

Kevin Trickett – Marsh Civic Volunteer 2013

“For me, Wakefield is the centre of the universe: it’s the place I always come back to”.

This is a quote from Kevin Trickett, who has been President and Chair of Wakefield Civic Society since March 2002 and who has worked tirelessly since then to create a dynamic, modern, influential and proactive Society.

Kevin originally joined the Society in 1989, having been on one of their coach trips. Having become a member, he was swiftly invited to join the committee, which he did in 1990. Gradually, he began to play a more active role in the Society’s affairs but was still rather surprised (and not a little flattered) when they asked him to become President in 2002.



On becoming President, Kevin knew that the Society faced problems - with a declining and ageing membership, falling income and a diminishing appeal (he was still the youngest member of the committee), Kevin realised he had to do something significant to keep the Society going.

He went out and bought a flip chart and stand, packets of Post-It Notes and marker pens and invited the whole committee to a brainstorming session he instigated a root and branch review of everything the Society did and the way they went about it. They emerged from the meeting with a set of agreed priorities and a change of direction. Kevin organised an application for Lottery funding and the Society received a grant for nearly £5,000 to pay for laptops, printers and a projector. This meant that the Society could now start producing professional-looking documentation (a new membership leaflet quickly followed), make use of email, and, courtesy of the projector and laptops, “take the show on the road” by giving talks to community groups, council officials and other stakeholders to promote the Society’s work to a wider audience. They also set up a new website to bring the Society into the 21st Century. All this was done under a new brand with a distinctive logo and strapline – ‘Building interest in Wakefield’ - that Kevin ensures is used on all their publications and marketing materials.

Kevin remembers that this was all rather challenging for some of the committee at the time – yet they backed him 100% and have continued to do so ever since. He is quick to acknowledge that the Society could not have travelled so far without the support of an enthusiastic and dedicated team.

One aspect of the Society’s funding that Kevin was keen to address was the level of membership fees. These were far too low and had not been increased for some time. In fact, the subscriptions were no longer covering costs and the Society was losing money. So, subscriptions were raised (with the approval of the membership) and a new type of tiered corporate membership introduced (Gold at £500 per annum, Silver at £250 and Bronze at £75. This helped to put the Society back on its feet financially and enabled it to do more things than in the immediate past.

Kevin now likes to think that the Society is firing on all cylinders. “It has taken us some time but we now have an ambitious annual programme of events, excursions (yes, we still do the coach trips), exhibitions and guided walks. Having a varied programme helps to attract public attention and people turn up to see what we are doing in increasing numbers – and then we try to get them to join. In fact, we have recruited 40 new members this year alone and the year hasn’t ended yet.



“And” he added, “I’m no longer the youngest member of the committee!”.

To an outsider, the Society certainly does look very impressive. From its publications, such as its Annual Reports and Accounts

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(which have been produced in a glossy magazine format since 2009), through to its booklet guides to Wakefield's architecture, public artwork and blue plaques, everything the Society does looks professional.

Until last year, Kevin worked full time and had a busy and demanding job that often meant he worked away from home. He points out that, if the majority of the committee had not been on email, he would have found it very hard to manage things remotely but using modern technology had made things much easier.

Kevin is really pleased with the progress the Society has made in recent years and is always on the lookout for new things to do. As well as being fully involved in helping to organise and promote Heritage Open Days, the Society also supports the local festivals such as the Festival of Food, Drink and Rhubarb and the Wakefield Lit Fest. But they also run their own events, including an innovative monthly Dining Club and an annual Design Awards scheme as well as taking full part in the Wakefield Artwalk. Kevin has also led the Society into the world of social media making good use of Facebook and Twitter, where the Society now has around 900 followers.

Kevin's commitment to the civic movement doesn't end with his involvement in Wakefield Civic Society. He is a former trustee of the Civic Trust and helped to set up Civic Voice. In addition, he is also in his third year as Chair of the Yorkshire and Humber Association of Civic Societies (YHACS), an organisation with 45 member societies that meet once a quarter at different locations across the region. Kevin likes to encourage society representatives to get together the evening before to eat out at a restaurant in whichever town or city YHACS is holding its meeting the following day. This has to be done at the members' own expense, of course, but Kevin says it helps to build relationships and develop friendships across the movement as well as contributing to a really relaxed and sociable feeling to the business meetings that follow. As Kevin points out, more business often gets done over the tea and coffee breaks than in the formal part of the meeting, with people sharing ideas and making plans to visit each other.

Kevin demonstrates commitment, passion and interest in his subject. He believes that to be a successful leader you have to act in a way that is professional, fair and open but, with a demanding programme of events to organise and projects to oversee, you have to have good management skills and also to be something of a plate spinner – keeping your eye on all that is going on to make sure nothing is allowed to fall off the timetable. It is no wonder, then, that he has won the 2013 Marsh Civic Volunteer Award. Run in partnership with Civic Voice, the award recognises the outstanding contribution made by an individual volunteer to the Civic movement.



Kevin reckons that there are 3 things every Society needs – Members, Money and Momentum. The members provide the money but the committee has to provide the momentum by keeping things going and trying out new ideas. But to keep going, civic societies need to do three things: Stay real, Stay relevant – and Stay around!

Wise words: sounds just the right kind of medicine to keep a society healthy and fit!