



Hythe Civic Society

Annual General Meeting – 28th May 2024

ITEM 4: FORWARD PLAN 2023-2027

This Forward Plan review and rolling plan, following the approval of the first plan last year, provides a position statement for 2023-24 and indications of work for the coming and future years (to 2027). It is intended to represent and convey the principal aims and targets for the Society over the medium term. It is set out in two parts:

Part One: Delivering on The Society's Charitable Objects (the purposes of the Society) – outwardly focused

Part Two: Delivering Effective Operations and Governance – internally focused

Mostly, the Plan reflects current and planned ongoing activities, but also contains some new areas of focus. Approval by charities of a forward plan is strongly recommended by the Charity Commission and is now built into the Society's Constitution. With routine oversight by the Executive Committee and the reporting of progress to members the Plan will help to ensure the Society maintains a coherent and purposeful sense of direction.

Recommendation

That Members be asked to note the 2023-24 Position Statements (in bold type throughout), and support and approve the Forward Plan 2024-2027.

Hythe Civic Society FORWARD PLAN (2023 – 2026) – PART ONE - DELIVERING ON OUR SOCIETY’S CHARITABLE OBJECTS

SOCIETY OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Measures of Success
Promote high standards of planning and development across Hythe	Maintain scrutiny of and input to significant planning applications – especially for listed buildings, proposals affecting the Conservation area, and more major applications – canvassing society members, where practical, for their views.	y	y	y	y	<p>Good engagement with the society’s membership with comments submitted to HTC and FHDC as appropriate within timescales. Positive outcomes secured.</p> <p>2023-24 Position. We maintained regular scrutiny and provided comment to FHDC. Of particular note were: comments regarding the former Aldi site/Spanton Crescent/and pre-planning discussions and comments made at a meeting with the Imperial Hotel’s representatives regarding the potential development of the Imperial Golf Course.</p>
	Hythe Civic Award – open the scheme to Non-Members		y	y	y	<p>Increased award nominations</p> <p>2023-2024 Position. Delayed until 2024-25</p>
Inform our public about Hythe’s heritage, history and its natural and built environments, and in these subjects more generally	Maintain regular monthly cycle of Talks (September – June). Feedback sought from attendees. Aim to increase the number of locally specific topics.	y	Y	y	y	<p>The programme is delivered as planned. Average attendances of 65 achieved. Positive feedback received.</p> <p>2023-2024 Position. Talk held each month (September to May). One speaker cancellation, but a substitute speaker found. Average attendance of approximately 60 per talk, which is encouraging. Some sounds issues to resolve.</p>
	Exhibition and events – aim for at least one exhibition and a ‘Civic Day’ event each year. Consideration to be given	y	Y May Library, and possibly	Y 80 th Anniversary Events Programme	y	<p>Good feedback received via a Comments Book/Feedback survey. Attracts new membership applications.</p>

SOCIETY OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Measures of Success
	to the purchase of a waterproof outdoor gazebo for external events.		the Venetian Fete			2023-24 Position. Very successful May 2023 Exhibition at Hythe Library 'Through the Lens'. Many pages of positive comments with requests for another. May 2024 similar exhibition underway. Gazebo purchase still under consideration.
	Maintain the regular cycle of guided 'Town Walks' during the summer.	y	Y Complete a review following the decline in numbers	y	y	Guided Walks are held each week during the programmed period. Average attendance of [10]. Good feedback received. 2023-2024 Position. 92 people attended throughout 18 weeks and average of 5, down 22% on previous year. 60 people across 3 group visits attended, compared to Nil in previous year. A review to be completed.
	Blue Commemorative Plaques – aim to install one plaque each year from 2024-2025.		Y Manor House, Hillside Street	y	y	Following consultation and necessary approvals one plaque successfully installed each year. 2023-2024 Position. Preparatory work, including design, cost price and formal consents achieved for the first plaque (Gerald Holtom – Manor House) and funding in place. Installation during 2024.
	Aim to publish at least one heritage/local history related publication each year, in e-book format or hard copy, subject to costs.	y	Y HCS pre-80 th anniversary publication	y	y	Publications are well-received by society members and others. 2023-2024 Position. Published 'The Hortons of Cold Harbour House' May 2023 – limited edition. Continued to sell and re-print 'A Walk Around Hythe' which has proved popular and will again be promoted during 2024. Anne Petrie is writing a book about 80 locations across Hythe for publication later this year – this to be a HCS

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						publication.
	Update information about walking opportunities in Hythe and its surrounding countryside, working in partnership with other organisations as desired to achieve a co-ordinated approach.'	y	Y <i>Launch the new Hythe Walks routes and website, in partnership with HTC</i>		Y Review	Published information and other information about walking opportunities is well received by members and others. 2023-2024 Position. Excellent progress to assist the Town Mayor in a major partnership project also advised by Elham Valley Walkers to establish a series of Walking Routes around Hythe and the countryside. Will be ready to launch late Spring.
Secure the preservation, protection and improvement of Hythe's historic features	In partnership with FHDC and HTC (councillors and officers) and other groups and to involve community consultation: a) develop a Conservation Area Management Plan. b) develop a 'Local List of Heritage Assets' as supplementary guidance for development planning purposes.	y	Y Y Y	Y y		Management Plan produced and then approved and adopted by FHDC Strong engagement with the District and Town councils with involvement of a cross- section of the local community. Plan adopted by FHDC as supplementary guidance for planning purposes. 2023-2024 Position. At early stages of planning and research. Preliminary consultation with FHDC planning undertaken last summer when advised by FHDC to defer until priorities at FHDC reviewed and resources secured. Recently secured by them. Work continues involving the Local History Group.

SOCIETY OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Measures of Success
Promote civic pride across Hythe	<p>'Hythe in Bloom' and 'the Tuesday Volunteer Gardeners' projects - maintain support for these popular and valued schemes. Aim to improve the appearance of identified neglected open spaces and the removal of graffiti where practical.</p>	Y	Y	Y	Y	<p>A continuing good working relationship with FHDC and sponsors. Attractive and well maintained flowerbeds in partnership with FHDC. Provision of a clean, well-maintained streetscape. Continuing enjoyment of volunteer participants.</p>
	<p>Working with the Hythe Environmental Community Group and pupils from Brockhill Academy in developing the Eaton Lands Community Orchard for communal use and educational purposes .</p>	y	y	y	y	<p>2023-2024 Position. Floral displays were once again planted in Prospect Road and throughout the High Street adding colour to the town – aided by the volunteers watering group throughout the year. Wakefield Walk, the Oaklands Sensory Garden, War Memorial garden, and Mackeson Square received splendid attention from the Tuesday Gardening Group. The Painting Volunteers also did splendid work on the bollards in the High Street, at locations south of the High Street and at Oaklands.</p> <p>Good feedback from the Community including local schools .</p> <p>2023-24 Position. Further work at the Eaton Lands Community Orchard, in partnership with the Hythe Environmental Community Group, awaits designs and text for information/interpretation boards from the Brockhill Academy.</p>

Hythe Civic Society FORWARD PLAN (2023-2026) – PART TWO -DELIVERING EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

OBJECTIVE AREA	ACTIONS	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Measures of Success
Valued Communications with Members and the wider public	Maintain quarterly newsletter containing information on Planning, Talks, History of Hythe, forthcoming events and local news items.	Y	Y	Y	Y	<p>Good feedback from members including Facebook ‘Likes’. Growth in monthly average of website ‘hits’ and ‘visitors’. Growth in Facebook Page members, with a significant number of these converted to full HCS membership. Good active use as measured by website analytics. Good demand and feedback.</p> <p>2023-24 Position. Quarterly Newsletters issued as planned, containing the breadth of content planned. Facebook Page continues to grow. Website Members Only Portal implemented containing a range of new features, including Heritage Hythe posters and regular ‘Forgotten Histories’ articles. HCS leaflet reprinted, a number of replenishments at the Library indicated levels of ongoing interest. Over 17,000 page views on Website over, 5,000 views of added content during the year, 23 visitors joined HCS using the Online Form, 70 visitors used Online Contacts Form.</p>
	Use the HCS Facebook Page to direct followers to the website.	Y	Y			
	Develop members’ only portal for the website, maintaining the release of new articles and features.	Y				
	Provide a leaflet and refresh as necessary to promote the Society’s activities	y	Y Refresh	y	y	

OBJECTIVE AREA	ACTIONS	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Measures of Success
	Survey of membership - analyse responses and feed into ongoing activities. Feedback results and outcomes to membership.	y			y	<p>Good response rate to the survey (30%). Document analysis of responses and details of impact on Society's activities. Successful co-ordination of messaging to Membership and Social Media audience. Publish 'end of year' results against stated objectives .</p> <p>2023-24 Position. Members' Survey issued February 2024, covering over 75% of member households. Full analysis completed and results published. Response rate circa 20% (to circa 330 member households that received the survey).</p>
Effective Promotion and Increasing Membership	Use of local press and journals, website and social media to publicise HCS work, achievements and benefits of membership.	Y	Y	y	y	2023-24 Position. Facebook and Website News Pages used regularly to promote events and important local information. Some local press articles featured HCS, including The Looker (Hythe in Bloom)/Kent Online and Kentish Express (former Aldi site).
Sound Finances	Annual balanced budget ensuring ongoing activities are scaled according to ongoing income.	Y	y	y	y	<p>End of year surplus. Monthly budget monitoring by the Executive Committee.</p> <p>2023-24 Position. Monthly updates to Executive Committee. Surplus £3,305 (including Boot Fair).</p>
	A 'fund raising' event each year (eg. boot fair, major heritage event).	y	Y 16 June Boot Fair	y	y	2023-24 Position. May 2023 Boot Fair, very large attendance with approx £2k raised. Boot Fair for 16 June 2024 allocated by HTC.
	Triennial reviews of membership subscription levels to maintain HCS viability against predicted costs.	y			y	<p>No budget deficits. Scale activities to budget where necessary. Generates greater sales turnover.</p> <p>2023-24 Position. May 23 AGM approved subscriptions increase from £10-£15 per household. Talk Fees increased Jan 2024.</p>

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	<p>Introduce online sales and payments facilities for publications, prints etc.</p> <p>Introduce online Membership facility(Portal)via the website with members only information, publication access and online payments.</p>	y	y			<p>Ease of payment generates greater take-up of memberships.</p> <p>2023-24 Position. Payments facility deferred until post-Members' Survey results (these show support). Members' Only portal implemented, though more promotion with Members required to increase awareness and use. Survey results indicate general support for cashless payment facility at Talks and on-line facility for subscriptions etc.</p>
Effective policies and governance measures	Establish a 'Governance' Working Group to oversee Policy and Practice reviews and staged production of all policies and arrangements required by the 2022 Constitution.	y	Y Review		Y Review	<p>Policies adopted and implemented by the Executive Committee.</p> <p>2023-24 Position. Working Group created and initial scoping of work planned. Limited progress during the year. Review work will continue during 2024.</p>
	Ensure all key operating functions are documented and available to all Trustees.	y Initial set-up completed.	Y			<p>Central e-library established and functioning for Trustees' use. Evidence that if a Trustee is no longer able to fulfil role, the Society can continue to function uninterrupted. Managed secure document libraries and shared folders used, where practicable, in place of multiple email traffic.</p>
	<p>Implement succession planning for key roles.</p> <p>Reduce data breach risks by reducing use of email to circulate information</p>		Y	y	y	<p>2023-24 Position. Job Descriptions for the main Trustees' Roles completed and held electronically. Trial of a central e-library and email sharing created for the History Group.</p>

OBJECTIVE AREA	ACTIONS	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Measures of Success
Sound Trustee (the Committee) development	Ensure all relevant Charity Commission Newsletters are circulated and key points highlighted to Trustees.	y	Y Implement online access for Trustees to CC information		Y Review	Received by all trustees. 2023-24 Position. Regular dissemination not undertaken due to other workloads and changes developed by the Charity Commission to access information. Now for implementation during 2024. Registration for CC weekly information in place for the Chair.
	Produce New Trustee Joining Pack with collated information from previous committee meetings etc.		Y Implement online access for Trustees to CC information			Improved engagement by participants at Meetings etc. Speedier implementation of Projects. Increased effectiveness of new Trustees. 2023-24 Position. Linked to the above and hence deferred to 2024-25 as on-line 'pack' information preferred using CC standard information. There was good attendance by Trustees at the monthly Executive Committee meetings. As the Blue Plaque implementation/Walking Routes /Website development/Exhibition/Members Survey/ Street Furniture painting projects demonstrate, project delivery is strong.
	One Trustee training and updating meeting each year.	y	y	y	y	Attendance by all trustees (the Executive Committee) with good feedback. 2023-24 Position. Deferred until 2024.

OBJECTIVE AREA	ACTIONS	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	Measures of Success
Effective Partnering	Close and effective working with the Town and District Councils on Conservation Area, Local Listing initiatives, 'Hythe in Bloom' and streetscape initiatives together with good working relations with other community groups	y	y	y	y	<p>Positive feedback from partner organisations, with commitments signalled for long-lasting joint working.</p> <p>2023-24 Position. Great feedback from HTC regarding work to assist the Town Council (Hythe in Bloom, street furniture repainting and Walking Routes project).</p>