



TRUST TOPICS

Doncaster Civic Trust Newsletter ©

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80th Anniversary Edition

The Trust was founded in May 1946, at a meeting held in the old Museum and Art Gallery at Beechfield House, pictured above, and as part of our 80th anniversary celebrations we have produced the attached report, highlighting some of the major achievements of the Trust so far.

Member of



These are some of the events planned to commemorate our anniversary: -

Hosting the spring YHACS meeting in Doncaster at the Point on South Parade on 18th April

Exhibition at Danum Gallery Library and Museum (DGLAM) from 26th September

Talk by John Goodall, Architectural Editor of Country Life on 26th September

Heritage Open Days with more venues, events and participants this year. Dates 11th to 20th September

Completion of digitisation of 1660 of Eric Braim's slides of Doncaster

Doncaster Civic Trust: Founded in 1946

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Members' Page

Winter Talks Programme

All talks are held in St Peter's Church Hall, Chequer Road, Doncaster. DNI 2AA and start at 7.30pm. Refreshments will be available after the talk.

12 th March	Eric Jackson - History of Alms-houses
23 rd April	Chris Barron – Treasures in the Tower

Members' News

This is a special year for the Doncaster Civic Trust with our 80th Anniversary and the production of this splendid report is a fitting way to celebrate our achievements.

We are also planning for Heritage Open Days in September and have already had initial meetings with Heritage partners to make this year's festival in Doncaster bigger and better than last year, so more to look forward to.

New Speaker Co-ordinator

As part of what we offer members each year we have an Autumn/Winter talks programme which has been popular for many years and is an ideal way to socialise with other members. We aim for the talks to be within the subjects of architecture, landscape, history and design.

However, this takes planning and organisation, and we are now in need of a new "Speaker Coordinator". Suggestions for speakers often come from other members but there is a need to explore different avenues to find suitable talks. The speakers need to be contacted, and their availability checked before booking them and compiling the list. Without a new organiser we may not be able to offer the popular Members' Talk Programme. Are you a good communicator and organiser with some computer skills? Why not get in touch and find out more. The success of the Doncaster Civic Trust depends on the support of its members and volunteers.

New Members

I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome the following new members to the Civic Trust and hope they will enjoy their membership and take part in our activities: -

Richard and Katherine Stevens and family, Malcolm Meachen, Calvin Caffrey, Anne Davies,
Sarah Harris & Geoff Wells, Peter Grey, Nigel Hunston, Nathan Turnbull

Rowena Mellows Secretary dct.membershipsecretary@gmail.com

Denison House

The Trust was very concerned to learn about the fire in the early hours of 24th January this year at Denison House, formerly The Hall. It is a very important building to Doncaster for several reasons:

- It was built in 1798 by William Lindley, the architect who made his home in Doncaster and was responsible for the Mansion House extension and top storey, the Pillared Houses and other buildings on South Parade, the building on the corner of Hallgate and Princes Street, and a number of country houses around Doncaster, together with other buildings which have sadly been demolished.
- It was the home of Sir Edmund Beckett Denison from 1855 to 1874, one of the two West Yorkshire MPs and chair of the Great Northern Railway Company. Without his litigation

work Doncaster would not have had a main line railway, and without his advocacy would not have been home to the Plant works which produced, amongst many others, the Mallard and Flying Scotsman engines.

- It forms an important part of South Parade, Doncaster's most complete Georgian Street

It was owned by Doncaster Council and used as the Architects' department for many years, but with the new building in Waterdale it was no longer needed and was part of a portfolio of property included in the agreement with MUSE, the Council's development partner for the new Cultural & Civic Quarter. They did not want to develop Denison House and offered it for sale in April 2013. Yorkshire Investment Properties bought it, and obtained planning permission for flats, but never carried out the conversion work and since then it has had more owners, all of whom appear to have concluded that it was not economic to do the renovation work necessary to bring it back to a working building. At each transaction, the price has decreased, and the state of the building has deteriorated.

The Trust has taken an active interest in the building's fate; there have been articles in previous Trust Topics, correspondence with the City of Doncaster Council, correspondence with a previous owner



and letters sent to the current owner seeking information, as well as seeking advice and information from Historic England. We were told by the Council that they have written to the owners asking them to take action to keep the building secure, but sadly, if people are determined, they can gain access.

The only hope appears to be if a charity or similar organisation comes up with a community use for the building which would not need to be profitable. The nearby Point, the home of Doncaster Community Arts, is a very fine example of where a charity, supported by Doncaster Council, has managed to draw in grant funding to restore and maintain an eighteenth-century building.

Cllr Rob Dennis, one of the Councillors for Town Ward, asked a question at a recent full Council Meeting "Denison House and the Georgian Pillared Houses are historic buildings on South Parade which have been neglected for far too long by their private owners. Sadly, last month there was instance of arson at Denison House and damage was sustained. Whilst the Council's enforcement team have been proceeding down legal routes to force the owners of the buildings to secure and keep the buildings in a suitable condition, little progress has been made to revitalise and bring these beautiful buildings back into use. What more can the Council do to ensure our historic city centre buildings are maintained by their owners? "

The reply from Ros Jones, elected Mayor, was

"The instance of Arson at Denison House last month is troubling, both Denison House and Pillared Houses are part of our heritage. Grade 2 listed buildings which have so much potential and could be stunning if redeveloped and brought back into use.

This council has initiated a Section 215 Enforcement Notice for Pillar House and currently trying to engage with the owners of Denison House.

I must point out that enforcement action is not cheap, and is not always successful. We must evidence that reasonable and proportionate steps to communicate with the owners has taken place. The general approach taken across the country is to work with property owners where possible, to encourage them to either sell or redevelop derelict buildings.

Government have brought in new powers including High Street Rental Auctions and 'right to rent' however, it does not resolve the fundamental issue in relation to derelict sites that are listed buildings, which often cost significantly more to renovate than other buildings or new builds, this generally makes them economically unviable for a business to develop. This leads to owners and developers leaving buildings to deteriorate.

This is why as part of our Community Regeneration Partnership, supported by £20m of Government funding for areas such as:

- £7m for next phase of Doncaster Market investment
- £5m to purchase key city centre sites – cleaning up and regenerating disused buildings and sites to provide new homes, shops and leisure spaces that bring life back to the high street. AND
- £3m for heritage and culture - for shopfront revamps and protecting and repurposing historic buildings for community and cultural use, with the community deciding on their priorities.

As part of our recently completed Doncaster Talks survey, a key priority for the residents of Doncaster was to regenerate our city centre, to protect our heritage and to bring derelict buildings back into use. That feedback has been used to prioritise the £20m of Government investment into our city centre."

Since the fire the Trust has written again to the Council asking them to take action to preserve the building and has received a reply stating that it is continuing with enforcement action. It has also written to the Council asking to be part of the consultation process on use of the heritage element of the £20 million.



Doncaster Civic Trust
BURSARY SCHEME
Applications open **NOW**

We are offering to help students from Doncaster pay their way through college/university when they study built environment or traditional craft subjects.

Eligible subjects include, but are not limited to:

- Architecture
- Urban Design
- Town Planning
- Landscape Architecture
- Traditional craft subjects such as
 - Stone Masonry
 - Woodcarving
 - Building Conservation

Apply using the online application form at www.doncastercivictrust.org.uk

Up to **£1,000**
Grant value per year

About Us

Doncaster Civic Trust was founded in 1946 to help in the work of conserving and improving our town and its surroundings. We are particularly concerned to promote the preservation and conservation of historic buildings, high standards of new building design and landscaping, the protection of places of natural beauty and an increased public awareness of the built and natural environment. We are a registered charity and operate on a voluntary basis. New members are always welcome.

Bursaries Available

Since 2011 the Trust has been running a bursary scheme, whereby Doncaster students can apply for up to £1,000 to help pay for their tuition fees when they study built environment subjects such as architecture, town planning, urban design, building conservation or landscape architecture. Bursaries are also available for young people who wish to study traditional crafts such as stonemasonry, woodcarving and building conservation skills. At present we have three students utilising these bursaries.

Are you, or do you know, a Doncaster person who is intending to study one of these topics and would appreciate some financial help? If so, do get in touch at the email address below, or have a look at our website for more information

<https://www.doncastercivictrust.org.uk/student-bursary-scheme/>

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