



Bequest Funding Projects
Coal Aston

Dronfield Civic Society

Caring for our local environment since 1989

Web: www.dronfieldcivicsociety.org.uk

Email: enquiries@dronfieldcivicsociety.org.uk

Welcome to the April newsletter

During 2025 the former Chair and Treasurer of the Civic Society gave notice of their intention to step down and subsequently initiated a process to close the Society. Fortunately enough people came forward to form an Acting Committee to enable our work and ongoing commitments to continue.

The Acting Committee members will need to be formally elected and we plan to do this at a Relaunch Meeting on Wednesday June 3rd at 7:30 p.m. at St Andrew's Church. It will be an open to all, informal meeting. The future of the Society requires support and depends on people offering some of their time and ideas.

Despite the difficulties of last year, your Civic Society has continued to be active across Dronfield and district. Members will be aware from previous newsletters that we have the responsibility to manage and administer a very generous Bequest from Mr and Mrs GM Rodgers, who were Civic Society Life Members and residents of Coal Aston.

In this issue we update you on the various projects the Bequest has funded as well as all the civic news since we were last able to produce a newsletter back in the autumn of last year.

DCS 'Acting' Committee

Issue 58

April 2026

We are a small team of individuals with interests in planning, heritage, conservation and environmental enhancement with a desire to help make the town a more pleasant place to live, work in and visit.

We invite you to help us secure a future for Dronfield Civic Society.

Dronfield Civic Society

Caring for our local environment since 1989

Bulb Planting, Litter Clearance, Environmental Projects, Planning Matters,



Heritage Protection, Road Safety Issues, Street Scene Improvement

Making our local area more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive

Relaunch Meeting

Dronfield Civic Society was founded in 1989 and over the decades it has helped to make our town a more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive place to live.

At the end of 2025, the future of the Society was in doubt when the Chair and Treasurer stepped down.

Fortunately people came forward and an Acting Committee is now managing ongoing commitments.

The future of the Society requires support and depends on people offering some of their time and ideas.

We are holding an informal, open to all, relaunch meeting to see whether there is enough interest to keep the Society running and if there is, to set it on a course for the future.

Please come along on Wednesday June 3rd 7:30 p.m. at St Andrew's Church Pentland Road.

Free entry, refreshments & short AGM to reset committee positions.

The future of the Society depends on you.

For further information please contact dcsmembership@gmail.com or enquiries@dronfieldcivicsociety.org.uk



YOUR CIVIC SOCIETY RELIES ON VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP TO KEEP OUR TOWN AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO LIVE. HELP US TO KEEP THIS SHARED SPACE BEAUTIFUL FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. JOIN US!

It helps us to save on postage and printing costs if you can receive this newsletter by email, so please let us have your current email address.

A Brief History of the Civic Movement

The work of a civic society varies according to location and is often determined by the needs of a local community.

It is important that we care for the natural and built environment whilst meeting the demands and challenges of today.



Civic Voice is the national organisation for the civic movement in England. We make places more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. We promote civic pride.

We advocate for a strong community voice and better planning policy at both national and local level.

Over the last 170 years, many thousands of people have volunteered their time and energy to improve where they live. Pride of place has motivated the members of hundreds of Civic Societies across the country to conserve, restore and improve their local environments particularly following the Second World War.

In the early days the work often involved practical projects to improve local amenities and create recreational areas like parks, manage traffic and sometimes to redesign street furniture.

During the 1960s and 1970s there was a need to balance regeneration with conservation which it may be fair to say was not always successful in terms of architectural style.

Care for the historic environment has been at the core of many of the activities of the civic movement. When the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 came about, it allowed areas of special architectural or historic interest to be designated as Conservation Areas. The Act also helped to connect local authorities with voluntary groups as part of a democratic planning process.

In 2010 the formation of Civic Voice was a major landmark event giving local societies a voice at national level.

Over the course of its history, the civic society movement has demonstrated an enduring presence and a commitment to improving the character of towns and cities by championing local distinctiveness through community involvement.

The extent to which civic societies are able to play this role in the future very much depends on the continued willingness of individuals to participate.

Dronfield Civic Society was founded in 1989 following concerns about traffic management in the town. Over the decades it has widened its scope with projects including bulb planting, litter clearance, tree planting and heritage restoration. With a keen focus on planning matters, it is now recognised by the local authority as a consultee.

Time for the Town

A few years ago Dronfield was voted the ninth best place to live in England. Whilst conversations on social media comment on how friendly its people are, that it has excellent schools, great cafes and well-equipped parks, we know there is still room for improvement. Your Civic Society would like to foster a sense of civic pride in our town. So can you spare 'Time for the Town'? Our Civic Activity programme will be coming soon and detailed on our website.

Can you spare some time to help us tackle the litter hot spots? Our 'Pick & Mix', open to all litter picks will aim to be a fun, social activity where after the pick, we can chat over a cuppa. **Can you spare some time to plant bulbs and shrubs in and around Coal Aston?** This work will begin in the autumn.

Are you interested in helping us manage our three K6 Book Exchanges at Holmesdale Shops, Falcon Road and Eckington Road? We need a team of people keen to restore these heritage features and keep them looking good with regular cleaning, tidying and clearing out the damaged or surplus books.

If you can spare **Time for the Town**, or you know someone who would be interested in helping with any of the above civic activities, please contact us at the address on the header and we will connect with you when our civic activity timetable has been finalised.

You don't need to be a Civic Society member to take part, but by taking part you may decide to become one.



Images right: Robert Hardcastle & David Hallam have given so much time to improve our town

The Rodgers' Bequest

Dronfield Civic Society is responsible for administering a most generous bequest from Mr & Mrs GM Rodgers to fund improvements in Coal Aston. Secretary Phil Shaddock has put together this information about the couple.

Michael and Pamela lived in recent years at The Beeches on Firthwood Road, Coal Aston. According to neighbours, they were very friendly, outgoing people. They married in 1966 and had no children. They did not attend any churches in Coal Aston, but were regulars at nearby St James Church, Norton.

Michael was born 1936 in Bakewell, where he lived for most of his early life. He was the son of Geoffry and Madge (Garrett), and grandson of Sheffield cutler Joseph Rodgers (maker of the famous Norfolk Knife). He was one of twins with a sister Margaret. (Geoffry) Michael, aged 87 years, of Coal Aston, died peacefully on 19th August 2023 in hospital. He was the beloved and ever-loving husband of the late Pamela who died on 29th July 2020 aged 76. Pamela was the only daughter of Ted and Iris Stratford of Topley. Michael and Pamela joined the Civic Society in 2000 as Life Members.

Michael's solicitor wrote to the Civic Society in January 2024 to say that he had left £10,000 to the Civic Society specifically requesting that bulbs should be planted together with a plaque in recognition of Michael and Pamela's long association with

Bequest Funding Updates—St Philip's Church



In the latter part of last year, Secretary Phil made us aware of an improvement project at St Philip's Church in Coal Aston that he thought may be suitable to receive some of the bequest funds.

The front garden area was scheduled to be redesigned to create three terraces to accommodate the sloping ground. We initially agreed to fund two benches made of recyclable HDPE which means no need for annual treatments such as staining or painting. In due course and alongside other sites in Coal Aston which are being improved, these benches will be fitted with a stainless steel plaque remembering the couple.

We have been asked for a contribution towards plants for the terraces which our committee will consider pending a planting plan and indicative costings.

Garden next to Coal Aston Methodist Chapel

The garden adjacent to Coal Aston Methodist Chapel was the first area to receive bequest funds for a replacement arch, bulbs and sundries for plant maintenance.

The land belongs to the Town Council but it has been looked after by volunteers from the Chapel for a number of years by arrangement and on the understanding that it returns to the Town Council if volunteers are unable to continue maintaining it.

Currently it is cared for in the main by Coal Aston resident Sylvia Thompstone. The garden is quite small and well-established with a variety of plants. A triangular planter is in need of repair or replacement, but the main problem is a lack of volunteers to help maintain this 'community garden' as it is known. Members of the Civic Society committee have offered to help with pruning and mowing the small areas of grass.



If you can spare some time to help maintain this garden, please email us at enquiries@dronfieldcivicsociety.org.uk

Bequest Funding Updates

Coal Aston Village Hall Wildlife Gardeners are a small group of volunteers who meet once a fortnight to maintain and improve areas around the Village Hall. The gardeners submitted their suggestions and plans to us for some of the bequest funding. The plans had several elements including a small pond, a community orchard, bulb planting, a wildflower area and seating as the area behind the Hall is popular with local walkers and the starting point for the Dronfield Round Walk. The gardeners have now completed two elements of their planned work. The bequest funded a pond liner, plants and a beautiful hand-crafted pond cover made by Dave Howarth.

We are sure you will agree that this looks amazing!



You may remember that the gardeners had identified several sites in Coal Aston for further bulb planting. The sites are a mix of small and narrow or larger wider areas of road side verges. Martin Hanrahan has been co-ordinating with the Town Council to check ownership responsibilities for verge cutting, so that we can be sure the identified sites are appropriate and the bulbs can flourish.

If you would like to volunteer to help out with bulb planting in Coal Aston in the autumn, please drop us a line at the enquiries address on the header.

Planting dates, times and meeting places will be advertised on the Civic Society website later in the year.



One of the sites identified for improvement on the corner of Eckington Road and Drury Lane.



The second element to create a mini community orchard at the rear of the Village Hall took place in January despite the very wet weather. Acting Chair Martin Hanrahan helped the gardeners to plant and stake the new fruit trees. He commented on the good quality of the soil and the ease of digging the holes for the new trees.

We look forward to seeing the fruits of their labour!

The trees include 3 varieties of apple, Egremont Russet, Scrumptious and Keswick Codlin, a plum called Marjorie's Seedling and a Concorde pear.

The bequest was also able to fund five metal tree guards to protect the new trees from damage and we anticipate being able to fund a picnic table with plaque, a sleeper bench, plug plants for the proposed wildflower area and more bulbs for the embankment at the side of the Village Hall.



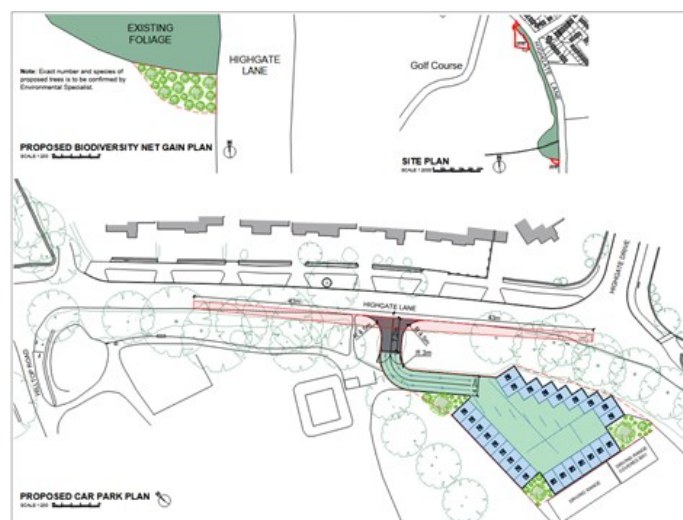
Highgate Lane— Both Sides of the Argument

Since our last newsletter, it has been fairly quiet on the local planning front but we continue to monitor the weekly NEDDC planning applications for our town.

We were interested to note an application by Hallowes Golf Club for an overspill car park in an area opposite the properties on Highgate Lane. The land is part of the golf course and would be partly screened by trees, but we regard it as an urbanising extension into the Green Belt. Regular walkers will know that the course abuts open farmland with extensive views across the Drone valley.

The application has raised objections from residents because Highgate Lane is very narrow. Some welcome the cars belonging to golf course users being in a car park rather than parked outside their houses but others have expressed concerns about the increase in the volume of traffic and traffic movements that a car park for 25 vehicles would bring. It is likely that head lights may shine directly into properties given the position of the exit. Pedestrian safety is also a concern given the proximity to the popular footpath leading to Ouzel Bank and beyond down to the Peak greenway.

The Highway Authority requested a deferral of the decision based on the need for more information about the size of parking bays and dimensions of visibility splays. These were supplied to the authority. At the time of writing, the application is pending a decision.



Hallowes Golf Club is clearly a thriving facility which is good for sport and leisure in the town.

We felt that the existing car park to the rear of the club house could be better utilised to accommodate additional vehicles, in part because an area has been given over to long standing marketing of Stratstone BMW vehicles and also the motorised gate arrangement means potential parking areas are unusable. We calculated that the area of the proposed overspill car park would be in excess of 300m² based on standard size parking bays and room for manoeuvring. Our view was that the proposals would have a detrimental visual impact on the character and appearance of the location in the Green Belt as well as negatively impacting the amenity for residents and walkers.

Whilst a car park could be regarded as engineering works in the Green Belt which are often allowed, we question whether the 'Very Special Circumstances' necessary to grant permission have been demonstrated.

Calling All K6 Enthusiasts

It is now more than a decade since the Civic Society purchased the last three remaining K6 telephone kiosks in Dronfield. We bought them for £1 each from BT to rescue them from removal. Over the years a few volunteers have helped David Hallam to keep them tidy and in good repair.

Now, two of the kiosks—Coal Aston and the one at Holmesdale shops are in need of major renovation to bring them back to a good standard as Book Exchanges.

We hope repair work will begin on the Holmesdale kiosk as soon as the weather improves. Both kiosks require replacement polycarbonate glazing panels, repairs to the doors, the hire of a generator to remove layers of old paint, full paint kits, brushes, thinners and cleaning products.

Whilst it has been worthwhile to retain these iconic heritage features, a minority of people have seen fit to spoil them by dumping old suitcases and unwanted magazines, and by having post Christmas clear outs leaving bags of books on the small floor area of the kiosk.

So we are calling all K6 enthusiasts.

Can you spare some time to help David Hallam begin work on the Holmesdale K6 when the weather improves? If so please get in touch using our enquiries address on the header. Once restored, we will need a dedicated team of volunteers to regularly tidy the shelves, remove unwanted material and damaged books, clean the glazing panels and remove weeds from around each of the three kiosks.

We would like to thank David and Janet Hallam for continuing to keep an eye on our Book Exchanges.



Past and Present - Educating and Inspiring – Supporting Local Schools

Many years ago the Civic Society ran a very successful bird box making project with school children. Former committee member David Hallam provided pupils with kits to put together and decorate. The boxes were sited either in the school grounds or in local woodland. The project was extremely popular and enjoyable and some schools also tried creating spaces for hedgehog hibernation.

At the end of last year, we decided to reconnect with local primary schools by making the generous offer of some funding to be used for environmental projects. The schools were given a deadline to get their proposals in for consideration before the end of November last year. Four schools responded. They were Lenthall Infant and Nursery, William Levick, Holmesdale Infant and Stonelow Junior. We can now reveal what the four schools are planning to do with the funds.

Holmesdale Infant School has a large natural space that they try to use to its full potential. The sensory garden created some years ago is in need of restoration. The area will be especially beneficial for pupils with sensory needs and being outside, it will bring added benefits that indoor areas cannot fulfil. Plans also include extending a small wildflower meadow to attract bees and other insects whilst at the same time helping pupils to learn about the importance of habitats for nature. The funds will allow these areas to be defined by fencing as well as the purchase of plants and seeds.

William Levick School would like to use the funds to purchase three mobile planters (on wheels) so that classes can have their own growing areas. The planters will be used to cultivate pollinator-friendly flowering plants and a variety of vegetables, helping children to learn about biodiversity, sustainability and healthy eating in a hands-on way.

Stonelow Junior School would use the funding to create 'zones' on the school field for children to journey through a series of activities to improve their lunch-time provision. They include small world, scooters, den-building and a sandpit. Funds will be used to create a quiet sensory zone where children can talk, read and connect with others within nature.

Lenthall Infant and Nursery School have a proposal for a community, sensory and wild garden providing a sustainable sanctuary for learning and well-being. The project aims to transform an under-used area of the school grounds into a vibrant sensory and wild garden that will benefit pupils, families and the wider community. The initiative will enhance biodiversity and green space, promote sustainability and environmental awareness, support mental well-being and inclusive education and strengthen community links through shared use and volunteering.

The school supplied us with a sketch plan including tree logs to create a story circle, bird boxes, bug hotels, a water feature, wind chimes, a sensory garden zone and wildflower area.



Did this work spark an interest in wildlife and the environment for these youngsters in later life?



Sensory gardens are designed to stimulate all five senses—sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste—offering calming, therapeutic spaces that improve mental health, support educational development in children, and provide accessible nature experiences. Key features include aromatic plants, tactile surfaces, calming sounds, and accessible, engaging layouts.

We are extremely pleased that four schools responded to our funding offer. All we ask in return is that they provide us with regular updates about their various projects which we will pass on through our regular newsletters.

Drop-ins, Focus Groups & Consultations—The Emerging Local Plan

North East Derbyshire Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

19th June - 14th August 2025



Following the Issues and Options Consultation on the Local Plan last summer, NEDDC commissioned Arc4 to run focus groups in the four main towns of Dronfield, Eckington, Killamarsh and Clay Cross.

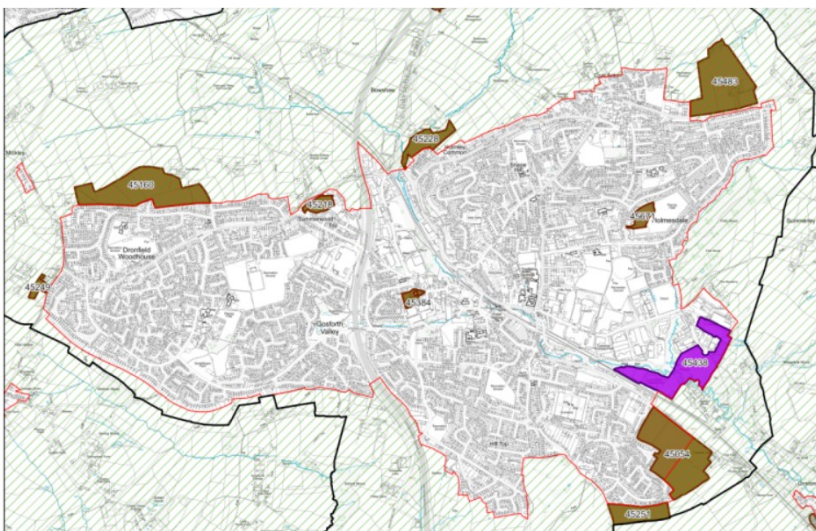
The first one was held on November 25th in the Courtyard Room at Hall Barn where thirteen members of the public from Dronfield and across the district had booked a place. Two civic society committee members attended the event.

Perhaps the most important question for discussion was where in the district new development should be located. This related to 7 possible options identified within the Consultation including within the four main towns, on the edges of Sheffield or Chesterfield, at strategic sites or in smaller towns and villages.

More than 500 people responded to that particular question in the Consultation with the most favoured option being around the edges of Chesterfield with many commenting on the significant availability of former industrial brownfield sites. A fifth of respondents favoured development at what are known as Strategic Sites where housing and the necessary infrastructure should be built out together on large sites, almost like new settlements. Just 13% of respondents thought the four main towns should have further development, which would most likely be on their edges extending into countryside or the Green Belt as in the case of Dronfield. Very few respondents thought that both large and small villages would be appropriate as locations for housing development. The District Council seem to be pressing ahead with the mandatory target of 12,000 homes over the 20-year plan period, even though many questions were asked about who the houses are for and the fact that population growth in the district has been relatively small at 3% over the last few years. The conclusion was that despite a majority of respondents not wanting more development in and around the 4 main towns and unsurprisingly no release of Green Belt, the only way to deliver such a colossal target of 12,000 houses will be across all 7 options including some Green Belt release.

At the time of writing, another consultation is running until the end of April. NEDDC has now produced their list of Refined Sites from all the land submitted last year and are seeking comments on these sites. For Dronfield there are nine sites with a total of 862 dwellings. The number of dwellings on each site is based on nearby housing densities. The sites are at Burns Rise for 240 dwellings and you may remember that part of this site was allocated last time but it now has an adjoining area of land. Others sites are at Dronfield Woodhouse (190), Stubley Lane (40 already allocated), Holmley Common (60), Meadow Grange (15), independent housing for older people linked to the care home, a site off Highgate Lane (100), Manor Bungalows (30), Gladys Buxton site for 27 which already has planning permission and the former DR2 site at Coal Aston (160) which a Planning Inspector disallowed last time largely due to proximity to the Moss Valley. There is also a 9 hectare extension to Callywhite Lane as an employment site.

Several meetings and drop-in sessions have been organised by the Town Council and district Council to help residents respond to the consultation and to understand where the refined sites are. We hope that you have been able to attend and respond within the seven week consultation period. Specific local knowledge about the sites is vital to put to the council at this stage. The refined sites will be judged against a Green Belt Review which is ongoing, but the outcome of that will not be known until later in the year. We won't get the opportunity to comment on the Green Belt Review, but the next public consultation will be on the Publication Draft of the Local Plan, likely in the autumn.



Since the consultation in 2025, we are pleased to note that several sites between Dronfield and Sheffield are not being progressed. Some sites in Unstone Crow Lane, Apperknowle and the Handleys are also excluded. But as can be seen from the map, many areas around our town which are located in the Green Belt could potentially go forward for allocation.

Whilst we don't expect all 862 dwellings to be built in the immediate future, we all need to be aware of the impact large scale housing development could have on the town, particularly because the three large sites are all 'town edge' sites which mean increased car journeys on already busy roads like the B6057 through Dronfield Bottom and others such as Green Lane, Stubley and Wreakes Lane.

Litter Pick—with the 5th Dronfield Hilltop Cubs

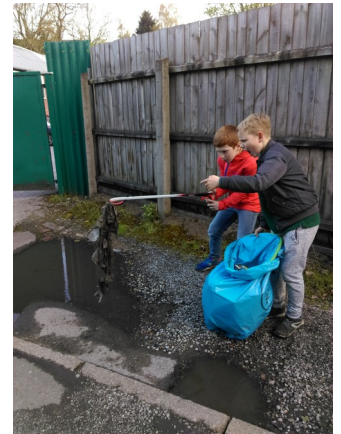
On a number of occasions in the past, the Civic Society has helped the local Cub Pack to organise a litter pick in the town. Thanks to former committee member David Hallam, who is always on hand to collect together all the equipment needed and organise collection of the bags of litter afterwards, it is a worthwhile and enjoyable experience for the youngsters to take part in.

The cubs usually divide into two groups with a leader to take them safely around the paths near Cliffe Park and onto Mill Lane which is often a litter hotspot. The cubs work in pairs with one holding the bag and the other using the picker. They then change over.

The litter pick is due to take place on April 29th from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Committee members will also be on hand to help at the event and with permission we hope to be able to take photographs of the Cubs and the litter they manage to collect.

Thanks to Chris Smith for getting in touch via our website to ask if we could support this initiative.

There's another litter hotspot just waiting to be tackled at the big lay-by between Unstone and Dronfield. If there is enough interest, we anticipate being able to gain access to the field below where much of the rubbish has accumulated. The amount of rubbish we managed to collect from there last time was quite unbelievable. Keep an eye on our website for dates, times and meeting places for our next big litter pick.



Civic Voice—Speaks for Civic Societies at National Level Making Places Better—Together

OUR PURPOSE



- **vibrant** high streets and **excellent** amenities
- **living** heritage and history
- **effective** climate adaptation and **sustainable** nature recovery
- **strong** community voice and **better** planning
- affordable, sustainable, and comfortable **housing** in keeping with local character
- **vibrant** community development

...and much more!

OUR OBJECTIVES



- To develop a strategy for **growth** in 2025-2030, building a stronger civic movement with a measurable impact
- To build a more **diverse** movement which truly represents our communities
- To **amplify** community voice to ensure better policy and planning decisions in the places we care about
- To **demonstrate** how genuine community engagement and codesign **builds better places - together.**

OUR ACTIVITIES



We are the national membership organisation for hundreds of civic and amenity societies and groups around England.

We support our local member societies in growing their organisations and their positive impact through training, advice, support, networking, signposting and provision of shared resources.

We develop and advocate policies for better places, aiming to influence policy at national, regional and local levels.



Dronfield Civic Society wants to play its part in this national movement to make
Dronfield a Better Place— Together
So please come along to our Relaunch Meeting on June 3rd.



Dronfield Civic Society is sponsored by Stauff UK Ltd. Experts in the UK hydraulic industry since 1977 www.stauff.co.uk



With thanks to John Morris of Stauff for supporting Dronfield Civic Society