

BULLETIN

Contact us: W: www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk T: 0151 708 9920 E: admin@civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk

Fleetwood Civic Society becomes 100th member

We are delighted to announce, less than 4 weeks after inviting membership, Civic Voice has registered its 100th member. Fleetwood Civic Society in the North West has joined civic societies from every region in joining the new national charity dedicated to speaking up and campaigning on behalf of the civic movement.

Civic Voice will only be a success if civic societies support it and provide the financial independence the movement needs. We have been delighted by the generous offers of support - as well as societies joining at the rate of two-three a day, two societies have joined at £1000 each and other societies have also made considerable donations to help get Civic Voice off the ground. The 100 societies who have so far joined have over 20,000 individual members and include

Littleborough Civic Trust, Greater Manchester
Penzance Civic Society, Cornwall
Sutton Coldfield Civic Society, Warwickshire
The Kew Society, London

We all need more civic and amenity societies and other local groups to join Civic Voice. Join as a Founder Member before the end of May and received a 10% discount. To join Civic Voice simply complete the Civic Voice Application Form here

<http://www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk/sitefiles/csinitiative/145858/Civic%20Voice%20Membership%20Form.doc>

Voting for the Civic Voice Board - one week left

All civic societies registered with the Civic Society Initiative by the end of January 2010 are being balloted on the new trustee Board. Your local group will have received a ballot form and details of who is standing. We have 19 excellent candidates. Make sure it registers its vote, which is for the society and not for individuals. We are delighted to say we have received an excellent response to the ballot so far.

Your group's ballot paper must be returned by email (preferred) to info@civicvoice.org.uk or by post to Ian Harvey, Civic Voice, Unit 101, 82 Wood Street, Liverpool L1 4LN to arrive by midnight on Wednesday 7 April 2010.

Any ballot papers received after this date or which have been filled out incorrectly will not be included in the vote. We urge you to read the instructions carefully before filling out the ballot paper. To emphasise, your local group can only vote for 3 candidates and the ballot paper must include the full contact information for the person submitting. We have had to return several forms so far due to contact information being missed off the form. We would not want anyone to miss out due to an incorrect form, so please do double check before you submit.

We will announce the results of the ballot shortly after the closing date and all successful candidates will be invited to attend the public launch of Civic Voice in London on Saturday 17th April.

If you have any questions about any aspect of the ballot then email us at info@civicvoice.org.uk or call Ian Harvey on 0151 708 9920.

Join us at the launch of Civic Voice

Civic Voice is being launched on Saturday 17 April at the Building Centre, Store Street, WC1E 7BT in central London (<http://www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk/buildingcentre.html>). The event will run from 10.30am until 4pm. All civic societies registered with the Civic Society Initiative and our partners are invited to this unique occasion which will start a new chapter in the proud history of the civic movement. A small charge of £10 will help cover refreshment.

We are planning an exciting programme for the day - Camden Civic Society will be organising a selection of guided tours while the London Forum will be celebrating 21 years of activity and several civic societies have confirmed they will be bringing along promotional material. The day itself will allow you to hear from Griff Rhys Jones, learn more about Civic Voice and how it works from Tony Burton and time to debate and influence its priorities. You will also meet the new Board of Civic Voice (including the new Chair), have a presentation from Sir Terry Farrell about the changing role of the civic movement in the future, meet and talk to civic societies from across the country and have the opportunity for a guided walk around Camden.

We are still planning for the first AGM in the Autumn where the first formal business of Civic Voice will be conducted and would welcome offers to host.

You can join Griff Rhys Jones, Sir Terry Farrell and civic society volunteers from over 75 societies from across the country by registering <http://www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk/launch.html>

Love Local campaign

The deadline for telling us what you love about where you live is fast approaching. The Love Local campaign is launched on 17 April to celebrate what is attractive, enjoyable and distinctive about where we live and what makes us proud to be there. We need your help in advance to get the campaign off to a strong start.

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete and we have already had over 230 responses. We will use the results on 17 April to help our campaign for places to be more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. If you are also able to send us digital photographs then that will help bring things to life. Photographs should be emailed to info@civicvoice.org.uk and they may be used on our websites and in our work. Please keep the file size to less than a megabyte if you can. You can view some of the images already submitted on our new Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/civicvoice/>. By sending in the images you are giving us permission to use them in our own work.

Please visit the survey at <http://tinyurl.com/y19dbgc> and support the Love Local campaign.

It would also help if you sent the survey details on to other civic society members so we can gather as large a response as possible.

We need your responses by Monday 5th April. All completed surveys will be entered into a prize draw to be announced at the launch of Civic Voice. This prize will be a signed copy of the Griff Rhys Jones book *Rivers* and £100 for a civic society of your choice

Street Pride campaign

Over 70 local groups have already signed up to the Street Pride campaign. This aims to rid our streets of unnecessary clutter to create streets we can be proud of. The Street Pride campaign pack is now available and can be downloaded from the website at www.streetpride.org.uk. The campaign pack provides everything you need to start surveying your area for street clutter and providing the evidence which can be used locally and nationally to campaign for its removal. We will also be providing briefing sheets on each of the four main causes of street clutter - bollards, signs, guard rails and posts - shortly.

We can also announce details of the Street Pride campaign workshops being hosted by civic societies across the country on Saturdays during May and June. The campaign workshops will be led by an experienced land use planner and community campaigner, Richard Bate, and will be held in:

- Wakefield, West Yorkshire Police Headquarters, 8 May
- Winchester, The Guildhall, 22 May
- Warwick, Date to be confirmed
- London, The Gallery, 70 Cowcross Street, 19 June
- Manchester, The Briton's Protection Hotel 26 June

The campaign workshops will run from 10.30am to 1.30pm and be followed by a practical session undertaking a survey of street clutter in the area. This is expected to run till around 4.30pm. Lunch will not be provided.

The workshops cost just £5 to cover light refreshments and places are limited to 30 so please sign up for a campaign workshop at http://www.civicsocietyinitiative.org.uk/street_pride.html

We are grateful to English Heritage for supporting the Street Pride campaign.

Free workshops on Government's new heritage policies

English Heritage has announced a series of workshops across England dedicated to Planning Policy Statement 5 *Planning for the Historic Environment*. These events will give you a detailed walk through of the content and terminology, as well as allowing you the opportunity to discuss with other delegates their thoughts on PPS5. These events are fully booked but Civic Voice has managed to negotiate with English Heritage to ensure that the civic movement does have a presence at each event. To confirm, all places have been booked and the only places now available are directly through Civic Voice.

More information about these events can be accessed at <http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.17707>

To have a chance of securing a place at the following events, **Cambridge** 20th April, **Preston** 23rd April, **Gloucester** 26th April and **Basingstoke** 27th April, please email ian.harvey@civicvoice.org.uk with your Name, Civic Society and a telephone number. Two places for each event will be selected at random on Tuesday 6 April. We hope the people who secure these places will be able to write up a short report that can be circulated to other civic societies.

How much does your civic society charge? Join the discussion!

The amount you charge for membership can have a significant impact on your society. It is a vital source of income for many groups and can make the difference between ticking over and really making a difference to your area in terms of activities, campaigning and profile.

Membership fees vary considerably across the movement and there is no obvious link with the size of the membership. Leeds Civic Trust currently charges £30 for individual

membership and has over 600 members. It also charges for talks and events. Others charge just a few pounds for membership and events are free. Many haven't changed membership fees for years and fear a loss of members. Some even offer Life Membership for less than Leeds charges for a year. There is no single approach that will work for everyone but it is important that local groups keep membership fees under review and think hard about the best way to raise and use resources for the benefit of the area.

The topic has been the source of lively debate on the Civic Society Discussion Forum - with some suggesting fees should simply cover the costs of servicing members and providing events, while others believe people join because they support the public work of the civic society and want it to make a difference to the area. It is also clear that raising membership fees does not mean fewer members - people join groups for what they achieve and with more resources there is scope to do much more and even attract new volunteers as well as members.

It is normal for groups to review membership fees on a yearly basis, so, if you have not reviewed yours for a considerable time, you may want to visit the Discussion Forum and see what other societies are saying on this matter. You can visit the forum at <http://civicsociety.proboards.com/index.cgi> and share your views.

Macclesfield awards spark helpful controversy

Macclesfield Civic Society's latest awards sparked national debate when they focused on buildings that make a difference to the town and not just aesthetics. Nominations include a retaining wall along the canal which replaces one that collapsed and a car wash which has replaced a dilapidated shed. This was too much for the Daily Telegraph and Daily Mail who decided to poke fun. As Secretary, Gordon Sidery, said "*We are not a stuffy old society which is looking for a pretty building. It is not the appearance, it is the substance that counts. A building has to add to or improve the area.*"

We would be interested in other thoughts on how awards can be used to recognise the most positive contributions that are made to the civic scene.

Read the full story in the Daily Mail at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1260428/Macclesfields-finest--takeaway-car-wash-civic-architecture-prize.html>

Wessex Midsomer Muster success

Midsomer Norton witnessed the first 'muster' of Wessex based civic Societies on the 6th March and it was generally judged a great success.

The event took place in the wonderful 150 year-old Italianate Midsomer Norton Town Hall. It got off to a not-so-traditional 'go round' - very few of those present had ever met each other before today. Attendees were then treated to a talk on the work of the Midsomer Norton Society by Paul Myers. It seems to have boundless energy and enthusiasm. Then John Peverley gave an excellent case study on Frome's experience of Local Listing which provided food for thought for those present. Finally a workshop session entitled "How to promote your group" gave incredible insight into just how diverse the various approaches of civic societies can be.

The Chair of Bath and North East Somerset Council, Cllr Bryan Chalker came to give his best wishes to the success of the muster and joined the group for the networking lunch - a sumptuous spread put on by our hosts the Midsomer Norton Society.

"No fewer than 30 delegates attended representing 11 civic societies and quite apart from the programme itself I think the highlight of the day for most of us was the opportunity to network with other like minded people - all passionate about their towns", said Peter Tapscott, from

Corsham Civic Society and one of the three members of the fledgling cluster's 'Maintenance Group'.

The day was rounded off with a guided tour of Midsomer Norton including a medieval tithe barn and the architectural splendours of the local Georgian Parish Church by Pinch the Younger.

The network is now planning its next gathering in June so watch this space for details.

New Bridgwater town trails

Bridgwater Civic Society jointly with Bridgwater Town Council are proud to announce a completely new edition of the Town Trails Guide.

The Guide was launched by The Worshipful the Mayor of Bridgwater on Saturday March 27 at the Blake Museum.

The new 36-page guide has been produced by a young team of Civic Society volunteers. In full colour, the guide is lavishly illustrated with recent and historic photographs from the Town Council's Blake Museum. Three trails are described, supported by a map which includes the positions of the Civic Society's Blue Plaques along the routes. The Medieval Trail 1200-1600 explores the oldest parts of the town; the Early Modern Trail 1600-1800 looks at the Georgian buildings, and the Victorian and Twentieth Century trail reveals much of Bridgwater's industrial past.

Derek Gibson MBE, President of the Civic Society, said: "*I feel both privileged and proud to be able to commend this new publication and to congratulate the young members of our local community who have been actively involved in its production. Its publication has only been possible by the generous and appreciative sponsorship by the Bridgwater Town Council.*"

Alan Hurford, Town Clerk, said: "*We are very pleased to support this useful booklet. It will be of great interest and value to residents and visitors alike, by giving them a new opportunity to explore Bridgwater's rich heritage.*"

More information is available at <http://www.bridgwatercivic.org.uk/>

Informed Conservation - Understanding Historic Buildings

The Bath Preservation Trust is delighted to announce this event aimed at stakeholders in the historic environment who wish to specialise in or update their knowledge in this critical area. The day (Friday 16th April) will provide an overview of the importance of an informed approach to conservation management and an introduction to the range of methods used to understand historic buildings, including researching and recording.

More information is available at <http://s266248275.websitehome.co.uk/index.php?page=97>

The Southern Comfort cluster, Hampshire - meeting date confirmed

In 1983 The Chichester Society, feeling a little isolated, invited the Lewes, Fareham, Portsmouth and Winchester Societies to meet with them for a day to discuss matters of mutual concern. The morning was devoted to society matters and the afternoon to planning issues. At the end all agreed that this sharing of experiences had been both enjoyable and extremely useful; above all it had been comforting to find that all had very similar problems. One member was asked to write a brief article and, knowing how catchy headings go down well with the press, he headed the article "Southern Comfort" and the name stuck.

The City of Winchester Trust is now organising the next Southern Comfort meeting, to be held in Winchester on Saturday 10 July. The keynote speaker will be the landscape architect Kim

Wilkie and further information is available from win2010@southerncomfort.org.uk All civic societies in the area are welcome to attend.

Kent Federation of Amenity Societies Annual Conference

The KFAS annual conference this year will take place at the Pines Calyx near Dover on May 15. The subject of the conference will be 'The Kent Coastal Network'.

Subjects to be addressed by the speakers this year will be:

- An Overview of the Kent Coastal Network
- The Medway/Swale Estuary Partnership
- The Thanet Coastal Project
- Balanced Seas: The Marine and Coastal Access Bill

More information is available at <http://www.kfas.org.uk/conference.htm>