

HYTHE CIVIC SOCIETY

Annual General Meeting 2025

Item 5.2 Chair's Report

It is with great pleasure that I present this year's Chairman's Report. This is my second such report, and as I mentioned in my first, the year has again passed by remarkably quickly. It has been another year filled with activity and achievement as we continue advancing the Society's objectives of maintaining, preserving, and enhancing the unique character and heritage of our town, and doing our bit to enhance civic pride.

Community engagement remains at the heart of our efforts. We have seen excellent participation in our talks, guided walks, and fundraising activities, clear evidence of growing interest in Hythe's rich history and environment. We continue to advocate for Hythe's heritage, offering constructive input on planning matters amid ongoing pressures on its historic buildings and cherished open spaces.

I want to sincerely thank our many dedicated volunteers who generously give their time and energy to support both the Society and the town—helping to maintain the attractiveness of our open spaces and streets, welcoming visitors to Hythe and St. Leonard's Church, organising talks, supporting events and exhibitions, catering, delivering newsletters, and producing publications, among much else.

I'm also deeply grateful to my committee colleagues (past and present), who work tirelessly behind the scenes—scrutinising planning developments, editing our newsletters, maintaining our website, organising events, developing our governance, recording meetings, and ensuring we remain financially responsible.

Special thanks to Kim Murton, who is stepping down after five years as newsletter co-editor; to the legendary Alan Joyce, retiring later this year after 20 years as a committee member including 17 years as our treasurer and membership coordinator - an occasion we will certainly mark later in the year; and to Evelyn Joyce, who is retiring after eight years of providing extensive catering for our annual volunteer thank-you party.

As this reveals, this is a Society that likes to keep going and achieving.

This year is particularly special as we celebrate the Society's 80th Anniversary. Originally formed in 1945 as the Hythe Civic Union here at the Town Hall led by the then Rev Canon Newman, the Society has remained an active champion of the town's heritage, advocating for the conservation of its unique character. To mark this significant milestone, we have planned a series of exciting events.

These celebratory events include: a special talk by Andy McConnell of 'Antiques Roadshow' in June, participation in the Armed Forces Day event, a July cream tea with a special tour of St. Leonard's Church, a September evening concert by the Hythe Town Concert Band, and during November a '*Through YOUR Lens – Hythe, My Hometown*' exhibition. We will end the year with our Christmas Social.

As always, we welcome help and support in organising and running events, please speak to a committee member if you would like to get involved or indeed would like to join the committee. We are especially grateful to all members, whose continued support enthusiasm and generosity make the Society's work possible. New members are very welcome.

With your continued support, we are confident we can build on past year's successes and help to ensure Hythe remains a wonderful place to live, work, and visit.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our successes this year. We all look forward to another inspiring and rewarding year ahead.

Paul Naylor – Chair

May 2025