

Kirkby Lonsdale and District Civic Society: Chairman's report for 2020

Society membership was 215 compared with 222 in 2019. Colin Boothman and Sandra Buckland joined the committee which was then two under its constitutional full strength of four officers and eight members.

Keeping members and the public informed about our activities was particularly important this year and we were pleased to be able to introduce a fresh, consistent and striking look for all our publicity and communications and to add Facebook as a new publicity channel.

One regular activity is our winter talks. We completed the 2019/2020 season with excellent talks on crime in the 19th century Lune Valley, the first map of Roman Britain and the restoration of Gleaston Water Mill, though the average attendance remained a little disappointing at around 40.

Unsurprisingly the planned 2020/21 season was thoroughly disrupted. We were grateful that Hannah Kingsbury agreed to give her talk on 'The Westmorland Dales Landscapes Partnership Project' via Zoom when 30 members 'attended'. It gave us confidence to run two more talks on Zoom in early 2021, which attracted more members and also some guests.

We also moved committee meetings to Zoom where we found more frequent, shorter meetings, cancelled where matters could be dealt with by E mail or phone, worked well.

The planning sub-committee considered 48 new applications, 32 in South Lakeland and 16 in Yorkshire Dales, taking key ones forward to the full committee. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was about 2/3 of last year's, itself a little lower than in previous years. We post regular summaries of new applications and our responses on our website.

We responded to 8 applications, objecting to two barn conversions on grounds of significant over-development; one house extension on over-prominent style and scale; one house extension on poor design and loss of original features; one house renovation on inappropriate materials; and one separating a house into two on inadequate amenities. We supported one barn conversion and one house improvement apart from suggestions for different window treatments. Encouragingly the planners mostly agreed with us!

A one-off project was reviewing the benches we own in and around Kirkby as many had become dilapidated or unsafe. Five needed major refurbishment, completed in spring 2021 and much appreciated by both residents and visitors.

We also completed the project to mark all the old inns and 'jerrys' in Kirkby with numbered tags, with a list of corresponding pub names on a revised edition of the popular town map.

We can't say with any certainty what we'll be able to do in 2021, but looking forward, 2022 will be our 50th anniversary year and we welcome ideas for, and help with, activities to mark this. Meanwhile I would like thank you all, and especially the committee, for supporting the Society in this difficult year.

Anne Burgess
Chairman
October 2021 (report as at March 2021)