

**swindon
civic
trust**

Registered Charity

STRATEGY 2010 - 2013

**‘...because Swindon Places
matter to Swindon People...’**

Member of



Our Mission

Swindon Civic Trust exists for the public benefit of the Borough of Swindon and its vicinity. We are aligned to the national Civic Voice.

We work to make the places where everyone lives more attractive, enjoyable and distinctive. We speak up for people and local communities across Swindon. We promote civic pride. We are a local charity for the civic movement and have a growing local presence. We know how people feel about places because we feel the same way - passionate.

In particular it is the object of Swindon Civic Trust to;

- Promote high standards of planning, environmental sustainability and architecture;
- Research, inform and educate the public in the geography, history, natural history, architecture, the built environment and the process of government;
- Secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest;
- Encourage and support community and individual participation in pursuit of the objectives.

Swindon Civic Trust is a registered charity. We have a membership and take its direction from its Trustees who manage the charity.

Over the period of this strategy we will pursue our objectives vigorously to enhance our reputation and authority so that Swindon people will make us their first stop when seeking to develop, conserve or interpret the beauty, quality and character of our town & surrounding

areas. We will continue to establish ourselves as a source of civic pride and somewhere people can come to engage us in shaping their futures. We are known for our independence of thought, challenging perspective and positive vision for the Borough of Swindon. We actively listen, advise, support and act on behalf of communities throughout the Borough.

Our Ongoing Activities

As we are aligned to the national Civic Voice we are pursuing strategically similar objectives. Swindon Civic Trust though, being a local voluntary charity, cannot undertake all the objectives that its national counterpart can. The Trustees have weighed up the national objectives and considered the following components to be both manageable and represent the best interests of Swindon people and its local communities.

- reviewing planning applications;
- reviewing conservation areas;
- quarterly newsletters;
- input to local development framework & attend formal enquiries;
- lectures and public events;
- membership recruitment;
- our website;
- guided walks and visits;
- supporting local campaigns;
- participating in local partnerships;
- local transport proposals;
- regional policy input;
- working with local business;
- media relations;
- books;
- blue plaques;
- fundraising; and
- research and training.

It our intention to bear these strategic objectives at the fore of everything we undertake on behalf of our community, because communities matter.

Our Core Operational Business

Specifically, we propose to pursue these developments of our existing core activities.

Our Newsletter will continue to be produced to keep our members abreast of our progress on strategic projects, to canvas views on community issues and to inform about developments, forthcoming lectures & public events and by way of providing news.

We will continue to review **Planning applications** and to raise objections where the Swindon public and communities best interests are being overlooked. We want to play a significant role in ensuring the redevelopment of the town centre truly meets local needs and plans for our long term future and not merely short term solutions. We will also campaign against all residential planning applications that ignore green issues.

We will continue to engage with our members and the Swindon public via our successful series of **Lectures**. In the future these will be a mix of strategy related updates on specific projects and issues of general community interest such as local community policing and Kevin McLeod's eco homes.

Swindon Civic Trust will also be developing its **Public events** to further engage with our community. Designated walks, tours of areas of significant local history and moving forward with our blue plaques scheme will all feature.

The Trust holds many books and items of published and/or recorded material. Over the next three years we intend to develop our own **Library** and market this important resource. Making the local material, in particular, available will be an important part of our local community engagement work.

As a local community charity we already have good relations with other groups

such as the Mechanics Trust. It is our intention to make significant input into a more effective **Local Development Framework** to increase the voice that local community groups in Swindon have.

We would like to:

- be part of developing the role that small, campaigning charities in Swindon have;
- by working more closely with each other and by sharing our success stories;
- where practical to speak as one;
- engage more effectively with our local community and to strengthen and increase the involvement of members of our community;
- build a better working relationship with the official Planners and SBC Planning Committee;
- build on the national and local Conservative commitment to communities by seeking a collaboration with both local Members of Parliament, whilst wholly maintaining our independence;
- work closely with local business for the improvement of local communities.

These are challenging targets but ones that we need to strategically strive towards if we are to effectively meet our objectives. These challenges cannot be achieved alone. One aspect of this strategy period is to attract more people to support Swindon Civic Trust who are willing to help. We will also be seeking a variety of funding to help resource aspects of this work from potential funding sources.

Our Strategy 2010 – 13 will also focus on four specific projects, three strategic projects and one organisational.

STRATEGIC PROJECTS

Town Centre Regeneration

The issue...

...is the need to contribute to providing the best possible regeneration of our town centre, focussing on the real, long term needs of the town.

Why does it matter...

...because regeneration needs to examine the shape, extent and character of the town centre. There is a clear need for a re-examination of the Core Strategy & to work closely with Forward Swindon.

Swindon Civic Trust plans to...

- re-define the extent & objectives of the town centre redevelopment;
- engage Swindon's citizens in determining the town centre's character;
- identify a prime site(s) for a University of Swindon;
- recognise the character & potential of the GWR Heritage Area & its neglected landmarks;
- secure a central position for the Modern Art Collection and Registrar's Office;
- produce a plan to resolve traffic circulation and design an ultra-light transport circuit.

This work will be project managed by Lisa Hawkes, Trustee & Chair of Swindon Civic Trust.

University of Swindon

The issue...

...is to bring a university to central Swindon and in doing so bring a fresh impetus to regeneration whilst providing a much needed academic facility.

Why does it matter...

...because comparisons show that a university would provide large economic, social and cultural contributions to the town whilst providing our youth with a place to study without having to uproot and incur large debt. The opportunity to have a world class higher education establishment in the town should not be understated.

Swindon Civic Trust plans to...

- build on the PriceWaterhouse Coopers feasibility study carried out in 2003;
- produce the academic case for a Swindon university;
- produce the economic case for such a university to be part of the Council's plan for regeneration;
- campaign for such a university to be centrally located;
- promote the benefits of having postgraduate training in Swindon for the benefit of Swindon companies;
- show how having a unique selling proposition will increase the marketability of both Swindon generally and the town centre specifically;
- specifically, campaign for the old college site and North Star to be used as key parts of a university campus.

This work will be project managed by David Body, Trustee & Secretary of Swindon Civic Trust.

The Landscape Project

The issue...

...is to create a greater awareness amongst the Swindon public and community of the diversity and history in which we live.

Why does it matter...

...it will help local people to establish a positive sense of identity and wellbeing with where they live. In many cases we believe this sense of identity will help to encourage people to want to become more involved within their community.

Swindon Civic Trust plans to...

- research how the development of our settlements & parishes influenced our historic landscape;
- understand the natural, rural, urban and social history of the Borough;
- create maps of the landscape of the Borough earlier in history;
- develop initial findings with the creation of further phases of work split into subject specific projects;
- apply for Heritage funding to support this important project work;
- achieve a positive contribution to the heritage of the Borough.

This work will be project managed by Donald Brunwin, Trustee & Treasurer of Swindon Civic Trust

ORGANISATIONAL PROJECT

Company Limited by Guarantee

The issue...

... Swindon Civic Trust is currently set up as a charitable trust which essentially means we cannot enter into legal obligations as a Trust, rather individual Trustees carry liability. As a company limited by guarantee the Trust becomes a legal entity in its own right though Trustees are still liable for negligence.

Why does it matter...

...because if we were to be *incorporated* the Trust would be eligible to enter into contracts as a legal entity under its own name. The current situation whereby liability rests with the Trustees rather than the Trust is a disincentive for becoming part of the management structure of the Trust.

Swindon Civic Trust plans to...

- consult with the national Civic Voice over our options;
- consider the pros and cons of becoming a company limited by guarantee or a charitable incorporated organisation;
- seek professional advice from the Charity Commission;
- conclude, after the above advice, the best position for Swindon Civic Trust;
- present a paper to the 2010 Annual General Meeting for a decision by our membership;
- implement any decision and for the Board to make changes as required.

This work will be project managed by

<p>Geraint Day, Trustee and Vice Chair of Swindon Civic Trust.</p> <p>Organisational Development and good Governance</p> <p>As well as looking forward and considering how best we effectively engage with the people and communities within the Borough of Swindon, the Board also has to manage the Trust in a fit and proper manner. Accordingly, in carrying out those duties, the Board highlights the following management practices.</p> <p>We will continue to build on the good governance processes that the current Board has established. By building an effective structure to our meetings and management planning we our increasing our efficiencies and the time available to carry out strategic work.</p> <p>We need to promote and increase our Membership. As our objects are all for community benefit the more members we have the stronger our voice. It is also important that we increase the number of members who want to actively participate in our work.</p> <p>The Charity Commission and other related bodies provide much in the way of assistance to the executive decision makers within charities. As our Trustees are still a relatively new group it is important that we maximise this information available to us and we continue to utilise the Trustee development material available to us.</p> <p>On behalf of the Board & our members, our Treasurer maintains close financial control over the charity's affairs. A monthly Treasurer's Report is presented to each Board meeting to aid Trustees in ensuring that the Swindon Civic Trust is being managed effectively. Annual Accounts are prepared and laid before Members at our AGM & are available for inspection by the Charity Commission.</p>	<p>To aid marketing work we will be producing new corporate information. This strategy document itself shows how we are committed to taking the Trust forward in a more professional manner. A new promotional leaflet will be produced to help bring us to the attention of a larger share of our community. We will also be striving to improve publicity for public events & lectures with better use of our website, the local media and more modern communication techniques.</p> <p>If we are to effectively deliver results from this strategy we do need to be committed to fundraising. Hard endeavour from the Trustees have given us a solid platform from which to build. In order to move forward swiftly on these projects we need to effectively apply for grant funding from potential sources such as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards for All; • Heritage Lottery Funding; • Grassroots & Administration Grants; • The Prince's Trust; • Lloyds TSB Foundation grants. <p>These are just examples. A key priority is to fully research and maximise all legitimate funding avenues at our disposal. The more funding we can generate the more effective we will be on delivering objectives.</p> <p>We will also explore how we can collaborate with local schools & colleges in providing a venue for student project work – for IT students for example – and work experience.</p> <p>In working for community benefit we will take engagement seriously, with other local charities, community groups, local authorities, our elected Members of Parliament, etc. We are not here to promote the Board's views; Swindon Civic Trust is here to represent the people of the Borough of Swindon and all its communities.</p>
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The Swindon Civic Trust is...

- a registered charity, no. 10950311;
- a member based charity managed by a Board of Trustees, membership being open to all who are interested in furthering the objectives of the charity;
- it was formed in 2001 and has its own constitution dated 16 February 2002;
- it joined some 900 similar societies across the country who were affiliated to the national parent organisation, the Civic Trust;
- following changes in April 2010 it is now affiliated to the new national parent organisation, Civic Voice;
- its core business is to work towards improving the local places where people live;
- our constitution encompasses the geography, history, natural history, architecture, the built environment and the process of government;
- committed to the preservation, protection, development & improvement of features of either historic or public interest.

As at May 2010 its Trustees are;

- Lisa Hawkes (Chair)
- Geraint Day (Vice Chair)
- David Body (Secretary)
- Donald Brunwin (Treasurer)
- Vivien Dipper
- Stephen Milner
- Martha Parry
- Norma Thompson

Membership

Membership of the Swindon Civic Trust is open to all and is valid for 12 months from 1 April and entitles members to attend all of our lectures and events free (currently £4 per event for non-members). The cost of membership for 2010-11 is £5 and will be reviewed for future years. The Gift Aid process allows the Trust to gain an extra 28p in the £.

If you would like to be actively involved in our work we have many avenues which may appeal to you. We welcome all as Members, which is help in itself, but especially need the support of people able to help with;

- reviewing and commenting on planning applications;
- engaging in community work;
- experienced in working with local authorities;
- writing quality grant applications;
- interest in our local heritage;
- bringing green & environmental issues into our daily lives;
- helping with equality and diversity in community issues;
- experienced in web site design and maintenance;
- the running of the charity as a Trustee.

If you would like to join and/or help us help our community contact us on;

info@swindoncivictrust.org.uk or call on (01793) 520592 or write to Swindon Civic Trust, 9 East Street, Swindon SN1 5BU.