



e-NEWSLETTER

HARROGATE CIVIC SOCIETY

1 September 2020



West Park Stray on 20 August: fully restored almost a year after the UCI World cycling championships ended on 29 Sept 2019

Keeping members informed

While the Covid-19 restrictions continue, we have instigated more frequent monthly newsletters for members to keep everyone in touch. Those members who are not on email are getting copies of the newsletters hand-delivered by committee members.

We are also exploring ways to put on a few talks in a carefully selected Covid-secure environment so long as the restrictions apply, and we will make further announcements on this soon.

Do contact us info@harrogatecivicsociety.org for any information or to let us know your views and suggestions as to how we can improve our communications.

The search for replacement Stray Land

The proposals for an Otley Road cycleway encroach on the 'Stray slips' on both sides of Otley Road, from Cold Bath Road and Arthurs Avenue down to the main body of the Stray. As a result, Harrogate Borough Council has launched a consultation to identify land to replace the area lost to the Stray.

The consultation, which runs until 9 November, can be found at <https://www.harrogate.gov.uk/otleyroad>

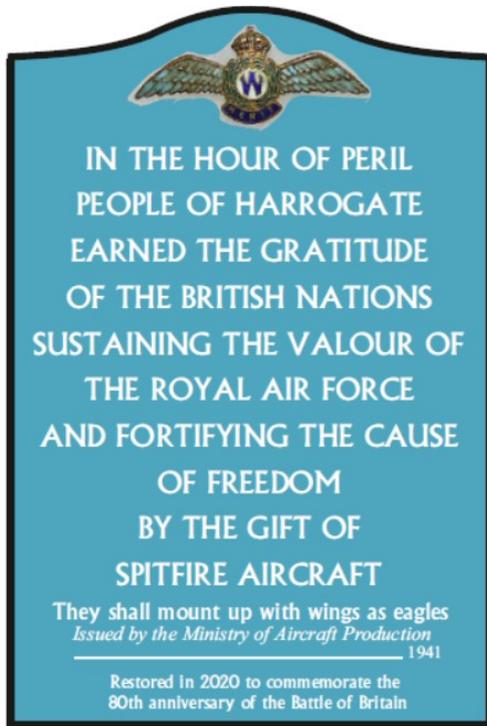
Malcolm Neesam explains:

'From the start of its life, the Stray became very popular, so much so that parts of it were worn away by pedestrian and vehicular traffic, which meant that those who had purchased "Stray Gates" had less herbage for their animals to graze. To compensate for this loss caused by the appearance of roads and footpaths, Parliament passed a second Stray Act in 1789, which created the so-called "Stray-slips", whereby land parallel to the turnpike roads leading to the Stray, and equal in amount to the land lost to the roads and footpaths, was designated Stray. In the quiet times before motorised transport, cows and sheep could safely graze the grassy verges.'

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

The Harrogate Spitfire

In the early stages of World War II, the people of Harrogate raised money to purchase Spitfire Aircraft and in recognition of this, the Ministry of Aircraft Production presented the town with a plaque acknowledging the fund raising effort.



The original plaque was lost many years ago, but so that the efforts of the town people are not forgotten, Harrogate Civic Society, along with many individuals, have been able to fund a replica plaque.

The unveiling of this plaque is being held a few days before the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain and will be by The Lord Houghton of Richmond GCB, CBE, DL who until recently was Chief of the Defence Staff. Also present will be our Mayor & Mayoress and our MP, Andrew Jones.

We are also delighted that three war veterans are hoping to attend the unveiling – ranging from 96 to 101 in age!

As part of the event, Malcolm Neesam will give a short talk on “Harrogate during World War II”.

Due to Covid-19, there are strict limits on how many can attend the event but we are delighted to be holding a ballot of members so that any remaining tickets can be distributed. In order for this to happen, the committee members who would normally attend are standing down in order to release their places.

Soon afterwards, a short slide presentation of the event, including Malcolm’s talk, will be uploaded onto our website.

Heritage plaques trails used for school project

This summer students from Harrogate High School found that the Heritage Plaques trails leaflets produced by the Civic Society were an excellent source material for their school project. Isabella and Tom (pictured left) said:

“Our holiday project was to visit the brown plaques around Harrogate to see what they celebrated. Some plaques recognised the work of people who had made a contribution to the development of the town, others are on historical buildings or businesses that play an active part in the town’s community. Others celebrate famous people who have visited or had a connection with the town. Our grandad provided us with copies of your Heritage Plaques Town Centre Trails leaflet which we found extremely useful. It was great fun going round the town. We visited 40 plaques and took photographs of them and we are now writing about them using our photographs and your leaflet.”



Isabella and Tom Robinson from Harrogate High School at the Library House plaque. (L14 on the High Harrogate trail)

All change! A new planning system

A Planning White Paper

A 12 week consultation process was launched by the government on 6 August into a radical new system of planning control. The prime motive for this is stated as 'helping to build the houses our country needs'. It also claims to place 'a higher regard on quality, design and local vernacular than ever before'. But in the process, some fear that it will remove much control and discretion from local councils and communities towards a more centrally-imposed rule-based system.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

White Paper August 2020

It promises to give local communities a 'genuine say in the design of new developments' but at the same time it is designed to significantly speed up the process of planning approvals.

The Civic Society warmly welcomes members' views on all this to assist our response to the consultation.

To see the full proposals, go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

Left: Skipton Road, Bellway homes development. The Harrogate District Local Plan provides for 16,077 new houses in the period up to 2035, including over 4000 on the western edge of Harrogate.

Police Training Centre and planning creep!

Early in this century, the Police Training Centre on Yew Tree Lane was destined to be redeveloped to continue in use and considerable expense must have been incurred in bringing forward the plans. However, its use as a police training centre was soon after abandoned and the site was assessed by the Council as a housing allocation for 130 dwellings. In 2014 an application came forward for an estate of 151 dwellings which was later amended to 163 dwellings. It was eventually approved for 161 dwellings in 2018. In July this year we saw a new application, this time for 180 dwellings, and so from 130 dwellings there has been, potentially, a gradual 38% increase in the number of dwellings. That is planning creep!

Historic Buildings

This large and very visible site was originally included in the Special Landscape Area, but has now been deleted from it in the recently adopted Local

Plan. There are four buildings on the site that are considered un-designated historic assets, the Lodge House, Kensington House, the Headmaster's house and the Memorial Library. We are pleased to say that all four of these historic buildings will be converted to dwellings in the current plans. The Library is known as the Memorial Library because of the First World War memorials within. This building has a very attractive interior with balconies around, supported in four columns. We do not yet know the detailed intentions for the interior, but it would be dreadful if it were gutted. No exterior changes are proposed to this or the other three historic buildings.



The entrance from Yew Tree Lane to the former Police Training Centre site with the Lodge House on the right.

All change! The devolution debate

What is it all about?

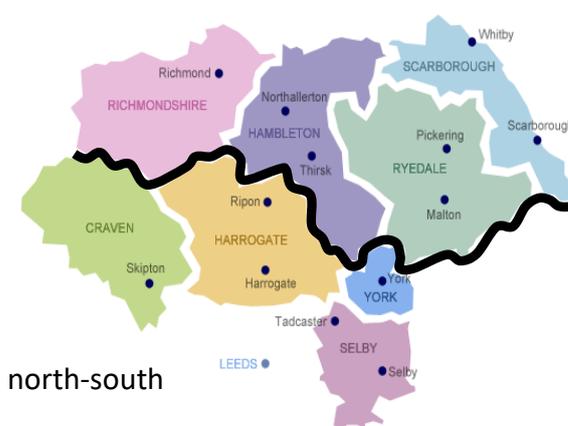
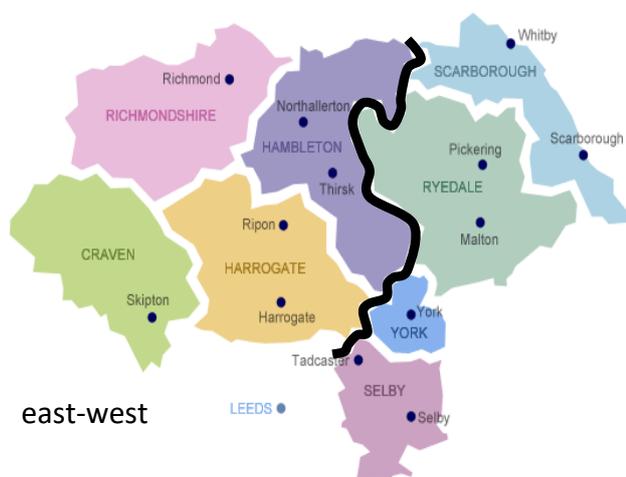
Currently, local government in North Yorkshire is two-tier, with seven district councils and one county council, each with separate powers and responsibilities. York is different as it is already a unitary authority responsible for all functions.

Devolution involves the replacement of the current structure by unitary bodies together with some transfer of power and funding from national to local government and potentially the creation of a directly elected Mayor .

The County Council has proposed that there should be a single unitary authority for the whole of North Yorkshire, except York, but the district councils are working on other solutions which include the creation of two unitary authorities including York (see below).

There will be a period of public consultation and ultimately, the government will need to approve any new arrangement.

Below: Possible grouping for two new authorities.



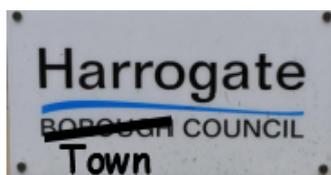
Timetable for change

Proposals put to ministers	July - Nov 2020
Consultation with stakeholders and the public	Dec 2020 - Feb 2021
Parliament to approve	July - Oct 2021
New combined authorities established	Nov 2021 - April 2022
Election of Mayors	May 2022

How does this affect the Civic Society ?

The Civic Society achieves many of its aims by working closely with local authorities and other local organisations, so when changes are proposed, we are keen to understand where any new responsibilities might lie and how this might affect our relationships.

We are writing to both North Yorkshire County Council and to Harrogate Borough Council to see if they can provide some clarity about the way in which each of the proposals for unitary government would affect the town and where future responsibilities might lie. We will, of course, keep members informed as the picture becomes clearer.



Left: The shape of things to come?

Contact us:

General matters	info@harrogatecivicsociety.org
Membership queries	membership@harrogatecivicsociety.org