



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 celebrated our 10th anniversary on 17th April 2020. Since we began, we have been joined by 269 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 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.

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.

Leading campaigns for the civic movement

Civic societies have been clear to us which themes you want us campaign on:

- 1, To bring new life to high streets/town centres
- 2, To give communities more influence in planning decisions
- 3, To enhance and protect conservation areas

We accept that our high streets, town and city centres are currently facing acute challenges and they will need to adjust and, in some cases, contract in response to changes in shopping and leisure habits. However, Civic Voice believes this needs to be done in a planned and curated way by local communities through their local planning policies, not by allowing the market to decide in a random and potentially counterproductive manner. Your support for our campaigns will be essential in 2021 as we prepare for the Planning Bill.

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.

3. Our future

We set up in 2010 and celebrated our 10th anniversary on 17th April 2020. 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 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.