previously named the Hereford Civic Trust was first registered with the Charity Commission on 16 August 1974. The original constitution adopted on 1 September 1973 was subsequently amended, including change of name on 23 October 2002 and incorporates amendments made on 4 June 2003 following receipt of comments from the Charity Commission.

### Management of the Hereford Civic Society

The Executive Committee is responsible for the management and administration of the Society. Under charity law they are the charity's Trustees. The Executive Committee elected annually includes four officers, who in 2022/23 were:

Chairman & Treasurer	David Fowler
Vice-Chairman	Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes
Secretary	Christine Bucknell's role is Minute Secretary, membership

communications and includes responsibility for managing the Society's website

The current constitution requires the Executive Committee to also include a minimum of five but no more than 15 other members nominated, seconded and elected at the AGM. The following members were elected to the Executive Committee at the AGM held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2022:

Alan Bucknell  
Jeremy Milln  
Ben Nash

All members of the Executive Committee give of their time freely and receive no remuneration or other financial benefits. The Executive Committee may co-opt members who attend in an advisory and non-voting capacity. In addition, the Committee has the power to fill up to three casual vacancies occurring between AGMs. Outgoing members of the Executive Committee may be re-elected. During the financial year, the Executive Committee met on seven occasions. Each meeting has an agenda and is minuted.

The Executive Committee are proposing at this year's AGM to amend the Society's current constitution. We have studied wording used by other charitable organisations and taken advice from HVOSS. Advice was sought from David Whitehead, a founding member of the Society and secretary at the time the constitution was last amended. The revised constitution will only come into effect if approved at the coming AGM and subsequently by the Charity Commission.

A Conservation sub-committee reports to the Executive Committee. The sub-committee members are trustees David Fowler and Jeremy Milln, and members Bob Heath, Christian Montez and Peter Taylor. The sub-committee endeavour to meet monthly (mostly using zoom) and are tasked with reviewing planning applications for properties in Hereford's conservation areas, or are listed buildings or is a development that affects the setting of a listed building/ conservation area. In most instances written representations are made to Herefordshire Council's Case Officer setting out the Society's comments, objections and occasionally, support of the applicant's proposal. We endeavour to be positive in our comments and suggest where we can, changes that will improve design/ layout/

appearance. We also comment on Herefordshire Council's consultations that are concerned with Planning Strategy with respect to the built environment and transport.

Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes represented the Civic Society on the Hereford City Council's Planning Committee (a non-voting role) until the May 2023 local elections. Disappointingly, subsequent to those elections, the invitation to attend and contribute to their discussions has been withdrawn.

We welcome members taking on tasks without necessarily becoming a committee member. Andree Poppleston keeps a watchful eye on new planning applications and alerts the committee on those that meet the criteria requiring review; Ros Peter arranges our speaker programme; Patricia Tierney took charge of collecting membership subscriptions and as this year's accounts show, did an excellent job in collecting members subscriptions and updating the society's membership records. Martin Leaton has taken on the role of Accounts Examiner. In 2022/23, the Society had 130 members.

## **Charity Correspondent**

David Fowler, 21 Venn's Lane, Hereford HR1 1DE

## **Bankers**

Lloyds Bank plc 8 High Town, Hereford HR1 2AE

## **Access for all**

There are no obstacles preventing the physically impaired from attending the society's meetings or other events. The Kindle Centre has a lift providing step-free access to the Society's regular meeting room. There is adequate free parking and the Kindle Centre is located within 10 minutes walking distance of the city centre.

## **General Data Protection Regulations**

Our membership records are kept in both paper and electronic form. They contain member's name, address, telephone number and e-mail address (our preferred mode of communication). We do not retain in either paper or electronic form members' bank account information. Members information is held solely for the sole purpose of communicating with you and is not shared with external parties.

## **Risk Management**

Appropriate insurance cover is in place covering all of the society's activities.

## **Objectives**

The Society is established for the public benefit for the following purposes in the area comprising the City of Hereford and its surroundings (the area of "benefit"):

1. To promote high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit
2. To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area of benefit and give related advice and information
3. To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area of benefit

and in so doing has the power to promote civic pride; promote/ publish research connected with the society's objects. Act as a co-ordinating body with other community groups who share similar aims. Make surveys/ prepare maps, collect information in relation to any place or building of beauty or historic interest. Hold meetings, lectures and exhibitions.

## **Achievements and Performance**

As many of you are aware, at roughly eight-week intervals I'm invited to write an Opinion Piece in Hereford Times. Following publication, they can also be found on the Society's website

### **Meeting Programme:**

All of our meetings this year allowed face-to-face contact with the speaker at the Kindle Centre, with several of last autumn's meetings also available on-line via zoom for those wishing to not venture out. We recognise that on occasions, the technology (particularly sound) for these hybrid meetings let us down and accordingly the number of members participating in our meetings from home declined. It was heartening that as the year progressed, members returned to the Kindle Centre to above pre-covid levels.

The 2022/23 meeting programme benefitted from excellent speakers:

- Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup> 2022 Tim Hoverd: **"The Herefordshire Hoard"**
- Thursday October 20<sup>th</sup> 2022 Clare Wichbold: **"Noble service in the cause of womanhood"  
followed by the society's AGM**
- Thursday November 17<sup>th</sup> 2022 Richard Suggett: **"John Nash – the architect before fame  
and fortune"**
- Thursday December 15<sup>th</sup> 2022 James Newby: Chief Executive NMITE at their Skylon campus
- Thursday January 19<sup>th</sup> 2023 Ross Cook: **"Hereford City Transport Masterplan & Vision"**
- Thursday February 23<sup>rd</sup> Rt. Hon Jesse Norman MP **"Regenerating our City, and our County"**
- Thursday March 16<sup>th</sup> 2023 Will Vaughan of Pedicargo **"Pedicargo - pedal power logistics!"**
- Thursday April 13<sup>th</sup> 2023 Herefordshire Council Election Hustings. Election Day: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023
- Thursday May 18<sup>th</sup> 2023 Jason Hodges: Walenty Pytel, Herefordshire based, Polish born sculptor
- Thursday June 15<sup>th</sup> 2023 Christian Montez: **"The discovery of old glass plate photographs  
allows us to look at Hereford "then and now"**
- Thursday July 20<sup>th</sup> 2023 Dr Neil Rimmington: **"The work of an Ancient Monument Inspector  
in the Herefordshire Landscape"**

Our summer "staycation" activities, as in previous years continued to be well supported.

On September 7<sup>th</sup> 2022, 30 members and friends visited the newly restored castle in Hay-on-Wye and the water powered flour mill at Talgarth.

On July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2023, 12 members on a very wet morning, visited Walenty Patel's home studio and workshop, where Walenty took us through his creative processes.

Our principal annual outing, slipped into the first week of September when on the 6<sup>th</sup>, thirty-three members and friends visited the Shrewsbury Flaxmill and Maltings, a five-story iron framed building constructed in 1797 – the first known multi-story cast iron-framed building in the world. The forerunner of today's skyscraper. On what was one of this summer's warmest days, afterwards we enjoyed a short relaxing cruise on the River Severn between the English and Welsh Bridges before returning to Hereford.

## **Planning**

Another busy twelve months. The Planning sub-committee commented on twenty planning applications as well as tracking their progress through the planning system. On a number of occasions, the applicant submits revised plans often resulting in our making a new (second set) of comments. For the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery, the applicant lodged a total of 111 drawings (230385).

We provided ongoing assistance to occupants of the former Conservative Club in East Street who will be impacted by a proposed new build dwelling (220541) in what was once the garden of a house in St. John's Street. Sadly, approval was given to what we believe is an unsatisfactory design. Another disappointment, was the approval given to demolish the current St. Owen's Street fire station and construction of its replacement on the same site (223339) when perhaps a refurbishment of this fine 1950's building would have been less disruptive and less carbon intensive.

Our comments many a time lead to the applicant submitting revised plans. Only rarely is planning permission refused. Where the applicant sees objections being taken seriously by the Case Officer, the tendency is for the planning application to be withdrawn ahead of the decision – and this occurred on two of the planning application on which we had objected this year: the café fit out at Hereford Station (231635) and a proposed dwelling in the rear garden of 81 Broomy Hill (230068). An application to build a single dwelling on land beside 26 Prospect Walk, on the Whittern Way estate (230040) was refused, with the Case Officer's decision letter repeating much of our wording.

An application to build a four-story apartment block on land to the rear of Prospect Place, off St. Martins Avenue (230432); a convenience store with 6 flats above in Venns Lane (230540) and for the Broad Street Museum and Art Gallery (230385) - all awaiting a decision, are currently subject to ongoing monitoring for the possible lodgement of revised plans.

The Planning sub-committee meet monthly, on the majority of occasions using zoom. Do let me or Jeremy Milln know if you would like to join us – or if you would like to listen in on these meetings. You'd be most welcome.

## **Hereford City Masterplan**

Detailed comments were presented to Herefordshire Council as part of their public engagement on the Hereford City Masterplan, the Hereford Cathedral Quarter and the Hereford Station transport hub. There has been no public feedback to these consultations which is disappointing.

## **Transport**

We are aware that opinion within the Society is divided on the merits of having/ not having a by-pass. However, there is almost unanimous support for pedestrian/ cyclist friendly active transport measures.

Work on the St. Owen Street cycle contraflow scheme and in relaying the roadway in Widemarch Street to remove the long-complained of kerb were completed during the year. The proposal for a cycle path along the Holme Lacy Road from the A49 to the Rotherwas Industrial Estate on which the Society commissioned its own consultant's report in 2018, has been reactivated, as are proposals to make Broad Street/ King Street more pedestrian friendly. We are not aware of when either of these works will commence.

## **Financial Review**

Page 1 of the accounts, sets out the Income and Expenditure for the current year which resulted in a surplus of £1242 (2021/22, a surplus of £825).

Your committee have this year again transferred £1,000 from the society's reserves (and proposes doing the same next year) into a designated fund for a project to celebrate the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> year. A 50-page booklet is in preparation setting out the circumstances that led to the Society's founding, the high and low points of the past fifty years and future aspirations. Approval of the proof will shortly occur. The book launch will take place later this year/ in early 2024.

Page 2 sets out the Society's Balance Sheet. Just a few days after the end of the year, payment was received of a long outstanding debt of £187.50.

Page 3 the retiring committee's proposed budget for next year is shown in Note 4.

Members' subscriptions for the coming year will remain unchanged at £15 (single); £25 (joint).

## **Future Plans**

### **Urban Room:**

We will lobby Herefordshire Council for an Urban Room (PLACE Winter 2019/20) enabling both locals and visitors to contribute/ comment upon Hereford's future plans in a publicly shared space.

The society is a member of the Urban Rooms Network.

### **Membership of National Organisation**

Hereford Civic Society will remain a committed member of Civic Voice (the national organisation for the Civic Society movement) and their West Midlands Regional Group, where we actively engage with fellow societies on national issues.

We will continue to liaise with colleagues in Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye Civic Societies.

## **A Big Thank You**

Thank you to members and supporters for your support

Thank you to our Conservation Planning sub-committee volunteers – Peter Taylor, Bob Heath and Christian Montez.

Andree Poppleston who sifts through all new Planning Applications

Patricia Tierney for bringing our membership records up to date

Ros Peter for inviting interesting, informative and entertaining speakers

Martin Leaton for being Accounts Examiner

and not least, to my fellow members of the Management Committee



David Fowler, Chairman

9<sup>th</sup> October 2023