



Grantham
Civic Society

www.granthamcivicsociety.co.uk

masthead artwork by Georgina Green

Newsletter

April 2023

Grantham Civic Society aims to:

Preserve the town's remaining fine or historically interesting buildings

Monitor the upkeep of green spaces

Keep a watching brief on new developments

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Diary dates (booking details on page 4)

Please put the following dates in your diaries for future events.

Monday 17 April

Quiz and evening buffet at Belton Park Golf Club

Hosted by James Wiggins 6.30 for 7.00pm start

Wednesday 17 May

Guided visit to Stoke on Trent including the Spode Museum

Depart Meres Leisure Centre 8.30am

Weekend 20/21 May

Folkingham Georgian Festival

Saturday 20 May open Talk by John Manterfield at 11.30am on 'The Professions of Georgian Lincolnshire'. Other talks and stalls throughout the day 11am to 5pm. Festival also open Sunday 21 May, 11am-4pm. Own transport

Saturday 17 June

National Civic Day

Guided walking tours of the town and bookstall ~ details to follow

Saturday 14 July

Visit to York

Depart the Meres Leisure Centre - 8.30am

SKDC new film on 10 celebrated local women

The new film launched on International Women's Day highlighted 10 remarkable ladies associated with South Kesteven. ***Inspirational Women of South Kesteven, Lincolnshire YouTube.***

Margaret Beaufort, Edward II's mother headed the list followed by Harriet Arbuthnot born in 1793 in Fulbeck and died in 1934. She was 19th century diarist, political hostess and close friend of the Prime Minister. Then Mother Magdalen (Francis Margaret Taylor) 1832 – 1900, born in Stoke Rochford. She was a volunteer nurse in the Crimea and later founded The Poor Servants of God religious order. Victoria Welby Gregory became a noted philosopher and Lady in Waiting to Queen Victoria. Then Lady Angela Forbes from Stamford (1876 – 1950) A British socialite and novelist who took supplies to troops in WW1 opening a canteen for them in France.

PC Edith Smith of course serving in Grantham in 1915 until 1918 becoming the first female police officer given the power of arrest. After Edith came Lilian Wiles who joined the police in 1918 and became the first CID officer in the Metropolitan Police in 1922 retiring in 1949.

Dame Felicity Hill joined the Women's Auxiliary Air force at the outset of WW2 and served as Commander at RAF Spitalgate in 1959, becoming the Director of the Women's Air Force in 1966 and the first female air commodore in 1968.

Judy Campbell's life is described. Her parents lived in Grantham and she went on the stage at the age of 9, later to feature in three of Noel Coward's plays. We are contemplating a Blue plaque to her in the town.

Margaret Thatcher is well known of course. She was born and went to school in Grantham and after to Oxford University. She became MP for Finchley in 1959 and Prime Minister in 1979. Sarah Hogg talks about her in the film.

Courtney Finn.

From the Chairman

At our packed Annual General Meeting on Friday 24 March, we were able to thank Courtney Finn for his many years of service as a committee member and more recently as Chairman of the Society. We wish him well for his retirement and hope that he and Elizabeth will be able to join us at meetings, social events and visits as time permits. I have been touched by messages received wishing me well as your new Chairman and I am honoured to have been elected to follow in Courtney's footsteps.

May I begin this April by sharing my thoughts about ways in which I should like to see us develop in the coming years? Over 1900 people are members on our Facebook page and this is one of the largest Civic Society Facebook communities in England. One task for us is to encourage more of these online members to become paid members who can play a more active part in the Society, by attending our meetings and joining us as we visit other towns and cities to see how they too engage with their built heritage. By widening our membership base, it is my hope that more of Grantham's population will appreciate what our town has to offer and can further develop that 'sense of place' that many of us feel as we understand more about its architecture, its layout and features, including our splendid parks and riverside walks maintained by our local council and the volunteers in RiverCare.

Some residents of the town are newcomers and possibly from more diverse backgrounds. A challenge for us is how best to engage with and welcome those individuals and families to our town. There are also opportunities for the Society to play a part in developing a strong visitor economy which will bring trade to local restaurants, hotels and shops.

We are pleased as a Society to be able to take the lead in National Civic Day (Saturday 17th June) and in the Heritage Open Days in September. This year we will be involved in at least half a dozen free, family-friendly events on

Saturday/Sunday 9/10th and Saturday 16th September. To do this well, we need extra help from members to volunteer to welcome visitors and assist as guides and on information points and bookstalls. So, I am inviting you to offer your services for a few hours at these flagship events. Please email us with your available times.

We also have several more information boards planned for points around the town and are looking to erect additional Blue Plaques to celebrate those women and men with connections to Grantham. Grantham's existing Blue Plaques owe much to Courtney Finn's vision and there is ample scope to build on that legacy. My belief is that, with your active help and involvement, Grantham Civic Society will continue to flourish and its membership will grow.

John Manterfield



AGM talk by Cllr Adam Stokes

On the afternoon of Friday 24th March, prior to the formal business of the AGM held at Grantham Museum, over 40 of our members received a report on current developments in the town from Councillor Adam Stokes, Deputy Leader of South Kesteven District Council. Cllr. Stokes had kindly stood in, at short notice, for Council Leader Kelham Cooke who had been called away on other business.

Cllr. Stokes said that he was proud of the great resilience the town had shown in recovering after the long Covid restrictions. He confirmed that the formation of a new Town Council had been approved in principle at SKDC Council, and that initially it was anticipated that it would comprise 22 members in the four wards representing exactly the areas presently within the surrounding parish boundaries. Some reservations were expressed by audience members about the need for so many Town Councillors, and also what exactly the scope of responsibility for the new Council would be. Cllr. Stokes said that he had some reservations about the number of proposed Councillors himself but that such matters would now be debated and agreed as things moved forward and nothing was yet set in stone. The new Town Council would not actually come into operation until May 2024. The general feeling amongst the audience seemed to be that they agreed in principle with the idea of having a Town Council, which might be able to encourage and instigate more initiatives aimed at the needs of the town rather than the wider Local Authority area, but that they hoped that it would not become just one more layer of bureaucracy.

Cllr. Stokes confirmed that the budget for SKDC for 2023/24 had now been approved at Council and that Councillors were now in purdah, awaiting the outcome of the Council elections on 4th May. He confirmed that funding had been made available to assist with housing and other services needed by refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine. He also said that a pot of money was available for release to support worthwhile community projects and that applications for such funding were encouraged from any interested bodies.

There had also been approval for a digital upgrade to the Town's CCTV system which would enable the creation of clearer images and better monitoring of any problems arising in the areas covered by the system.

A question was asked about why, when tourism is claimed to bring an estimated £168 million to the region each year, we did not any longer have a manned Tourist Information Office in the town, where visitors could find maps, pamphlets and other guidance to support their visit to the area. There was also concern expressed that we had inadequate provision of Conservation Officer services in the area, leading to lack of progress resolving issues with some of our Listed Buildings in the town, such as Bow House and the Barkers Café building, both of which were falling into a poor state of maintenance and were of great concern to the Society. Cllr. Stokes promised to continue to pursue these matters at Council on our behalf.

Also, questions were asked about the fate of the Town's library, which is apparently having to move out of its long-term home on the upper floor of the Morrisons centre. Cllr. Stokes said that particular issue was currently under negotiation, but that there was nothing definite he could confirm on the future of the library at that time. Members of the Society expressed their grave concerns about any possible break up or relocation of the Local Studies collection including the unique Newton collection. These collections had been built up by successive librarians and contained material not readily available elsewhere. The Deputy Leader said he would pass on our concerns. Finally he confirmed that the move of SKDC's offices into the upper floor of the relatively recently built cinema Building on St. Catherine's Road, had now taken place and that the Council were in negotiations with a potential new user for the old offices. He said that the move would overall save the Council money on maintenance and upgrading works, which would have been needed to the old offices, and also, he hoped, enable a better service to be given to residents.

After any final questions, Cllr. Stokes was thanked for his time and consideration in coming to talk to us.

Graham Cook
Vice Chairman

Book stall



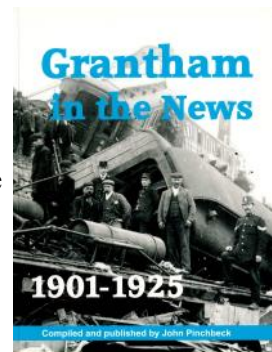
Do you have younger family members or friends?

Why not get a pack of **Grantham Trump cards** ~ 62 cards featuring historic Grantham buildings, each with a bite-sized history, date, listing status and distance from a central point in town. Packs are gheart fun and are available at the amazing price of only £5 per pack. We have a few remaining. UK postage and packing is £2 per pack or they can be collected from me at my house.

Grantham in the News

Volumes cover 1851-75 and 1876-1900 (both A4 format) and then 1901-25, 1926-50, 1951-75 and 1976-2000 (at B4 format). We have a stock of new and used copies (priced between £4 & £8 which cover the major events as reported in the Grantham Journal. They are well illustrated and provide a year by year contemporary account of the town. Please contact me for details.

John Manterfield



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Grantham Civic Society

www.granthamcivicsociety.co.uk

Membership

Membership forms can be obtained from Ruth Crook or downloaded from the website. Membership currently costs **£12 per annum** (£22 for two people at the same address)

Events for the coming months.....

Monday 17 April

Quiz and evening buffet at Belton Park Golf Club

Hosted by James Wiggins

6.30 for 7.00pm start

£12 per head including meal

Names to Graham Cook and payment to Ruth Crook by Monday 10 April please

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Coach departs Meres Leisure Centre **8.30am**

£32 per head

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£32 per head

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PLEASE MAKE ALL PAYMENTS FOR THE EVENTS ABOVE IN ADVANCE OF THE EVENT AND ON THE WEBSITE IF POSSIBLE RATHER THAN BY CHEQUE.

Westgate Hall major works

In answer to a query from Courtney Finn, Claire Saunders at *Invest SK* recently gave the following update on works proposed to Westgate Hall

- *The grant awarded for the works to Westgate Hall is £300,000, which has been awarded through the High Street Heritage Action zone programme. The total value of the grant aided works is £400,000, the remaining £100,000 is being met by the property owner as required match funding.*
- *There are limits to what SKDC are able to issue grants for in terms of both the value and scope of works which are grant aided, for example, we are not able to fund any 'fit out' works.*
- *It is the intention of all involved that the works identified within the application will be completed in their entirety and the building will be brought back to use. It is because of this intention that we were able to award such a sizable grant for the works. Because of time constraints on the funding, we are prioritising those works in the first instance, the remainder of the works will be completed by the property owner and tenant in due course.*
- *The grant which we have awarded for the works at Westgate Hall is part of the package of funding which SKDC has been successful in obtaining in recent years.*

We look forward to this exciting development, for which the scaffolding is already up.

Graham Cook