

## Addingham Civic Society – Marsh Civic Society 2013

A shining gem in Wharfedale. At least, that was the conclusion we came to as we left Addingham after having spoken to members of the team who were responsible for the MUGA. The what? Well, as they say, you have to have something instead of the mouthful which is the Multi-Use Games Area which has won them a Marsh Award!

Addingham is a small village near Ilkley in Yorkshire, with a population of 3,500. The village was mentioned as far back as 875 when the Archbishop of York took refuge there. Since then, Addingham became important for farming and textiles and boasted the world's first successful mill-spun worsted yarn. It is now entering a new phase as a commuter village at the gateway to the Dales.



The Civic Society is quite a revelation. It is a feisty group and as Mike and Keith said, they are not afraid of standing up for themselves. The Society was formed back in 1978 when a pressure group was formed to campaign for the most suitable route for a bypass. They got it. The Committee today is 12 strong and has 5 sub-committees – all with people willing to take responsibility for a project and to put the hours in to achieve it. Wow. They have a monthly newsletter delivered by volunteer posties to the membership of 450 (sometimes nearer 500) and twice a year, delivered to all 2,000 households in the village. Their main aim with this is to let the village know what is going on. This brings all kinds of interesting people out of the woodwork with offers of help and skills – hence the success of the sub committees. The website is recent (oh yes, someone came out of the proverbial with the relevant skills) and communication (and hard work) is their key to success. They hold monthly speaker meetings and when there is something of importance they think the village need to be aware of, organise meetings. They have had Nick Boles to speak this summer because they'd been kicking up about planning. Helps when your local MP – Kris Hopkins - has just been made Housing Minister!

They have sub-committees for Planning, Projects, Communications, Publicity and Events. The Committee is fortunate to have people like a planner, architect, management consultant, geologist and a web designer. There are two retired headteachers who want to take the lead getting involved with the junior school in the village and the secondary school at Ilkley. There is Geoff, who is involved in the Blue Plaque group which is looking to establish a heritage trail. It just seems to roll.

They work with other groups and individuals in the town like the local historians (and have published several books) and the Garden Friends, who tend lots of little landscaped areas around the village. This group won last years' Yorkshire in Bloom (gold) and Britain in Bloom (silver gilt). The general feeling is that this is a village which works together to improve its well-being, inhabitants and to keep it a place to be proud of to live in.



They also work closely with other local CSs and other groups who all have a common theme – the Wharfe Valley.

Vibrant? Just a bit.

Over the last 10 years, quite a lot has been achieved

As a Millennium project, they re-paved George St. This is an unadopted pedestrian street with cottages on either side. The flagging was uneven and dangerous, so the civic society raised money to get it made good. Oh yes – typical Yorkshire folk. They don't use their own money. They ask others for it. They get it from local sources - charities, businesses, individual donors. Simple, eh?



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In 2006 they re-paved around the Old School Room, which is now the community library. It is a Grade II building dating back to 1668 and owned by the PC. Again the surface was uneven so permission was sought and granted to get on with raising the 7-8k needed to carry out the works. The Garden Friends worked with the society to create a garden and water feature to complement the new paving.

In 2008, a new medical centre had been built in the village, designed by Keith's architectural practice. There was a playground on the site (owned by the PC) which had to be moved as part of the planning consent. Sadly, it fell to bits. The civic society got permission to build a new one and got an agreement to do so. It cost 75k and was to be built alongside the medical centre. Off they went with their begging bowls. They approached WREN – Waste Recycling Environmental, Bradford Council and Local Charities, amongst others. The resulting playground is very green, using recycled products.

Then there was the Farfield Tip proposal. A local farmer wanted to fill in a valley next to Addingham golf course with building waste and cover it with top soil. This would have destroyed the valley (and set a dangerous precedent for other Yorkshire valleys). It would not have been a valley anymore – so the local civic groups banded together with neighbouring and national organisations (like the CPRE) to save this local valley – and won.

Chelker – an existing wind turbine farm nearby on land leased by Kelda, a part of Yorkshire Water. The plan was to replace the existing turbines at the end of their lives with even bigger new ones. Turner had painted a landscape from nearby Bolton Abbey across the valley. The CS super-imposed wind turbines on to a copy of the painting and took it to the local Ilkley Gazette (which prints almost everything they give it) with a very appropriate title. With a lot more hard work to oppose this, they won. It was the first example of a UK wind farm being dismantled.

Now.....excavated spoil from the Health Centre, which had had to be built into the hillside, had been placed just above the playground on the hillside. There had been complaints in the village that the children were kicking balls around in inappropriate places and causing a nuisance. But there was no space set aside or appropriate for them to do this. So, the idea was born that the spoil be levelled and made in to a surface suitable for a multi-purpose games area. Simple! Keith had done a lot of designs for sports facilities so came up with one to suit the area. Tendering took place to the spec - 125k required. Bradford Council granted Planning Permission and the society got a lease as Trustees which they will transfer to a newly created body, Addingham Sports Council once it has been established, to run the MUGA.

So, off they went again..... WREN gave about 40k, YORVENTURE about 50k. This paid for the surfacing and fencing and they then raised the 25k from the usual local sources, donations in kind from various businesses and individual donations. Local businesses are supported by the civic society and vice versa. People donated anonymously. The village pulled together to get something for its youngsters. They now have a safe floodlit space for 5 a side football, netball, basketball, tennis and cricket practice that is also fully accessible by disabled people.

Now, having achieved the build, there is still money to be raised to landscape etc. But that will be done.

The idea is now to get a Sports Council set up. There is a need to involve other people where the CS has a presence, but where a self-sustaining group would operate the management. Representatives for this Council would hopefully include the different sports groups and a teacher and governor from the schools. Subsidised and free coaching is already being given – and they are looking for grants to extend the football and other coaching for youngsters!

Addingham Civic Society regard themselves as enablers. They are far more than this. They are achievers.