As yet we have not seen a planning application for the conversion of Council Offices at Crescent Gardens or for future use of the road outside. I wrote to North Yorkshire Highways regarding the possible stopping up of this road (so that it would no longer be a right of way). The developers have indicated that they are considering applying for a stopping up order. Application could be made to the Highways Authority (NYCC) or to HBC as the Planning Authority in communication with the Highways Authority. The utility companies would have to be consulted and satisfactory arrangements arrived at for services or there wouldn’t be much point in taking the matter any further. If diversion of gas, electricity or water etc. were necessary, it could be very expensive to the applicant no doubt! Do look out for any advertisement that closure of Crescent Gardens has been requested – you may wish to comment! Also look out for the planning applications for conversion of the HBC offices.

There has been a lot of interest in the application to demolish Victoria Park House (18 Victoria Avenue) and build a modern office block. One of our members, Peter Hirschmann, applied to Historic England to get the building spot listed but he tells me that the request was declined. Nevertheless it does have protection under local planning policy. It is of course in the conservation area and is additionally listed in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal as a building of local interest and merit. To give Victoria Park House still more protection, Policy HD9 – Building Protection Harrogate, which has been saved from the old Local Plan (1991-2006) says that all the buildings indicated under that policy should not be demolished. This includes the whole building and not just the façade. The sticking points with the application are that the Council has put an Article 4 Direction on Victoria Avenue that effectively (but not inevitably) takes away the development right to change the use of buildings from offices to residential. Also the developer is not really interested in a residential conversion. The building undoubtedly has its physical problems as well, but often such difficulties can be overcome although this may be more likely to be satisfactory if the use was residential.

July saw the consultation period for the Local Plan Additional Sites. Several exhibitions were held over the District, in Harrogate, Green Hammerton, Knaresborough, Boroughbridge and Ripon. This batch of additional sites provides for a large number of dwellings, some employment land and also additional Educational Facilities and Gypsy and Traveller sites. Several of the sites in the Draft Plan of last year have changed. A Gypsy and Traveller site is no longer allocated to the Crimple Valley but the provision is proposed in three very small sites near Knaresborough. A location previously allocated for housing east of Leeds Road, is now down as an employment site. Several housing sites have been increased in size. The Council has now decided to create a new/expanded settlement at Green Hammerton. In last year’s Draft Plan there was a choice between that site and one at Flaxby, which, of the two, was our preference. Many of the additional housing sites are highly contentious and large numbers of objections have been sent. I hope that the figures for housing need in the District can be found to be excessive. Many applications for substantial housing sites are coming forward all the
time for sites that are not even proposed as allocations for the Local Plan. The Council will be very nervous of under-allocation because the previous attempt at a new Local Plan in 2014 quickly failed its inspection, partly for reasons of housing provision that was considered inadequate.

Despite pressure from developers, especially because the Council cannot at present show a 5 year land supply for housing (the current figure is about 4.2 years) there are still good reasons for refusal in some cases. The proposal by the Duchy of Lancaster for 165 dwellings on fields which are in the SLA, off Cornwall Road, has been firmly laid to rest by the Appeal Inspector, largely on landscape grounds. An application for 130 dwellings off Hookstone Road in the Crimple Valley has been refused by the planning committee principally because of damage to the Crimple Valley Special Landscape Area.

We are sorry to hear that there is an application in the pipe-line for 350 dwellings south of Penny Pot Lane. We were sent a letter of consultation by the Planning Consultants prior to submission of an outline planning application – inviting our comments. Our response was basically – no thank you! This site is also in a Special Landscape Area opposite the Queen Ethelburga estate and the 600 dwellings etc. to be developed by Persimmon Homes between Penny Pot Lane and the Jennyfield area. It is Persimmon of course that is responsible for the destruction of hundreds of metres of hedgerow on the Penny Pot Lane boundary of this very large site. The Council quite rightly are considering prosecution for this offence under the Hedgerow Act. The strongest action is required to show that even large developers who have plenty of money to fight a legal battle cannot be above the law.

We co-operated with the Council on Heritage Open Days (HODS) again, which took place in September. Liaison has in previous years been with staff at the Mercer Gallery which has worked very well. Stuart Holland came back to our committee this year and particularly asked to be involved with HODS. It was disappointing that the Tourist Information Office who took over the HODS duty did not operate with the same degree of liaison as we have enjoyed in previous years.

I am sorry to end this report on a sad note. Erete Amaku, father of our vice chairman, Susan Amaku, had been ill for some time and died recently. The funeral and Memorial Service was on 13th October, which several Civic Society members attended. The funeral was private but the Memorial Service was held at the Methodist Church on Skipton Road, followed by a reception at the Cedar Court Hotel. The church was packed to over-flowing with members of Susan’s extensive family and friends many, of whom had travelled from far and wide. Many tributes to Professor Amaku were given, both at the church and at the reception.

Henry Pankhurst
Chairman

Congratulations
Maureen and Bernie Poulter
Gold Award winners of the Harrogate Civic Society Shield in the 2017 Harrogate in Bloom Competition.
SIGNS AND SHOPFRONTS
The new signs for the Co-op at 50 Otley Road have, as we had hoped, been reduced before consent was given. Most of our attention on Parliament Street over the last few years has focussed on the odd numbered side (going down the hill, on the left). This time though, we looked at an advertisement application for Nos 46-48 Parliament Street which is the Gino da Campo Restaurant. A split decision was given with only an internally illuminated menu case and a gobo projector being approved. Refused, was the internally illuminated projecting sign, the internally illuminated fascia sign and the flag pole and flag. The reasons were due to illumination and size and position of the flag sign on the building, which would be obtrusive and would detract from the character of the street scene.

At 2B Albert Street we were concerned that a hanging sign and a fascia sign would be over illuminated. The projecting sign was to be a light box type of sign where the whole of the surfaces would be illuminated from within. It was a glowing photographic image. I cannot think of any other such sign in existence in Harrogate. The fascia would have been joined up lettering rather than truly individually illuminated letters which are often allowed. The application has been passed but not before amendments, so that the hanging sign will be a painted, non-illuminated sign and the fascia will have lit letters on a timber fascia. A good result!

The room at the Royal Baths that you may remember as the Crescent Room is now called Unit 3, The Potting Shed. New signs are desired. There would be three sets of internally illuminated letters and three non-illuminated menu cases. They are long modern style signs that do not sit well with the historic architecture of the Royal Baths. There is a listed building application and an advertisement application for the signs with a difference between the two. The advertisement application shows three straight signs but the listed building application shows one of them curved, which we think is out of scale with the small doorway over which it would be placed. We are also concerned about the visibility and fixing of the electrical wiring. This and the method of fixing the signs were not shown on the plans. Apart from visual damage, there could be physical damage.

The Cattleman’s Grill at 17 Cheltenham Crescent applied for a fascia sign with what looked like two projecting signs plus a free-standing sign. The fascia sign was an improvement on the previous one – less cluttered, but we thought that the free-standing sign did not preserve the conservation area. Unfortunately next door there is a worse example of a sign on poles – I do not know if it has planning consent. The free-standing sign was deleted from the application and the indication of two projecting or hanging signs seems to have been an error.

We have seen two applications for the Tap & Spile Public House on Tower Street. The pub has been refurbished and new signs are proposed, except that they have been put up prior to any consent! We are not at all happy that a sign on the side of the building has been painted directly onto the stonework, measuring 1.7m wide. It says ‘BEER HERE’ – too obvious to be worthwhile don’t you think? A large circular sign of 1.5m diameter has been put on the front elevation at 1st floor level, which duplicates a similar sign on a pole in front of the pub. Another sign on the front of the building is also redundant because it repeats one on the pole.
The second application for the Tap & Spile is to paint the rendered ground floor exterior a dark blue, which would look oppressive – rather like that (unfortunately) fashionable battleship grey I have remarked on in this newsletter from time to time. I see that the new dark blue paint has already been put on the lower part of the ground floor which was a deep red. Thankfully the rendering above has been left the previous cream colour, but we await the planner’s decision.

LARGER HOUSING SITES

Larger housing sites for the purpose of this section are developments of more than ten dwellings. Many sites come forward for several tens of homes and for hundreds of homes, a lot of them in locations other than around Harrogate. To give you an idea of the scale of applications that come through, these are the dwellings figures validated per week for a few sample weeks in August, September and October – 121, 12, 465, 149, 3, 169, 7 and 145 giving rise to an average of 134. The number that needs to be built each week on average is 13, even at the recently raised rate per annum of 669! As you can see, only a tiny fraction of the applications received needs to be passed to achieve this, so I don’t know how the District can fail to maintain our current target, even if we only have 4.2 years supply of housing land at present. One bit of welcome news is that the Local Plan will no longer apportion percentages of housing development to various towns and villages, but any target that we have (and I hope that there is a chance that this will be lowered) will be a general District-wide figure.

There are of course plenty of large housing developments in the planning pipeline, but we don’t tend to respond to them unless they are in or close to Harrogate. It would be too onerous a task to be quite honest. I have rather pre-empted the larger housing sites item regarding one on Hookstone Road, which appeared in the Chairman’s report, so please refer back!

There have been several applications to convert offices to flats on the Windsor House site. They have involved the smaller blocks on Clarence Drive but the main Cornwall Road building is now to go the same way – for 94 flats! At least it is a brownfield site with plenty of parking. Permission has to be granted under the relatively new development rights, which is why an Article 4 Direction is in place for Victoria Avenue as explained in the Chairman’s report.

The site at the rear of the Old Swan Hotel that was the kitchen garden and orchard has come back in the planning news.

The proposal is still for a block of 12 apartments, plus renovating the potting sheds to provide bicycle and bin storage. There have been two applications for a block of apartments, one of which was firmly refused in 2015 and the other which was withdrawn last year following several concerns of the planning officers. We are very much against the scheme and will send strong objections as before.

SMALLER HOUSING SITES

We have seen the revised application for two additional flats in a converted office block at 2-4 Windsor Court on Clarence Drive. The design is much improved. The penthouse has been removed plus other amendments. However, the one aspect that spoils the design is the two flat-topped external lift-shafts.

In August 2014 an application was passed for a new house at 10 St. Georges Road but this application was never implemented. It has been re-submitted. At the time we made representation but after our letter was sent, amendments were made to the design, which were helpful. The proposal has returned in its amended form but as far as we are concerned it still has shortcomings. The proposal involves demolishing a garage/
store and building a very interesting modern design of house on a narrow plot with underground parking for 2 cars via a lift. To avoid overlooking, there are no windows on the side elevations although it is very close to the existing No.10 and that side will not be seen to any great extent. Much of the light to the rooms is provided by light wells and from windows on the front elevation. The conservation area is not well served by the proposal because the low front wall would be lost in order to get cars to the lift. The vehicular access point also seems to endanger a telegraph pole and a highway tree that is of amenity value. I think the house will be obtrusive to No.8 St. Georges Road.

There is a proposal to convert a care home at 30-32 Otley Road to six flats. This is generally acceptable – there are some improvements to the front elevation but the loss of one of the chimney stacks is regrettable. For the conservation area, chimneys on properties of this age do have a certain importance. Unfortunately, the internal alterations as proposed depend on the demolition of the chimney breast all the way up the building, so if it and the stack are to be kept, design changes would be necessary.

At 20 West Park ‘Lynx’, they want to create two dwellings on the upper floors, which in principle is good. However, alterations they propose to the front elevation are unsuitable due to new fenestration and balconies. Changes to the rear of the building would not have such an impact on the conservation area as the important aspect facing the Stray.

OTHER APPLICATIONS
I begin with fences and walls again. At 31 Spring Lane, Pannal I noted a retrospective application for a high fence that was not accurately or clearly presented. This has been refused. There is a retrospective application for a high wall that incorporates a shed at 2 Grosvenor Road. Corner plots do give a problem regarding privacy for garden areas with a boundary on two main highways. Here, the right angle of the wall is also two walls of the shed. A planning application cannot be determined on the existence of other unauthorised boundary treatments or that some fences and hedges are poorly maintained. The wall in this application is a stark and obtrusive element in the street scene.

There has been an appeal against refusal of permission for plastic windows at 17/18 York Place. Rear windows are to be replaced at 29 Montpellier Parade. It is good to see that hardwood frames are proposed, but more authentic two x six pane sash windows would be better.

It is disappointing that an extension of opening hours has been allowed at ‘The Foundry’ one of the units in the block 17-23 Parliament Street – opening hours Sundays – Wednesdays remain the same – 8 am to midnight, but are extended for Thursdays to Saturdays, which will now be 8 am to 2.30 am on the following day!! Remember that staff will be arriving and leaving before and after these times and customers are unlikely to have dispersed exactly on closing time! Not a comfortable thought for local residents when there will be only about four and a half hours quiet time on three days.
The possibility of having pavement trees at the old Beales site on Station Parade has been dragging on for a long time.

It was one of the conditions of their application of 2014 that a landscaping scheme should have been approved before any units were occupied. What happened? The Cinema and all the restaurants have been up and running for ages and only recently have the developers, 4 Urban, come up with a plan – were they trying to ignore the fact that, in order to proceed with the building, several trees in tree guards were destroyed and replacements were expected. It should not have needed much time and effort by planning officers and members of the public to at last get them to offer replacements. These are in the form of 4 large square tubs in which small trees will be planted. Between two of the tubs is a large gap in which we have suggested that a fifth should be placed, thus having an evenly spaced row. Trees planted in the footway would have been better. The tubs will take up much more of the footway than slim tree trunks!

It is very rare for us to respond to applications to take out hedgerows, but there were two such on the Rudding Park Estate.

The dreadful treatment of the hedgerows by Persimmon Homes on Penny Pot Lane was something of a spur to look into the Rudding Park application.

One hedgerow of 118m in length was said by the applicant to have gaps in it, - that it is not a boundary hedge and is an impediment to farming. Permission has been refused because it is important under the Archaeology and History Criteria. The other one, 77m long can be torn out as it does not quite meet the Wildlife Criteria and does not meet the Historical Criteria. The applicant wants to combine two fields, one of which is small, into one.

Henry Pankhurst
Chairman
On 27th September, we were treated to a double-act, possibly the first time that this has happened!

Keith Wilkinson MBE, who is Honorary Secretary of the Bilton Conservation Group spoke and John Branson from the Bilton Historical Society brought his large model layout of the main line railway from which coal was transferred to the narrow gauge Barber line. Until 1957 this was the procedure for transporting coal to the gas works at New Park.

Keith explained why this arrangement came into being.

In 1845, the Harrogate Gas Company was formed and three years later the first gas street lamps were installed in Harrogate. These were the design with the square bases decorated with the Yorkshire Rose.

Unfortunately the gas works of 1845 were located at New Park which is, of course, not well related to a railway station. At the time, the nearest station was the quite extensive railway centre at Starbeck. This is where the coal arrived, but road transport was necessary for its onward journey to New Park. This was in the form of 8-tonne trucks drawn by 3-wheeled steam road engines, later superseded by 4-wheeled steam road engines. It is not hard to imagine what the nobility and the genteel visitors to Harrogate thought of their smart horse drawn coaches intermingling with the noise, steam and smoke of such an industrial procession! Furthermore, visitors had to pass the unsavoury antics of the occupants of Henry Peacock’s workhouse (although we now think highly of it architecturally).

A solution needed to be found to the inevitable complaints so that those coming to Harrogate to take the waters, etc. could do so in the comfort they expected and with a degree of decorum.

To remedy the problem, coal was to be brought to the level crossing on Bilton Lane and decanted, once again, via hoppers, into trucks hauled by steam road engines. The route, including the steep downward incline of Skipton Road, was not ideal in terms both of safety and efficiency!

In fact what was needed was a railway to deliver direct to the gas works. Finally, on 1st April, 1907, Gas Works Chairman, Francis Barber, cut the first sod of a new 2-foot gauge railway.

This ran from the existing transhipment depot at Bilton, through a tunnel, under the A59, to the rear of New Park Primary School. Three steam engines, named ‘Spencer’, ‘Barber’ and ‘Peckett’ and a diesel locomotive known as ‘Drewry’ were used. The first two were named after Chairmen of the gas works and the latter two were simply the names of the makers.

Keith gave us much detail as to where various landmarks of the railway were in relation to subsequent house building, etc. He provided us with many fascinating photographs of the original operation of the Barber Line. Indeed, some of us would benefit by a further hearing of the information to help us pinpoint the route geographically. Thankfully, John’s model, which we were able to examine, was an ideal way to demonstrate the workings of the operation, especially the transfer of coal from the main line railway to the narrow gauge railway.
By 1957, even this well thought out railway could not cope with the demand for coal for the gasworks: 20-tonne diesel road wagons took over. The coal was brought from the transhipment depot, along Bilton Lane, Skipton Road and Ripon Road. Resulting in a new generation of noisy, smelly road transportation taking over – no doubt to the similar displeasure of the public.

**Henry Pankhurst**

**Chairman**

* We saw these on our streets until last year when almost all of them were removed by North Yorkshire Highways. You may recall that very recently we succeeded in getting 15 of them listed.

On 29th August I attended a very interesting meeting of Zero Carbon Harrogate at the St. Roberts R.C. Church Centre on Roberts Street. Representatives of the car club organisation Co-wheels (which I had not heard of until then) were there to explain how it worked. Cars would be available to members of the club from central parking places in the town, but not necessarily all in the same place. It is a very flexible scheme with the cars looked after, serviced and cleaned etc. A member has no responsibility for these aspects – the cars are inspected on a fortnightly basis. If there are any problems the organisation can be easily contacted every day including Christmas Day! Usually the cars will be loaned on a short term basis – a few hours, a day or a few days. For longer periods normal car hire may be more suitable.

Several circumstances can make Co-wheels an attractive prospect. For those who only use a car intermittently, for those who find car ownership expensive for the little they drive, for those who have not got onto the car ownership ladder but would like to have the convenience from time to time or simply to make a contribution to looking after the environment. Co-wheels operate successfully in many towns and cities, some of a similar size to Harrogate.

See page 11 for further details

**Henry Pankhurst**

**Chairman**
The Real Deal
Putting on the Ritz

The October talk
By Christine Littlewood

We all, no matter what we have been to see at the Theatre, or even if we have never been at all, have an impression of what it is like to enter those rather ornate palaces of plush seats and velvet curtains with golden cherubs lighting the way. It is a grand night out, something you dress up for, get into the spirit for, have a glass of wine, relax, sit back, and let them entertain you. From a comfortable seat, in the darkness of your own space, your senses focus on that pool of light on the stage and you are transported, thrilled, everything is sharpened, by the knowledge that this is live and anything might happen. Theatre is a true meeting place of all art, the acting, singing, dancing, scenery painting, designing the costumes, setting the scene, the music, the orchestra, the words, the worlds, the story, the human interaction, it is all there.

There is another side to these fantastic productions; Christine Littlewood who has been a member of the Harrogate Operatic Players for 40 years, and was Chairman for nine years, gave a rather intimate group of Civic Society members a very privileged insight to the real deal. Christine, who has also played a number of principal parts herself, and knows the world of amateur operatics inside out, revealed to us in the most enthu-

siastic and even dramatic way, the truth behind the phrase ‘the play must go on!’

Behind every performance, someone has to do the accounts!

Every single little thing has to be paid for, thought about, up to a year in advance sometimes. Before anything else, permission has to be sought to perform the particular musical that the committee has decided on. People like Andrew Lloyd Webber take their royalties seriously and over exposure is a worry for them. Payment has to be made, and on top of this, deals entered into regarding a percentage payment according to how big the audience take is, for the four nights and one afternoon that shows often run for these days.

Then a theatre has to be booked, and you hope for a good slot in a busy calendar. There is a lot of competition from other Amateur Dramatic groups for available times, and often, sensitive negotiations have to take place between different societies about musical scores and time slots. A great deal rests on the right choices, and even then audience size depends on many imponderables, child actors for instance can increase the size of an audience; gorgeous grans and doting dads can be relied on to turn out for a star performance.

Tickets and posters and pre publicity have to be discussed, designed and printed, and then on top of these already not inconsiderable costs, costumes have to be designed, fitted, and made, for adults and children, sometimes more than one change, all is part of the Spectacle and must be right. The Orchestra is booked for rehearsals as well as performances, and all the sounds systems, and individual microphones positioned and tested, the technicians too are an indispensible part of the production. Christine Littlewood had a couple of amusing tales to tell about the positioning of microphones but I am afraid you'll have to watch the next production very carefully for signs of heads being held back a little too far or appendages suddenly appearing where they shouldn’t, to learn about these!
It must be a busy fun filled time, with scenery makers and movers, and painters, in amongst sound technicians, all of whom need to be paid and that’s not to speak of performers. Child actors fall into a special health and safety category, they have to have specially trained chaperones, and separate changing and rest facilities. Finally, though I am bound to have missed something, there is the insurance, important, because theatres are dangerous places, and costly. Of course credit card machines with their 2.5% charge are another cost though it would have to be the ticket office that added a charge to compensate for this.

After all that most societies try to donate to a charity out of any profit, and to put something by for future unpredictable losses.

Small Business people will be familiar with many of these aspects, and the accounts have to be done and tax paid, but not too many small businesses have only one throw of the dice each season. We audience members must try to remember to buy a ticket with cash, and to turn out in force for a show that is the crowning glory of the entire lengthy production process which can add up to as much as Fifty Thousand pounds for one show. Absolutely amazing and such a credit to the dedication and enthusiasm of people like Christine. No wonder then that to be a member of her family, they aren’t really joking when they say you have to be musical, right down to the 6 year old grandson.

Thank you Christine for a very exciting, entertaining, and enlightening evening.

Rachel Grimmer
HCS Member

The Barber Line Museum
New Park Primary School
Skipton Road

If reading the account of the Barber Line talk has triggered a need for more historical information about this forgotten industrial area of the town, members may be interested to know that further research can be done at the Barber Line Museum.

The Museum is within New Park Primary School, 359 Skipton Road

Visits to the Museum are by appointment only.

Please telephone the school secretary on 01423 503011 and she will pass on your contact details to Terry Williams who organises visits during term time
Zero Carbon Harrogate (ZCH) is seeking to establish a car club in Harrogate and to that end recently invited interested parties to a meeting at the St Roberts Centre to hear a presentation by the social enterprise provider Co-wheels. This was followed by a Q&A and discussion on the way forward.

**Background**

Car Clubs have grown strongly in the UK over the last few years as more people look for alternatives to car ownership.

You may have seen the commercial providers Enterprise (was City Cars) in Leeds and York and Zip Cars in London for example. The commercial providers have not been present in smaller communities where the financial case is not so viable.

Co-wheels have a different model. They typically work with local authorities to provide seed funding for a short period until the scheme is financially self-sustaining.

**Benefits**

Car clubs make an important contribution to carbon reduction, improving air quality and reducing private car dependency. Evidence is that on average each car club vehicle results in 16 fewer vehicles on the road through members selling their own cars or not purchasing in favour of using a club car. This is especially pertinent with many diesel car owners wondering whether to keep their vehicles in light of the frequent reports of serious health issues from noxious exhaust fumes. We can all see the problems with on street parking in Harrogate and serious congestion on main roads. Car club membership also results in a shift towards walking and cycling for short journeys rather than using a car.

**Where Next?**

HBC's response has been positive. In the two months since the meeting ZCH have made further representations to HBC seeking a decision on the way forward and offering assistance in the evaluation and support on implementation. We await a reply. We remain committed to making this happen as a contribution to improving our quality of life in Harrogate.

David Rang
Zero Carbon Harrogate
Final Event for 2017

Tuesday, 14th November, 7.30 pm
at The Granby, Granby Road, Harrogate

Malcolm Neesam, eminent local historian, will give a well-illustrated talk entitled

Harrogate’s Inns and Hotels

Please note the new venue for this talk.
The Granby Care Home has kindly invited us
to use their premises, recently beautifully refurbished, for this talk.
The Granby, of course, was formally itself one of the leading hotels of Harrogate.

Tickets for Civic Society talks are £5 per person, £7 non-members, to include refreshments.
Payment may be made on the door, however, it would be appreciated if you could indicate that you are coming
by telephoning
Wendy Cross on 01423 501981 or by emailing: wendyjcross@yahoo.com