



Join Civic Voice

Be part of a national movement

Who are we?

Civic Voice is the national charity for the civic movement. We work to make the places where everyone lives more attractive and distinctive. We set up in 2010 and will celebrate our 10th anniversary on 17th April 2020. Since we began, we have been joined by 262 community based civic and amenity societies with over 76,000 individual members. You will find us campaigning with local volunteers, speaking out in the media, undertaking research, building partnerships and promoting civic pride.

Civic Voice is the national authoritative voice for the civic and conservation movement with members in 70% of local authority areas. We are proud of our record of achievement and our approach. By engaging and working with civic societies, we give the civic movement a national voice. With the support of our members, we can continue to make the case that the views of civic societies should be heard on national level.

Be part of a national movement:

1. National voice

Civic Voice is the only national organisation that speaks up for the civic and conservation movement and campaigns on issues that cannot be changed locally. Our strategy is built on being a national voice with a strong local presence and making a difference for most of civic societies, based on their feedback to us.

It was a Civic Voice campaign that persuaded the Government to amend its proposals to extend permitted development rights, securing a reduction in the scale of the changes. It was a Civic Voice campaign that led to the Government putting a greater focus on 'community engagement' and 'design' into the new National Planning Policy Framework (2018).

We use our Parliamentary meetings to bring MPs and key audiences in the sector together on issues that are impacting the civic society movement. Events planned for 2019 include:

- Public Participation in the Planning System (27th March 2019)
- Building Better: The Community Perspective (7th May 2019)
- England's Favourite Conservation Area (18th June 2019)

Griff Rhys Jones is our President and an excellent ambassador and champion for the civic movement. Other notable individuals who have become Vice-presidents of Civic Voice include Laura Sandys, Baroness Andrews, Sir Terry Farrell and former Chair, Freddie Gick.

2. Networking, conference and events

Civic Voice is about co-ordinating a movement but not controlling what individual groups do. Our campaigns are nominated for and voted on by our members. Getting the most from Civic Voice requires groups to put in. The best way to shape our work is to engage on a regional and national level, where you can meet and network with groups with similar issues.

It seems hard to imagine now, but when the civic movement gathered together in 2009 in Blackpool, it was the first national conference of the civic movement since 1978. We now have an annual conference as the highlight of our calendar of events. The national conference is always delivered in partnership with a local group. If you go to one event a year with Civic Voice, make the national conference the event you attend. This is a once a year opportunity to hear from leading motivational speakers and be inspired by examples of civic societies across the country.

'Whilst the initiative to do the Conservation Area Appraisals came from our long-term relationship with our local planning department, the desire to make our toolkit available and to publicise our work resulted from the motivation that I get by attending the Civic Voice conventions. Furthermore, the attention we got would not have occurred were it not for your Civic Day initiatives to celebrate Conservation Areas.'

David White, The Deal Society

3. Leading campaigns for the civic movement

In 2017, the country celebrated 50 years since the introduction of the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Civic Voice marked this anniversary by running a national campaign called The Big Conservation Conversation. This campaign was voted on by Civic Voice members in 2016 and again confirmed in 2017 as the priority for the civic movement. We have a dedicated website www.bigconservationconversation.com which brings together our research, case studies and campaign resources for Civic Voice members.

The ground-breaking Skeffington Report, 'People and Planning Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning' was published by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government in 1969. The Skeffington Report wanted to assess how the public might become more involved in the creation of local development plans. This was in response to the belief that the Town and Country Planning Act created a largely 'top down' system. 50 years on from Skeffington, Civic Voice wants to understand why we are still having the same debate? We will be leading this national debate for the next three years.

4. Our future

We set up in 2010 and will celebrate our 10th anniversary on 17th April 2020. In the coming 12 months we will hold more events, issue more press release and statements, speak at more conferences and be even more visual than we have been in the past 10 years.

We will be reviewing our website and communications, capitalising on our work around the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission and campaign for more meaningful engagement in the planning system. We will inspire more individuals to be active citizens through National Civic Day as we continue to make the case for Conservation Areas and the historic environment. In our advocacy and campaigning, we will be the voice of the civic and conservation movement.

Join us

Together, we can build a movement that combines community action with a sense of place for the benefit of everyone. Our vision is simple, 'A country where every individual can say "I care about where I live"'.

We hope you will join Civic Voice as an individual supporter, civic society, associate member or business. Help us to make put communities at the heart of placemaking.