

## CIVIC SOCIETY OF GREAT YARMOUTH NEWSLETTER 2



Ian Harvey, the joint founder and Chief Executive Officer of Civic Voice, spoke to the Society on Tuesday 21 November at Christchurch. He gave an inspirational talk tracing the history of the Civic Movement from Rochdale in 1844 where the Cooperative Movement was started. The Civic Trust was formed in 1957 by Duncan Sandys and brought together Civic Societies but, unfortunately, it collapsed in 2009 after investing in Icelandic banks.

Ian had been asked to join the Civic Trust the day after leaving university and 6 weeks before the Trust became insolvent. He decided to do something about it and after sending an email he had 40,000 replies and £75,000 was raised. As a result, Civic Voice was founded in 2010. It represents and connects its 100,000 members. Societies vary in size from 6 to 3,000 members and subscriptions range from £3 to £35 with an

average of £13.

**Planning Watchdog.** The number of planning applications to councils is increasing and 20% are opposed which is 30,000 yearly. On average each civic society views 300 applications yearly.

He mentioned some examples of activities in other parts of the country:

- Tree planting by schools.
- Oxclean. Each spring in Oxford over a weekend the community - including schools - comes together to clean up the city and children who participate are given certificates by the Mayor.
- Attention to War Memorials. There is a £5M fund to help with this. Great Yarmouth has 15 war memorials.
- Reducing the amount of street clutter caused by unnecessary street signs and furniture.
- Meeting with the local member of Parliament.
- Fun events: One society meets in a different restaurant for a meal each month and at the end of the year awards a prize to the one voted to be the best.
- Work with other groups
- Involving the whole community and families, not just individuals

The Civic Voice Website ([civicvoice.org.uk](http://civicvoice.org.uk)) contains 101 ideas of how civic societies can work better. It is worth looking at.

He quoted Prince Charles who had said: "Nowhere should be without its civic society and no-one should be without the voice you can provide."

### **Membership**

We now have 65 members. It would be good to bring that number up to at least 100 by the end of the year.

### **Brief points from committee meeting on 27 November**

- Roundabouts. It looks as though an agreement is being made to allow GYBC to take over the management of the roundabouts from the Highways Authority.
- Great Yarmouth in Bloom has agreed to work with the Civic Society in “greening up” the town
- We are drawing up some plans for some civic awards
- We have decided to visit Kings Lynn as it has many similar problems to Great Yarmouth. Is there a volunteer to organise this?
- Andrew Smith has agreed to vet planning applications made to the Council
- The design for a car sticker has been agreed and will be available soon
- We are keen to light up the town
- A leaflet is being designed to circulate to businesses to encourage new members
- We are looking at possible grant awarding bodies to help finance some our projects
- We have a stall at East Norfolk 6th Form College to publicise the Society on Wednesday 6 December at 9.45am If you are interested in joining me please give me a ring on 01493 665287
- I have had an initial meeting with community workers about involving the local community in working with the Society

### **Will you help?**

During the meeting last Tuesday I circulated a piece of paper asking what activities people would like to be involved in. Most said they were willing to help with anything. There is much to be done and to fit people with the tasks I attach a list of suggested projects. In addition, we would welcome suggestions for future speakers and topics as well as places to visit. Please add any other comments you might have. When completed please email the form back to me at [hugh@sturzaker.plus.com](mailto:hugh@sturzaker.plus.com). or send to me at Hobland House, Hobland Road, Great Yarmouth, NR31 9AR  
Many thanks.

Hugh Sturzaker