



**Celebrate** our past - **Enhance** our present - **Shape** our future

March 2022



*The Council Offices seen from Coppice View in springtime. In a little over a year, Harrogate Borough Council will cease as a local government body when the new North Yorkshire Council takes over. See page 3 for a discussion on what future arrangements might be made for Harrogate Town.*

## Exciting Book Launch

### Important changes to our April event

Arrangements for the formal launch of Malcolm Neesam's new book on 26 April have been changed. See page 2 for details.

## Annual General Meeting

All members are welcome to attend our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 29 March.

See page 8



## In this issue ....

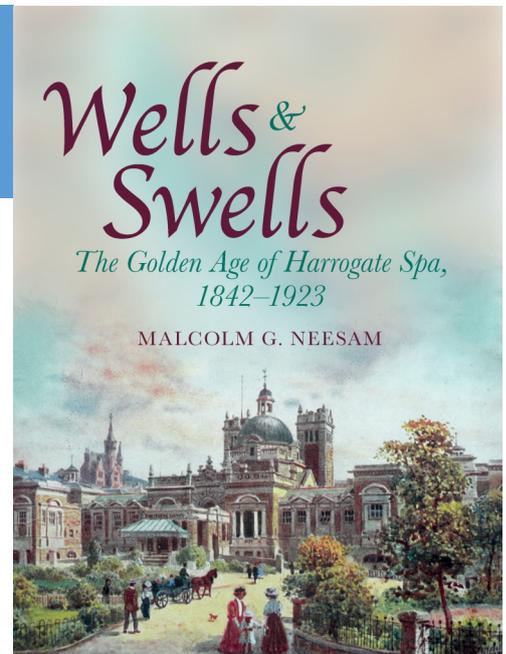
Wells and Swells book Launch	2
Yorkshire and Humber Association news	2
The new shape of local government	3
A Stray for all seasons	4
The proposed Tesco development	5
Annual Planning Report 2021 - 22	6
Early days at the society	7
Down your street: Skipton Road	8
Membership survey	8
Annual General Meeting and talk	8
Programme of events (updated)	9

## Wells and Swells

The forthcoming launch of a major new book by Malcolm Neesam

We are delighted to announce that Malcolm Neesam has requested that we host the formal launch of *Wells and Swells*, the second part of his definitive history of Harrogate covering the period 1842 to 1923. The launch will be held at the **Cedar Court Hotel on Tuesday, 26 April at 10:30 for 11.00am.**

*Wells and Swells* is being sponsored by Chris Bentley of Hornbeam Park Developments who is kindly covering all the launch costs. Chris has generously agreed to extend the invitation to all members of the Society so you should be receiving yours within the next week or so. If, for whatever reason, you do not, please contact us at [events@harrogatecivicsociety.org](mailto:events@harrogatecivicsociety.org)



**IMPORTANT NOTE - This event replaces the talk by Malcolm scheduled for the evening of 26 April. Even if you have already booked for that talk, please book separately for the launch event.**

## Yorkshire and Humber Association

The 2022 Annual General Meeting of YHACS was held, like the year before, on Zoom with about 50 participants, including representatives from Harrogate Civic Society.

After the formal matters of the AGM were carried out, the Chair, Kevin Trickett introduced the two main speakers.

**Professor Matthew Carmona** of UCL spoke on the subject of housing design. With the drive to deliver more homes across the country has come a loud call for those developments to be of a high standard of design in order to deliver high quality, and sustainable environments for residents.

*[An] audit of over 140 medium to large developments across the country showed that the overwhelming number of developments were rated mediocre or poor.*

Research has consistently shown that high quality design makes new residential developments more acceptable to local communities and delivers huge value to all.

Unfortunately, the audit of over 140 medium to large developments across the country showed that the overwhelming number of developments were rated mediocre or poor. Much more needs to be done by developers and authorities to create the sort of places that future generations will feel proud to call home.

Read more on <https://placealliance.org.uk/>

The second speaker, **Ian Harvey**, chief executive of Civic Voice, spoke about the work of the national charity for the civic movement in England. Civic Voice engages directly with government to represent the issues faced by the civic society movement.

Read more on <http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/>



# The new shape of Local Government: What future for Harrogate?

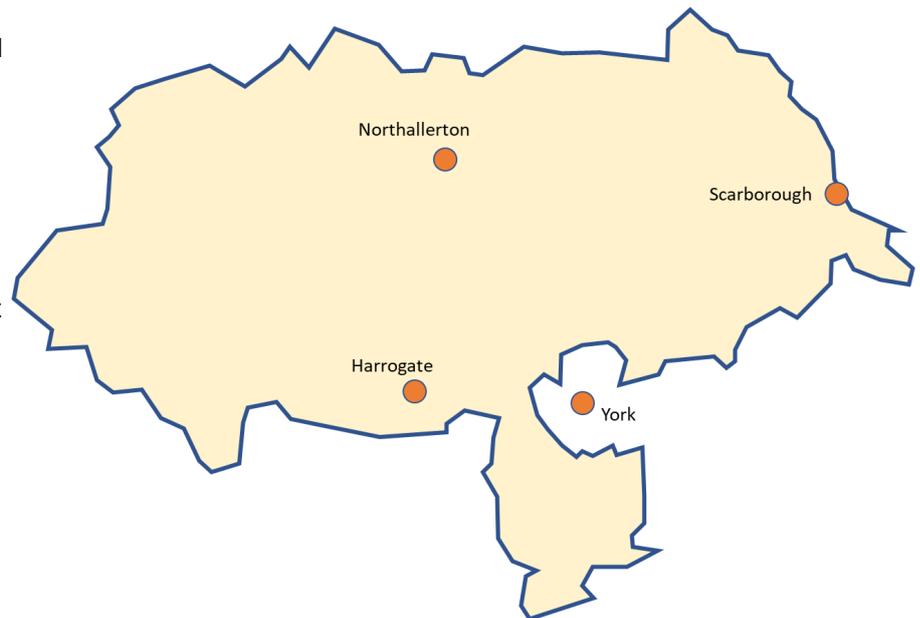
*A report by Nigel McClea*

In May 2023 Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) and North Yorkshire County Council will cease to exist. This will be the first major reorganisation of local government to affect the town since 1974. We shall all have an opportunity to play our part when, this May, we elect councillors to the new unitary authority. Although that authority will not take full executive power for a further twelve months, the councillors will be using their first year in office to ensure a smooth transition of power.

The arrangements will inevitably be complex. That being so, I am delighted that **Graham Swift** (the current Deputy Leader of HBC), hopefully accompanied by **Wallace Sampson** (HBC's Chief Executive), will be talking us through the issues and processes at our meeting on **Tuesday, 31 May**, part of our current events programme. Please book your place through [events@harrogatecivicsociety.org](mailto:events@harrogatecivicsociety.org)

*despite general agreement that both Harrogate and Scarborough merit town councils, next to nothing seems to have been done ...*

But does there remain a significant elephant in the room? I think there does, and it is a big one. As part of the reorganisation, despite general agreement that both Harrogate and Scarborough merit town councils, next to nothing seems to have been done to establish what powers, responsibilities and financing such a body might have. That conundrum is being left to the new unitary authority to wrestle with. What concerns us is that town councils around the country have traditionally followed a parish council model. But the limited powers that may be granted to a village or smaller community are likely to be wholly inadequate to meet Harrogate's needs. Will there be the political will to close this gap?



Whatever it may look like, any town council is unlikely to come into existence before May 2024 at the earliest. Nevertheless, we are already beginning to play our part in the debate, requesting an audit of the public realm assets in the town and asking the question: who will protect, preserve and enhance these assets for the economic and social wellbeing of Harrogate? Some limited work is already under way. For instance, we believe the mayor's office and function, with associated regalia, is to be moved into an independent trust prior to transfer to a town council in due course.

A town council for Harrogate – this is an important debate and the stakes are high. As thoughts develop, we shall need all the support members can provide. If you are interested, and particularly if you feel you have relevant experience or expertise to offer, please do get in touch.

**Tuesday 31 May**

**The new Unitary Authority**

**A talk by Cllr Graham Swift**

**At 7.30 pm in St Paul's URC Hall,  
Belford Road**

Email [events@harrogatecivicsociety.org](mailto:events@harrogatecivicsociety.org) to book

## A Stray for all Seasons - a talk by Judy d'Arcy Thompson

A capacity audience attended our second talk of 2022 held on 22 February at St Paul's URC Hall.

Judy d'Arcy Thompson, Chair of the Stray Defence Association, our guest speaker for the evening, gave a very informative and lighthearted talk on the many benefits of our beautiful and unique Stray and how fundamental this large green area is to the people of Harrogate.

The Stray Defence Association came into being in May 1933 and nearly 90 years later its objective remains the same to safeguard Harrogate's Stray against building and encroachment from all quarters. The Stray itself is much older and formally came into effect in 1778 when 200 acres of open common land were granted to the people of Harrogate. To this day the Stray is Crown Land with Harrogate Borough Council responsible for its maintenance. The Harrogate Stray Act 1985 further protects our Stray and subject to certain provisions enshrines the right for free access at all times.

*Some 7-8 million crocuses announce the arrival of Spring*

But what does the Stray actually mean to most people? In Judy's words, 'it is just there like a comforting old cardigan'. Well used and enjoyed by individuals and groups in all seasons. Some 7-8 million crocuses announce the arrival of Spring followed by the daffodils. Summer is heralded with 2000 beautiful trees and the sight of people enjoying the open space. Autumn is for the warm colours. Finally Winter on the Stray shows its beauty in white.

Judy also reminded us that Harrogate is privileged to have the Stray as a place to escape from modern life. With lifestyles taking a toll on our mental health and physical wellbeing it is a place of refuge and freedom – our very own 'natural health service'. The green spaces of the Stray helped during lockdown with an endless supply of fresh air, space and the ability to relieve stress.

The environmental importance of the Stray is often overlooked. Harrogate has its own natural green lung soaking up water, heat and pollution which is the envy of other urban areas.

Judy's presentation enlightened us on many facts. There followed interesting questions covering topics such as the future of the Stray when the Unitary Authority comes to power, wilding, ongoing flooding issues, the problems of litter and the commercial use of the Stray. Hopefully this will make us really 'think' about the essential importance of our beautiful and unique Stray.

*A report from our member Barry Adams, who is also a member of the Stray Defence Association.*



*Photographs courtesy of the Stray Defence Association*

For further information on the Stray Defence Association visit [www.straydefence.co.uk](http://www.straydefence.co.uk)

The work of monitoring and commenting on planning applications continues year-round and **Henry Pankhurst** will be presenting his Annual Planning Review to the Annual General Meeting on 29 March (see the next page). In the meantime, here he looks at the recent major development proposal by Tesco for a new supermarket on Skipton Road.

## Planning Report: the Tesco application



For years we may have thought that TESCO's aspiration to have a superstore in the HG postcode area had gone away. Although there are several TESCO convenience stores in the locality.

Believe it or not, the previous application for their New Park site (the North East Gas Site) was in 2009, but it did not get planning consent until 2011. I doubt that the current application (ref. 21/05436/FULMAJ) will take as long to be determined. Soon after the 2011 consent TESCO decided not to go ahead with about 100 new stores that they had planned. Harrogate was one of them but nothing is for ever as they say. Many will be in favour of a TESCO superstore on the north side of Harrogate but conversely, few I guess will welcome the consequences. We can be fairly sure that permission will be granted, considering the planning history that saw TESCO succeed in 2011 and that permission was given for a retail park in 2018.

There are notable differences between the old and the new TESCO applications. The current proposal is for a significantly smaller store with a sales area only a little over half that of their previous permission. The current proposal will have a petrol station (in 2009 it did not). Also there will now be a click and collect service and a dotcom service.

Access arrangements have changed with the proposed Skipton Road roundabout now being the only access point. Previously, service vehicles would have entered from Ripon Road. Customers would also have been able to enter at this point. A pedestrian bridge over Oak Beck directly into the store was shown on the old plans but the shopping level was built over the car parking. Such a bridge would be less convenient for the current proposal

because the shopping floor is now at ground level. Another pedestrian/cycle link was shown between numbers 37 and 41 Electric Avenue. This was not popular with residents who foresaw car parking by people just popping through to the store. TESCO owned number.41. The new application has all service vehicles driving equivalent to the full length of Electric Avenue to the service yard but with a landscaped buffer zone between. This is unlikely to be totally effective in preserving residential amenity.

The Civic Society responded to the proposal and the letter is on the HBC Planning Application Site with our concerns.

Landscaping should be improved or introduced in several ways with planting to divide the car parking areas. The petrol station should be deleted from the application and the area used to protect/improve biodiversity alongside Oak Beck. The buffer zone between the service road and Electric Avenue should be structured so as to be a good wildlife habitat. We are strongly against the roundabout on Skipton Road being the only access and we do not want to see an out of town supermarket having an adverse effect on town centre retail.



An extract from the documentation submitted with the planning application

*This is a copy of the report being presented to the Annual General Meeting on 29 March*



This report is for the year ended February 2022 inclusive, but due to the need to send the AGM report in good time in accordance with our constitution, the figure for planning responses is not quite to the end of the year.

The Government's proposed Planning Bill referred to last year has been abandoned – perhaps we hear sighs of relief!

A new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021 to supersede that of July 2018. It is a little longer but probably will not make a dramatic difference to decisions.

The 5 year supply of housing land required by the Government remains healthy. It is up from a little under 7 years supply to over 7 years now. We can see this in the high level of planning consents to the west of Harrogate and applications in Ripon. From the number of applications in the last few months, housing permissions must slow down considerably.

Five new Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) were adopted in June 2021. These are designed to expand, clarify and explain the policies of our Local Plan. The topics are (1) air quality, (2) providing net gain for biodiversity, (3) provision of open space and village halls, (4) rural workers dwellings and (5) affordable housing. We studied them all but the only one we felt required our comment was (5) - the affordable housing SPD.

*During the year we looked at 279 applications (a particularly high figure) and responded to 82.*

At the beginning of the year, we responded to an invitation to comment on *Proposals for Cycle Facilities in Harrogate*, a survey in respect of the NYCC Active Travel Fund (ATF). This was separate from the Station

Gateway proposal. The three ATF proposals in the survey are for a short section of cycleway on the A59 between Starbeck and Knaresborough, improvements to the narrow cycle lanes on Oatlands Drive and new cycle tracks on Victoria Avenue. We sent a detailed response emphasising the history and heritage of Harrogate and appended our consultation response of February 2019 to the then proposed Otley Road cycleway. I asked for this to be taken into account when considering the three latest ATF proposals.

These are our development control statistics with last year's figures in brackets.

During the year we looked at 279 applications (a particularly high figure) (227) and responded to 82 (71). The Council consulted us on 37 (24). The consultation figure is about average – last year it was unusually low.

There were 132 (57) decisions on applications that we responded to.

Of these, 62 would be regarded as good decisions as they were in line with our responses, 27 were fairly good, usually having helpful amendments, 21 were withdrawn and 22 we regarded as regrettable.

Most applications that we commented on have been studied by Peter Hirschman, Barry Adams, Andrew Brown and myself with occasional input by others. Our thanks to them.

## Early days at the Society - A personal reflection by Anne Smith

*Anne Smith joined the Harrogate Society soon after its inception in 1971, and was Chairman from 1982 to 1985. She carried on chairing the Friends of the Valley Gardens for 20 years. The Harrogate Society changed its name to the Harrogate Civic Society in 1991. We thank her for contributing this short article.*



*Anne at the time she was Chairman of The Harrogate Society*

How did I become involved in those far off days? I was already a member of the Harrogate Naturalists' Society (wildlife) when the Chairman was the very able Margaret Sanderson. She had asked me to talk about trees at their meeting in 1971. I had arranged the very first Tree Preservation Order (TPO) in Harrogate- TPO No 1 Pannal 1969 - on a group of trees in Pannal where I live. I also campaigned for Tree Preservation Orders on a number of trees in Harrogate.

After the talk in the hall at the Royal Baths Mrs Enid Davey who was Secretary of the newly formed The Harrogate Society approached me and asked me to come to a meeting at the home of Mr Michael Laycock which I did and so met the committee and joined them. We were all of a similar mind to save Harrogate from excessive building and road schemes and also preservation of The Stray. Those days were fun. Apart from Mrs Enid Davey and her husband Walter Davey the well-known society photographer who had a studio in James Street, we the newly formed committee were all relatively young.

*The Society was a force to be reckoned with and carried on under various Chairmen until the day in 1982 when I was asked to become Chairman.*

Very often at the end of the committee meetings the young ones would repair to the nearest pub. On one memorable occasion at the end of our Annual Meeting at the Royal Baths meeting room, Miss Shaddick stood up and wanted the audience to march on the home of the Town Clerk (notice Town Clerk and not Chief Executive) whose views on modern architecture were anathema to the Society. She had quite considerable support from the audience who were keen to march

behind her. She was stopped, however, by the Chairman Mr Winston Hartley.

The Society was a force to be reckoned with and carried on under various Chairmen until the day in 1982 when I was asked to become Chairman. I had been minutes secretary for a number of years but now the great honour was bestowed upon me.

Then in 1983 I found out (how I found out is another story!) that Harrogate Borough Council were planning to demolish the Sun Pavilion and Colonnade and horror of horrors replace them with a car park. I called a meeting in the Crown Hotel where we now had our Annual Meetings and nearly 400 people turned up. I was asked by the audience to form a group to stop this happening. From the platform, I formed The Friends of the Valley Gardens. I took the role of Chairman. Geoffrey Smith who was in the audience, James Herriot and David Bellamy who was also in the audience became President and Patrons. Stephen Barnes became our invaluable treasurer.

A Committee was formed there and then. It was an exciting time, but a great deal of hard work lay ahead. I realised that I could not do two jobs as I had four children with the youngest only three.

Reluctantly I left The Harrogate Society in capable hands\*. The Friends of the Valley Gardens went on to save the Sun Pavilion and Colonnades from their dreadful fate and we were all present when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II opened the newly refurbished Sun Pavilion in 1998.

\* John Nellist became Chairman in 1985



We are over halfway towards the funding target of £900 for the next plaque to Claude Verity, the cinema sound pioneer. Further donations will be most welcome.

*Details for bank transfers*

*The Harrogate Civic Society*  
Sort Code : 05-04-54  
Account Number : 16746595

## Down Your Street Skipton Road

Do take a look at our website under the tab 'Harrogate History' then 'History - Articles' where you will find the latest in our series 'Down your Street' which this time focusses on Skipton Road.

This is the sixth in the series and more will be added as time goes on.

<https://www.harrogatecivicsociety.org>



## Membership subscription questionnaire

A questionnaire has been circulated amongst members to seek opinions on our events programme, newsletters and membership fees.

The questionnaire covered:

- Events: what topics would members like to be covered?
- Membership fees and charges for attendance at events
- Newsletters: charges for printed and posted copies

Initial responses to the Questionnaire indicate a large majority in favour of increasing the subscription so that talks remain free. Pre-lockdown there was a charge of £5 for talk attendance and this kept our subscriptions down. Also those who prefer receiving a printed copy of the Newsletters (about 6 per annum) say that they would be happy to pay a larger subscription to help with that cost. We hope to discuss this further with members at the AGM.

## Our next event - 29 March

**A history of Harrogate brass bands**  
**A talk by Gavin Holman preceding our AGM**

Members will have received the notice of our forthcoming **Annual General Meeting** which will be held at **St Paul's URC hall on Belford Road on Tuesday 29 March at 7.30 pm.**

Before the formalities of the annual meeting, Gavin Holman will give an illustrated talk on the Harrogate brass and military bands that have entertained townsfolk and visitors over the last 180 years.

Gavin has an academic background in computer science and librarianship, working in a senior position at the British Library. He has studied brass bands in Britain and America from the early 1800s to the mid 1900s and has published several research papers and books. We are very pleased he will be sharing with us his studies relating to Harrogate.



## Forthcoming Events in 2022

Tuesday

**29 MARCH**

**7.30 pm**

**Our AGM**, after a talk on *The History of Harrogate Brass Bands* by Gavin Holman

Tuesday

**26 APRIL**

**10.30 am**

Malcolm Neesam will be introducing his newly published book, *Wells and Swells*, the second part of his major history of Harrogate. Cedar Court Hotel

**See page 2 for details**

Tuesday

**31 MAY**

**7.30 pm**

*The New Unitary Authority* - Graham Swift, Deputy Leader of Harrogate Borough Council, will be giving us an overview of the impending changes in local government in North Yorkshire. St Paul's Church Hall, Belford Road.

Sunday

**10 JULY**

*Behind the Scenes at the Great Yorkshire Show* - a booked event with limited numbers. We shall be given a guided tour of the Great Yorkshire Show during its setup period.

YAS society are providing refreshments, for which £5 / head should be paid online to us in advance via bank transfer (details on page 8) or bring a cheque/cash to the AGM or the 26th April event.

*Numbers restricted – early booking advised*

**9 – 18 SEPT**

**Heritage Open Days**

**SEPTEMBER**

**(tbc)**

**A garden visit** (awaiting finalisation)

Tuesday

**25 OCTOBER**

*Schooldays in Edwardian Harrogate* - a talk by Dr Paul Jennings

Tuesday

**29 NOVEMBER**

*The Harrogate Convention Centre: its purpose and future* - a talk by the Centre Director, Paula Lorimer (to be held at the Centre)

**DECEMBER**

**(tbc)**

**Christmas Social for 2022** (details to follow)

All details are on our website and continuously updated. Full information and reminders will be issued via the newsletter, by email and via facebook.

Talks will be advertised to our link groups and the general public. They will be free for members unless otherwise stated. There will be a £5.00 head charge for non-members. Early booking is recommended. If an event is oversubscribed you may not be able to attend if you have not booked in advance.

Unless otherwise stated, events will be held at ST. PAUL'S URC HALL, Belford Road, just off Victoria Avenue, starting at 7:30pm.

Booking by email is recommended

### Contact us:

General matters	..	..	info@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Membership queries	..	..	membership@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Event bookings	..	..	events@harrogatecivicsociety.org

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