

# DIGEST

ISSUE 013 / SUMMER 2025



Image: May's Guided walk, by Nigel Slater (centre, with binocs), by Karen Stainer

# PLANNING

Planning matters for our area ceaselessly roll on – here’s what our volunteers have been up to at the coal face this quarter...

CONTENT BY  
TAMAR



## Riverside 23/00447/FUL

Since the planning application was REFUSED by the Local Planning Authority, Applicants for developing Riverside had appealed to the Government Inspectorate. This was disappointing, but not a surprise.

In addition to our objection already submitted, we sent further comment to the Inspectorate in support of the Council REFUSAL decision. We also co-convened a local residents' community meeting, along with Councillor for the ward, **Cllr. Shaun Dannheimer**, and **Cllr. Teresa Cullen** (Notts County Councillor for Broxtowe) for people to ask questions, discuss, and enable those wishing to engage with the planning procedure to do so effectively. Tamar was on the panel and gave the Society viewpoint and waymarked people to respond in a way which holds water (rather *unlike* the proposed underground car park, no doubt...). Turn-out was good, and engagement was high. We hope to be able to update on proceedings as and when they happen.

Read our objection and Inspectorate comment on our [blog](#).

*Images: by Mike Spencer*

## **Works on Protected Trees**

We continue to monitor Planning applications, especially for works to trees and tree felling where the tree is protected – either by a TPO or by being in a Conservation Area.

There have been a number of applications to fell diseased or dead trees, which we raise no objection to; those which mention replacement tree planting we actively support. Examples of tree pruning on species which do not respond well to pruning (such as some Silver Birch) or applications which cite reasons such as 'leaf fall' we also object to. Falling leaves, leaf litter, or insect frass or honeydew on vehicles is never grounds for significant cutting back or – worse still – felling a tree! In Conservation Areas many mature trees form an intrinsic, explicit part of the fabric of the *character* of the area, which itself usually forms part of the attraction of living there.

Recently, we have heard disappointing accounts from residents in the Cottage Grove Conservation Area on the noticeable reduction in visible tree line around the area. It's always a distinct possibility that property owners are felling trees in Conservation Areas without permission (perhaps they do not even realise they need permission?). We would urge anyone who notices such works to get in touch with the Council planning department immediately.

## **Volunteers**

The Society continues to appreciate the work of its Planning volunteers who monitor applications, and especially John Temple who updates us all on a weekly basis. Thank you very much, John!

To offer much needed help watching and /or commenting on planning applications [send us a message](#) to be added to our Planning WhatsApp group.

## **Design Awards 2025**

The Civic Society is as much about recognising the *good* in our local built environment as it is about challenging the bad. We've witnessed much renovation and redevelopment since our last Design Awards, in 2023. Obviously, our judging panel *can't* nominate projects for the competition (bit dodgy, that) – but YOU can!

If you have seen, or completed, building work which you think deserves commendation, please nominate it for this year's Design Awards. The deadline for suggestions is **31 July 2025**, and we want as many projects as possible to stand a chance of winning!

Nomination is easy – **just fill in what you can on our online form, the judges will do the rest!** Go online:

[beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/designawards](https://beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/designawards)

# WALKS

Our summer programme of walks guided by local experts kicked off with two walks based around Attenborough Nature Reserve and Beeston Canal.

WRITTEN BY  
NIGEL SLATER  
MERVYN BROWN

**WALK  
WITH AN  
EXPERT**

**NATURE RESERVE  
INTERACTIVE**  
BY NIGEL SLATER

**SUNDAY 11 MAY, 10:30AM**  
**ATTENBOROUGH NATURE RESERVE CAR PARK**  
**MEMBERS: FREE**  
**NON-MEMBERS: DONATION**  
**JUST TURN UP!**

This alternative look at the nature and wildlife of Attenborough is in collaboration with **Beeston Wildlife Group** and lead by wildlife authority Nigel Slater. It will start and finish at ANR car park.

Duration: approx 90 minutes  
Please wear suitable clothing and footwear.

[BEESTONCIVICSOCIETY.ORG.UK/WALKS](http://BEESTONCIVICSOCIETY.ORG.UK/WALKS)

## 11 MAY (Sunday) NATURE RESERVE INTERACTIVE (see cover image)

On a hot and sunny Sunday morning, a dozen Sir David Attenborough devotees waited to be escorted around the Nature Reserve. Unfortunately Sir Dave wasn't there, so I filled in. I relayed how David had opened the Visitor Center in 2005 with a two minute speech, but the draw bridge, which allows access to the center, took four minutes to lower – leaving Sir David ad-libbing hilariously. We learned about the history of the place – being turned from a working gravel quarry to a haven for wildlife.

This wasn't a classic walk, more like a stop-start shuffle as we paused to listen to Common Whitethroats, Blackcaps, Sedge Warblers and Chiffchaffs that were proclaiming their territories after flying from their winter quarters in various parts of Africa. We saw and heard about 30 species of bird, with a few Butterflies and wildflowers that are just emerging. We walked to the river and to the new viewing shelter to see nesting Oystercatcher and several Gulls (not sea Gulls!) and tiny wading bird, not much bigger than a sparrow called a Little-ringed Plover. In no time, we were heading back, having everything that moved identified with accompanying anecdotes and their life stories expanded – even the 'little brown jobs' have amazing stories and come to life when seen close up through a telescope.

I hope the group learned there is a huge variety of wildlife on our doorstep and weren't too disappointed that we hardly walked a mile!

Nigel Slater, Beeston Wildlife Group.



*Images: by Jane Harvey and Mervyn Brown*



**WALK  
WITH AN  
EXPERT**

**CANALSIDE  
+ TRENTSIDE**  
BY MIKE SPENCER

**SATURDAY 14 JUNE, 10:30AM**  
**BEESTON LOCK**  
**MEMBERS: FREE**  
**NON-MEMBERS: DONATION**  
**JUST TURN UP!**

This walk takes a look at what was, what is, and what could be relating to our River and Canal. Lead by Mike Spencer, well known for his inspirational input to the locality, it will start Beeston lock Trent side and finish at Canalside Heritage Centre Café.

Duration: approx 90 minutes  
Please wear suitable clothing and footwear.

[BEESTONCIVICSOCIETY.ORG.UK/WALKS](http://BEESTONCIVICSOCIETY.ORG.UK/WALKS)

**14 JUNE (Saturday)**  
**CANALSIDE + TRENTSIDE**  
**by Mike Spencer**

Aspects of prehistory to modernism ran through Mike Spencer's interactive tour around the River Trent and the Beeston Canal - supplemented by information and anecdotes from the twenty+ participants. Our tour took us from Canalside Heritage Centre (CHC) - with exploration and explanations of lock operation and construction of the 'Beeston cut' - before progressing via the weir and along beside the Trent. Tour leader Mike Spencer is well known to our members for his long involvement in helping to found and operate Attenborough Nature Reserve and his recent co-option to our Committee.

**Beeston's 'Stonehenge'**

The tour was illuminated by handling artefacts such as clay pipes, a stone axe head, knapping flint - as well as precious Roman pottery and fragment of a Stone Age wooden construction pile.

One walker enthused: *"I didn't think, when I woke up, my day would include holding actual Roman artefacts."*

Our furthest point of the walk - described as 'Beeston's Stonehenge' - was the site of a Stone Age village. Projecting into the river and built onto a series of piles acting as supporting stilts, the site is the subject of ambitious plans to develop an archaeological 'visitor experience' facilities along with a study centre.

**'Turn-over' intrigue**

Our return journey along the canal side featured more wildlife including sounds of Chiffchaff, Sand Martin nesting in the canal bank together with Red Kite and Buzzard. Interaction and intrigue heightened at the stone-built 'hump-back' bridge over the canal. The bargees had to 'turn-over' their horses from the termination of north side tow-path to the south - their ropes having cut grooves into the cast-iron bollards. Back then along the elevated flood-protection embankment to CHC, which concluded the two-hour (and as many miles) walk - with thanks and much applause for our tour-leader. Mike's animated style made for an enlightening, enriching and enjoyable experience - everything brought further to life by artefacts, and interaction provided by fellow participants.

Mervyn Brown

# WALK WITH AN EXPERT

## URBAN DESIGN: NEW DEVELOPMENTS

BY DR STEFAN KRUCZKOWSKI  
& CHRYSE TINSLEY

**SUNDAY 13 JULY, 10:30AM**

**BEESTON RAIL STATION CAR PARK**

**MEMBERS: FREE**

**NON-MEMBERS: DONATION**

**JUST TURN UP!**

Take a walk with urban designer Stefan Kruczkowski and landscape architect Chryse Tinsley. Chryse and Stefan have spent their working lives in planning departments advising on design.

Duration: approx 90 minutes  
Please wear suitable clothing and footwear.

[BEESTONCIVICSOCIETY.ORG.UK/WALKS](http://BEESTONCIVICSOCIETY.ORG.UK/WALKS)



# BUILDING HERITAGE

From medieval structures to modernist innovations, Architecture is a cornerstone of our area's heritage. Our Heritage Open Days this year celebrates this with two themed events.

CONTENT BY  
TAMAR

Beeston's architectural landscape is an undeniable testament to its industrial and social past. Nowhere more evident, perhaps, than the multitude of factories: lace, silk, bicycles, seed, boilers, cars, telephones, and munitions – industrial buildings have boomed (and busted) here; shaping the town to this day.

From the embodiment of the Victorian obsession with All Things Gothic as seen in **Anglo-Scotian Mills** – designed by James Huckerby in 1892, it's been razed and rebuilt more times than any building should, and is now Listed and languishing as luxury apartments, to the Modernist innovation of the **Boots Factory** – designed by Owen Williams / Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, it is Grade I Listed and recognised as one of the most important Twentieth Century works in Britain; the first of its scale in England to use reinforced concrete as the structural frame and exterior material; 'making things' on an industrial scale has made Beeston what it is today.

It doesn't end with occupation, though – a fine web of varied architectural heritage in the residential dwellings exists on our doorstep too: from the stunning oldest and grandest houses, including West End House, Beeston (built 1600s) and what seems like most of Attenborough village, to grand villas, pretty cottages, and the prime and practical examples of rare



International Modernism, such as 35 Hallams Lane, Chilwell (designed by Raymond Myerscough-Walker in 1936, and largely untouched since).

Our architectural surroundings not only provide a visual record of the past, they serve functional purpose; as well as reflecting the values and aspirations of Beestonians, they shape our community's identity and sense of place. They did that in the past, they do it today, and they will continue to do it in future.

One way we can immediately recognise the impact buildings have on our lives is through our Blue Plaque scheme. Local people who've made significant local or national contribution to society are recognised with a plaque on the building associated with their endeavour - whether that be their home, place of work, or a specific event explicably tied to a building or location. What better way to highlight this irrevocable link between buildings and people.

Come along to our Heritage Open Day Guided Walk this September and you can learn more about the connection between local buildings and people, this time primarily in and around Chilwell. (See pages overleaf for details.)

Blue Plaques and architectural styles speak volumes about our town's past, but what will the architecture of today say about *us*? What will future generations make of the 'new' Beeston now being made, when viewed beside the heritage we choose to protect and retain? [*Ed: I wonder which of our contemporary buildings will have Blue Plaques in the future?*]

Perhaps the other of our events for Heritage Open Days, titled ***How to Build Heritage: Architectural Legacy Today + Tomorrow***, will explore these interesting questions, and the panel of invited specialists might even form some answers together. Focusing on the environment for living that we are creating for ourselves and for future generations – our legacy – our presenters at this panel discussion are all experts in their field, and provide the opportunity to discuss building heritage together. Come along prepared to hear contributions from the specialists, and even to have your say – who knows, maybe one day, history will prove you were right...

Find out more about Heritage Open Days: [heritageopendays.org.uk/whats-on.html](https://heritageopendays.org.uk/whats-on.html) or [beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-open-days](https://beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-open-days)



# HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

12 – 21 SEP '25

## ***BLUE PLAQUES: CHILWELL + BEYOND***

**A guided walk by local expert Dr Peter Robinson,  
and Alan Dance**

**Sunday 14 September 2025, 2pm**

**Meet: Cycle Inn (Sid Standard's Plaque)**

**FREE**

**Just turn up!**

**Stalwarts of the South Broxtowe Blue Plaque scheme, Peter Robinson and Alan Dance will take a new look at the influence and impact that featured individuals have had on our local communities.**

**Start at Sid Standard's, Chilwell Road and finish for (optional) refreshments at The Cadland Inn, Chilwell.**

**Duration: Approximately 90 minutes**

**Terrain: Easy (pavement), fully accessible**

**Please wear suitable clothing and footwear!**



**For further details go to the Heritage Open Days website, or our website below. Or scan the QR code.**

**[beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-open-days](https://beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-open-days)**



# HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

12 – 21 SEP '25

## ***HOW TO BUILD HERITAGE:***

**Architectural legacy today + tomorrow**

**Thursday, 18 September 2025  
Royal British Legion, Beeston, NG9 1EL  
Doors from 6:30pm / Event 7pm  
FREE!**

**Our interactive panel event forms our contribution to the Heritage Open Days: Britain's largest community involvement festival. This year the theme is 'Architecture'. Presentations from panellists are followed by interactive audience discussion about the environment for living we are creating for ourselves and for future generations – our legacy. What will the 'architectural heritage' of our era look like?**

### **PANELLISTS**

- **Ryan Dawson – Head of Planning + Economy, Broxtowe Borough Council (BrBC)**
- **Emma Georgiou - Head of Environment, BrBC**
- **Dr Jordan Kauffman – Architectural Historian, Assistant Professor at UoN**
- **Dr Stefan Kruczkowski – Urban Design consultant**
- **Gavin Richards – Head of Architecture, NTU**
- **Dr Kate Simpson – Sustainable construction specialist**
- **Gil Shalom – Environmentally sustainable Architect**

**For further details go to the Heritage Open Days website, or our website below. Or scan the QR code.**



**[beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-open-days](https://beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/heritage-open-days)**



**category  
winner:  
commercial  
buildings**

YELLOW WOOD  
CAFE  
CHILWELL ROAD  
BEESTON

**DESIGN AWARDS 2023**



*Image: a 2023 winner proudly  
displays their certificate.  
Courtesy of Yellow Wood Cafe  
[@yellowwoodcafe](#) on Instagram*

# BESTEST BUILDINGS

There's still time to show your support for a better and more vibrant Beeston.

CONTENT BY  
GARY SMERDON-WHITE

Our **Design Awards 2025** are open to organisations, companies and residents in Beeston, Attenborough, Bramcote, Chilwell, and Toton. Nominating is open to anyone, for projects completed between July 2023 and 31 July 2025.

There will be three category awards:

- **Beeston Character** – adding to our area with good design
- **Climate + Sustainability** – reducing carbon emissions, helping nature and biodiversity
- **Streets + Public Spaces** – making Beeston a more pleasant place to live and work

There will also be an overall Winner, a People's Choice award, and a primary schools' competition for designing a 'dream' building.

The deadline for nominating is 31 July.

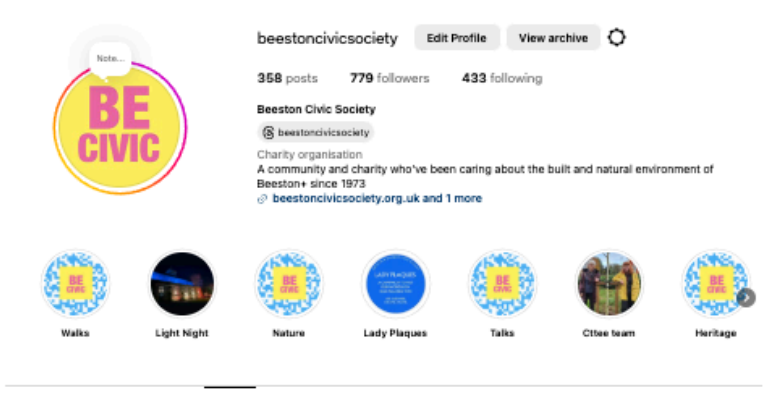
Previous commendations have included a school learning garden; an eco-designed house, street murals, a cinema, a renovated shop, and a heritage building sympathetically extended.

## **What's in it for you?**

Anyone can nominate and it's completely free. By nominating something you'll have brought to everyone's attention a wonderful place with good design. It's a great way to show you care about how Beeston develops, looks, and combats the impact of climate change, plus you'll have supported our project and had a bit of fun!

Find out more online [Design Awards – Beeston Civic Society](#). Nominating is easy - just tell us what you can, our team and the judges will do the rest!

**[beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/designawards](https://beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/designawards)**

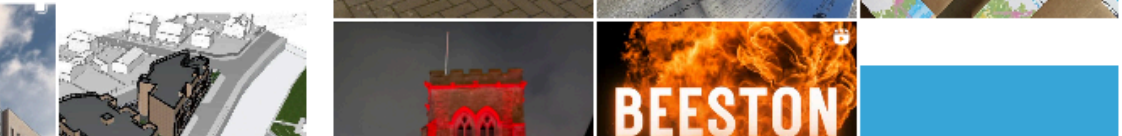
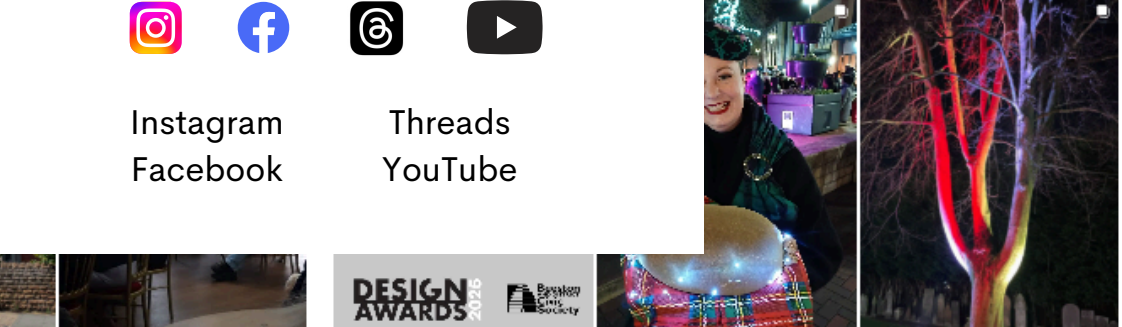
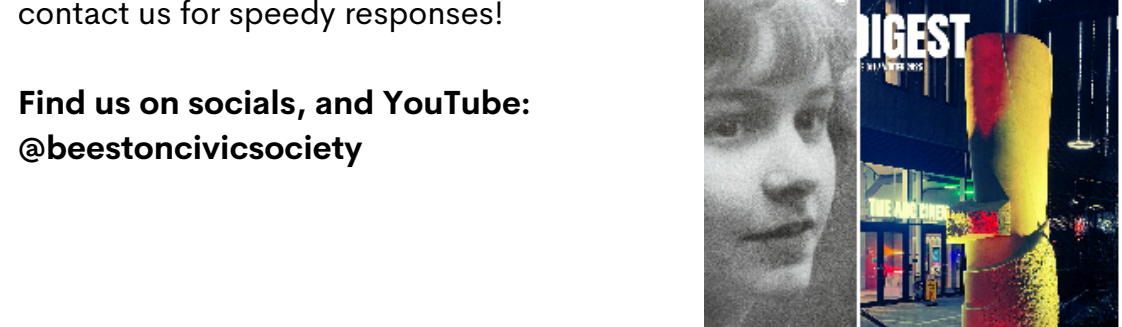
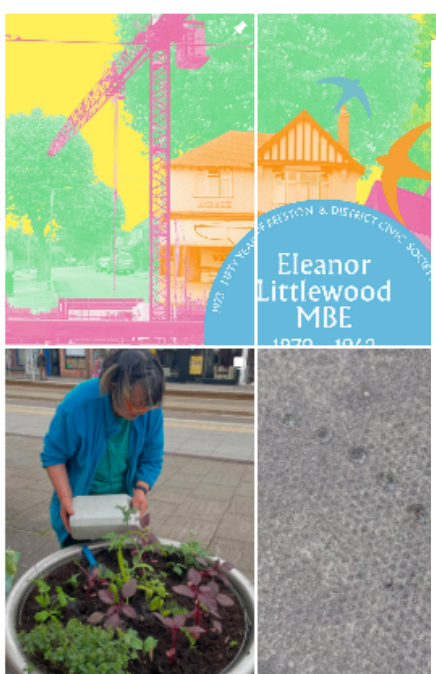


# If you're on social media, why not give us a follow.

With content and sharing on events, news and anything to pass the time of day in Beeston, our social media channels are all monitored by volunteers who live, work or study in Beeston.

They're a great way to keep in touch with what's happening in your area, and to contact us for speedy responses!

Find us on socials, and YouTube:  
[@beestoncivicsociety](#)



# GREENING BEESTON

A new project to create a local mosaic of nature-boosting gardens is launched by our Greening Beeston friends, and we're all right behind it.

CONTENT BY  
JANET POLIAKOFF  
[GREENING-BEESTON.UK](http://GREENING-BEESTON.UK)

In 2022 our **Greening Beeston** group were fascinated to hear from one of our members who had visited Felixstowe, where they have a Community Nature Reserve. The idea is to create a nature reserve by having as many local gardens as possible where the owners are gardening in a way that encourages wildlife. We were inspired to start our own and decide to call it **Patchwork for Nature**.

We are lucky to have Attenborough Nature Reserve nearby, but we still think the more places where wildlife can flourish the better. This is especially important in this area where so much of the land outside towns is used for agriculture, which limits the opportunities for wildlife. A patchwork of gardens in addition to adjacent woodlands can make a big difference.

We chose the name **Patchwork for Nature** to capture the idea that it is made up of many patches of varying sizes. We chose a list of 8 actions to encourage wildlife and decided to allow a garden to join our Patchwork, once the owners are taking at least 5 of the 8 actions, as shown on our website. The actions include leaving some patches to go wild, avoiding peat products and creating a pond for wildlife. So far we have around 15 gardens







The Society and Greening Beeston joined forces this June!

Our volunteers shared a stall at the Beeston and Chilwell Garden Trail (7+8 June) with the Poliakovs (below).

Tamar and Mary planted up the containers on Chilwell Road (left), and called in to Gilbert Lodge to meet receptionist Michelle and gardener residents there to enlist willing helpers for watering and caring for the planters just outside the complex – something which they've already taken to doing!

Great community action, with lots of positive chat and interaction.

*Image: Mary Venning watering after planting up Chilwell Road containers with Tamar (above) [photo by Tamar]; Civic Society volunteers Clyde, Christy, and Mervyn sharing a very long table with Martyn and Janet Poliakov at 102 Cator Lane [photo by Karen Stainer].*



# POWERING THROUGH

Could local, sustainable energy be coming to Beeston? A new Society group exists to explore all of the possibilities.

CONTENT BY  
SUE SPENCER  
JOINT CONVENOR - BEESTON CIVIC  
SOCIETY LOCAL ENERGY GROUP

Do you recall the Civic Society's **Beeston2020vision: Our Beeston – Our Future** event at the Royal British Legion? Slightly mis-titled due to Covid meaning it couldn't *actually* happen until 2023, the well-attended event encouraged Beeston community members to describe their vision of the future of the town.

The feedback from this one event led to the formation of several action groups, one of which is focussed on Energy & Sustainability. Last year, volunteers of **Greening Beeston** worked closely with The University of Nottingham and pupils of John Clifford School to create a poster campaign highlighting the part we locals can play in reducing energy and saving money.

We want to do more, much more. Following the Society's January talk by Alan Simpson titled '**Climate Code Red**', the idea was born to explore the feasibility of generating our own sustainable energy for local consumption. A small group of us came to together, eager to see if some of the projects shown to us by Alan could work here.



*Image: Beeston Weir and Hydroelectric plant (to the East bank of Trent). © [CC BY-SA 4.0](#) Curiouswidget*

Aptly named the **Local Energy Group**, we have a diverse range of skills and experience, not least the stamina to read through the enormous amount of information that is out there!

Over the last few months, we've attended several D2N2 Energy Conservation and Sustainable Technology presentations and workshops organised by local councils. We are now at the information gathering and resource exploration stage, looking at who might already be working on similar projects – after all, we don't want to waste valuable time and energy re-inventing the wheel.

By referencing similar projects both here in the UK and overseas, we hope to identify the most appropriate systems and locations within the area of Beeston, Chilwell and Toton – local energy for our local communities!

Sue Spencer

# AUDIENCE

The Events Team once again are pulling out the stops – calling in favours, extending invitations to a wide range of people and projects. We're delighted to share the early details of the events so far bringing 2025 to a close.

CONTENT BY  
MERVYN BROWN

Work continues organising our next season of monthly talks on interesting local and relevant subjects. We're this year calling it **Audience**. Our members and attendees play an engaged and vital part in our guest speaker events, so it's only right they feature on the billing!

Events will continue to be on Wednesday evenings at Beeston's Royal British Legion (RBL) on Hall Croft. With doors open from 6.30pm, attendees may choose to enjoy a convivial drink from the bar. Presentations begin around 7pm and run through until approximately 9.30pm – giving the option to ask questions or chat. The upcoming programme includes:

1 October 2025

*Stewart Craven + Mike Spencer*

**TRENTARCH:THE RIVER PROJECT**

Project Founders

+ Beeston Civic **AGM**

5 November 2025

*Chris Carter*

**ACTIVE TRAVEL + TRANSPORT FUTURES**

Transport Strategy Manager for

Nottingham City Council

+ **Design Awards 2025** presentation

3 December 2025

**VISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: A PANEL**

*Dr Vicky Palmer Vicky*  
Senior Lecturer in Youth Justice

*Andrew Allsopp*  
NCC Youth + Community District Manager

*Inspector Usha Madaraa*  
Youth Compliance and Conflict

*Toby Goldszmit*  
Youth Mayor, Generational Aspirations

*Paul Herry*  
White Hills Park Academy Executive Head

*Cllr. Teresa Cullen*  
Transformative Youth Futures



# SHAPING BROXTOWE

**22 JULY 2025, 7PM**

**BROXTOWE COUNCIL OFFICES  
FOSTER AVENUE, BEESTON**

Community aspirations are the beating heart of a town – but *action*, not words, makes things happen. You can be part of it!

The Civic Society's **Beeston Vision** consultation led to a hundred responses on what the future of Beeston might look like. These are now all documented [online](#), but what came next?

Detailed discussions followed about how some of these ideas might be reflected in Broxtowe Borough Council's Corporate Plan under the general heading of '*Shaping Broxtowe for the Future*'. The last meeting with Portfolio Holders in November 2023 discussed ideas, priorities and implementation.

'Portfolio holders' are the councillors responsible for developing and delivering council policy within their designated area, working with officers and local organisations to address local needs, and representing the council's views on strategic policy.

At this public meeting, these Councillors will give an overview of recent events and achievements; what they've been doing as a council, and how they work with others in the community – including Beeston & District Civic Society.

Councillors will also be taking questions and gathering your feedback, so this is a great opportunity to be heard by local decision makers on the things that matter to you.

Come along. Listen. Ask away!

**Find out more**

See our website, or get in touch by email:  
[secretary@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:secretary@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk)

**[beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/beestonvision](https://beestoncivicsociety.org.uk/beestonvision)**

# CONTACT US

Here's how you can get in touch with the right person or team for the job.

Please bear in mind that we're all volunteers – we always respond as soon as we're able to!

To contact a member of the committee personally use  
**[their first name]**  
**@beestoncivicsociety.org.uk**

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# UP CLOSE

Can you recognise these local places from their detail?

CONTENT BY  
MERVYN





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