



HISTORIC CATHEDRAL CITIES ALLIANCE: A NEW VENTURE GROWING FAST

The Historic Cathedral Cities Alliance (HCCA) was launched on Saturday 24th October 2015 at the Civic Voice Annual Convention in Bristol. This is a new venture, growing under the umbrella of Civic Voice. It has already drawn together civic societies in over 20 cathedral cities but its concerns are relevant to all Britain's historic towns and cities.

The HCCA was launched by Spencer de Grey, Head of Design at Foster and Partners, who recently produced a major study of cathedral cities, published as *Cathedral Cities in Peril* with English Heritage. The Launch was attended by members of many local civic societies, as well as representatives of national heritage and conservation organisations.

Aims

The HCCA aims to set up a network of individuals and organisations to:

- Share ideas about the challenges facing historic cities, through information exchange by social media and twice-yearly meetings
- Consider and publicise a variety of solutions to the challenges identified
- Represent these cities and give them more power to shape their future in ways which protect their heritage

Background

Civic societies in a number of historic cathedral cities have become increasingly concerned about the tension between the conservation of the historic city and the current drive for growth. Spencer de Grey described cathedral cities as one of the 'glories of the UK', but noted that many are threatened with over-large, ill-considered developments, which endanger the very qualities which make them so attractive.

At the same time a number of other groups have highlighted the need to protect and enhance historic cities, which have enormous economic, as well as cultural and social value to the country. These bodies include the Kenwood House group, the Historic Towns Forum and Green Balance, which in 2014 produced *The Sustainable Growth of Cathedral Cities and Historic Towns*. The aim of the HCCA is to help civic societies to contribute to, and learn from, the debate which is already going on at national level.

Next steps

The HCCA has been awarded a grant from the All Churches Trust. This will support a national conference, planned for 8th March 2016, and the development of a dedicated website and information exchange hosted by Civic Voice.

A Planning Group has been set up to take things forward, convened by Jan Pahl and John Walker. The Planning Group includes: David Evans (Chester), Ian Green (Oxford), Noel James (Historic Towns Forum), Jan Pahl (Canterbury), David Turnock (Peterborough), John Walker (Civic Voice), Chris Winter (Wells).