

# NEWS



# LETTER

Förlög Jörvikskiris með rödd Jörvikskiris

*Our quarterly update for members*

*Quarter 1, 2016*



## **From the Chair.**

Last year saw a mixture of exciting and frustrating times regarding devolution in the UK. 'Exciting' because devolution became very much a current affair and no longer restricted to London, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland as it had been since 1998 and 'Frustrating' because, in comparison, the devolution that is now being handed out is inequitable in so many ways.

Back in 2011 when I first started looking for like-minded people to get the Yorkshire Devolution Movement off the ground, any suggestion that further regional devolution should happen was, at best, met with dismissive comments and, at worst, ridiculed. After all, just seven years earlier the Labour Government had attempted to introduce regional assemblies and failed, miserably. However, I did find like-minded people and in March 2013 the Yorkshire Devolution Movement was officially founded as an active organization and the serious business of campaigning for real devolution to Yorkshire began.

Through that campaigning we have put the case for Yorkshire and for devolution to Local Authorities, MPs, MEPs, businesses, the media, the public and directly to Government in Whitehall. We have inspired new voices to speak out for Yorkshire, such as Yorkshire First, a new political party founded in 2014 by Richard Carter, who attended the formative meetings of the YDM Executive Committee, together with Stewart Arnold and Richard Honnoraty, YDM's Vice-Chair and Treasurer respectively. We have been sought by journalists to give our views and contributions to news reports regarding Yorkshire and devolution. We have been specifically mentioned by politicians at both local and national level, such as in the document, "*A devolution dialogue: Evolution or revolution?*"<sup>1</sup> by Paul Tyler and Sir Nick Harvey MP in 2015. There is no doubt that our campaigning has contributed to the escalation of devolution as an issue to the level where we now can focus on the right geography and model of devolution rather than also on the idea of regional devolution itself.

These achievements have all been made possible by the support we have received from members like you and I take this opportunity to personally thank you on behalf of this Movement for that support. Excellent as those achievements are, there are many goals for which we must continue to campaign in order to address the inequitable position in which Yorkshire still finds itself. To achieve those goals we need both financial and active support from our members. Please consider either making a donation or contacting us if you would like to make a more hands-on contribution toward our goals. Together we can achieve them! Thank you.

*Nigel Sollitt*

## A Devolution Timeline for Yorkshire:

1998: Devolution granted to London, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland.

2004: Yorkshire & the Humber referendum for a devolved assembly cancelled.

2010: Rt Hon David Blunkett asked Prime Minister to give one good reason why Yorkshire should not have her own parliament – Prime Minister gave none!

2011: Nigel Sollitt began his quest to create a movement for a Yorkshire Parliament and social media group 'Yorkshire Regional Movement' formed with Thomas Kirkwood and Alex Beck.

2012: Change of name of social media group to, 'Yorkshire Devolution Movement' and call for foundation meeting announced by Nigel Sollitt.

2013: March - Yorkshire Devolution Movement founded at meeting in York with Gareth Shanks, Stewart Arnold (former Chair of 'Campaign for Yorkshire') and Nigel Sollitt as its Executive Committee – YDM website launched.

September – Meeting in York to discuss way forward for devolution to Yorkshire, further attendees including James Alexander (then Leader of City of York Council), Diana Wallis (former MEP), Richard Carter (now Leader of Yorkshire First), Richard Honnoraty (now YDM Treasurer) and Gordon Dabinett (Professor for Regional Studies at Sheffield University) – direction decided - executive roles allocated – campaign planning initiated  
October - YDM Registered at Companies House.

2014: YDM launched several campaigns inc 'Flag Campaign' calling for all authorities within the traditional county of Yorkshire to fly the White Rose from their buildings; - YDM submission to the Political & Constitutional Reform Committee<sup>2</sup> regarding the future of devolution after the Scottish independence referendum. - YDM feature in press, radio and TV. - Yorkshire First founded as a political party by Richard Carter, Stewart Arnold & Richard Honnoraty.



Attendees of YDM meeting – York, September 2013

2015: Greg Mulholland MP proposes a Mayor for the reunited Ridings of Yorkshire<sup>3</sup> - The Treasury received 38 devolution bids including 10 involving parts of Yorkshire. – YDM submitted proposal for Yorkshirewide devolution to to the Treasury<sup>4</sup>. – Several deals involving parts of Yorkshire agreed in principle. - YDM conclude that battle for gaining acceptance of devolution is won and that campaigning now need focus only on geography and model of devolution. – Launch of new upgraded YDM web-site<sup>5</sup>  
2016: YDM launch, 'Campaign for a Yorkshire Parliament'.

**2030: Mission accomplished????????????????????**

### Links to articles mentioned in this edition:

<sup>1</sup><http://www.centreforum.org/assets/pubs/devolutio-n-dialogue.pdf>

<sup>2</sup><https://yorkshiredevolutionmovement.wordpress.com/2014/10/18/634/>

<sup>3</sup><http://gregmulholland.org/en/article/2015/1085813/mulholland-calls-for-mayor-of-yorkshire-and-reuniting-the-county>

<sup>4</sup><https://yorkshiredevolution.co.uk/news/4/YDM-Submission-to-the-Treasury-on-Devolution-Proposals.html>

<sup>5</sup><https://yorkshiredevolution.co.uk/what-we-want.html>

## Osborne's deals - not good enough!

Yorkshire deserves and should have so much better than the devolution that is currently being tabled. The Chancellor has skipped a step in the process that is vital to the real meaning of devolution and that was not skipped in the process of devolution to London, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales. That step being 'reference to the people'. In the process of devolution to each of those parts of the UK firstly, the identities of the people were respected in the boundaries of the area to be devolved and secondly, the people within those boundaries were given the opportunity via referenda to decide whether they wanted the model and detail of devolution on offer. Neither courtesy has been afforded to Yorkshire. Instead we

have a situation where the boundaries are being determined by councillors squabbling over what best suits their political ambition, deals regarding the detail of devolution being struck with Whitehall behind closed doors and a model of devolution being forced upon us in the form of metro mayors. Only when the geography, the deal and the model of devolution have been imposed upon us will the people of Yorkshire have any say at all and that will consist of electing someone to a position that most of us do not want to exist! This is not YDM's definition of real devolution and that is why we campaign for a 'Yorkshire Conversation' where the Yorkshire people would have the say they deserve.



## Current YDM Campaigns:

'Yorkshire Studies in Yorkshire Education'

'Yes to Yorkshire, No to City Regions'

'Campaign for a Yorkshire Parliament'

## How you can help:

Your subscriptions are always greatly appreciated but you may like to help achieve the goals we share in other ways as well. Examples of how you can do so are:

- **Get active** – the Executive Committee are all volunteers working in their spare time so if you would like to help with YDM administration or campaigning as a volunteer please contact us; your help will give us more time to focus on more campaigns.
- **Get digging** – if you are able to make a donation, any amount you contribute will mean we will have more funds to get the most from our campaigns.
- **Get recruiting** - the more subscribing members you recruit for us the more funds we have and the more potential volunteers we have to make our campaigning even more effective so that our goals are realised sooner.

## Contact us:

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