

WHALEY BRIDGE AMENITY SOCIETY

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 500862

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2012

I must thank the Society's Officers and Executive Committee members for their support during the past year particularly Cllr Anne Winter (Honorary Secretary), Martin Thomas (Honorary Treasurer), and Dr Bernard Treves Brown (webmaster and lead on planning matters). Our Society depends upon the success of our Coffee Mornings in the Mechanics Institute. Thanks to all who have helped on the day, or have donated cakes, and raffle and tombola prizes. Our thanks to Barbara Pritchard for providing refreshments at our meetings, to Andrew Slater who repaired minor damage to the wall and gate, and to Vice-Chairman Joy Brown for deputising in my absence. I regret to report the passing of Dr Dorothy Pearson (our President and a founder member of our Society in the 1960s, a former Chairman and Hon. Treasurer) and Peter Rogers (sometime Hon. Secretary). I represented the Society at their funerals.

Since the last AGM there have been six meetings of the Executive Committee and two Coffee Mornings. All members of the Society may attend and speak at Executive Committee meetings, and we have been pleased to welcome several this year.

The business of the Society is conducted in the context of promoting the Objects of the Society:

- **to promote high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit** (ie the civil parish of Whaley Bridge)
- **to stimulate public interest in and care for the beauty, history and character of this area and its surroundings**
- **to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area of benefit.**

CLUBROOM: The future of the Clubroom remains uncertain. Its usage as an audio-visual centre for the proposed Whaley Bridge Urban Heritage Trail would require significant grant funding, but this is not forthcoming. The local Living History Group has produced an excellent booklet about the Trail, and this has been a source of income for the Toddbrook Reservoir Historic Valves project.

CANAL & RIVER TRUST: Canal & River Trust (CRT) became the successor to British Waterways on 2nd July 2012. All assets and responsibilities of British Waterways in England and Wales have been transferred to it. CRT has merged with the England and Wales operations of The Waterways Trust, a charity previously affiliated to British Waterways, to avoid confusion and as both charities have similar aims.

LITTER PICKS: This year, the Town Council took out public liability insurance cover for community litter picks, in which some of our members participated.

CIVIC VOICE: Our Society has continued with its membership of the new civic society movement **Civic Voice** (which it joined in 2010 as a founder member). Its campaigns include: Civicwatch, Love Local, Save Our High Streets, and Street Pride. Neighbouring members include: Bollington Civic Society, Dronfield Civic Society, Eyam Village Society, Cheadle Civic Heritage Trust, Marple Civic Society, and The Wilmslow Trust.

REGENERATION: Following the local elections in 2011, High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) has introduced the Councillors' Initiative Fund. The Friends of Furness Vale Station Group has been awarded £300 for the completion of the Ann Picot Memorial Garden on the Manchester-bound platform. A bid by the COGS (Community Organising Green Space) group for £2,850 for the levelling and drainage of the field off Yeadsley Lane is awaiting approval.

At Whaley Bridge Station, Network Rail has replaced the Buxton-bound platform by a new platform at a higher level.

SHALLCROSS INCLINE GREENWAY: The construction of this project has been completed this year. The route is being used by walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and is wheelchair accessible at both ends and throughout its length. It adds to the existing Linear Park, and takes forward the aspiration of the former Whaley Bridge Urban District Council to have public access along the line (as far as practicable) of the former Cromford and High Peak Railway within the Parish. The 'Shallcross Trail' has been waymarked between the Canal Basin and the Greenway. Have you seen all the 14 markers?

PLANNING: The complex Localism Act 2011 received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. Of particular interest are: General power of competence (eg Whaley Bridge Town Council), Abolition of regional strategies, Community right to challenge, Community right to bid, Community right to build, Requirement to carry out pre-application consultation, Neighbourhood Planning and Community Infrastructure Levy. Regulations are being introduced at different times through Statutory Instruments and Commencement Orders.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March; see:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

It is in this context that HPBC, the local planning authority, has continued working on the preparation of an up-to-date evidence-based Local Plan to replace the existing Plan that is based upon a planning horizon of 2011! The revised timetable is for the Adoption of a replacement Local Plan in September 2014, with Public Consultation on a Draft Local Plan in February/March 2013, the adoption of an Interim Policy

Statement in April 2013, and an Examination in Public in May 2014. The procurement of affordable housing to meet local needs will be an important issue.

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNRs): The Brookfield Pond (formerly known as CPA Pond) was designated in 2007 and is one of the 45 LNRs in Derbyshire. A Section 106 agreement between the local planning authority and the developer of the housing in the Hockerley New Road area provided for the transfer of land to be maintained in perpetuity by HPBC. This transfer, together with a sum of £10,000, took place during 2011. It is hoped that this land (to the north of the Jodrell Road Children's Recreation Ground) will in time become a protected Local Nature Reserve. The Society has made this recommendation in its response to the High Peak Local Plan Options Consultation. HPBC Officers have been asked to invite Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to a site meeting.

BRIDGE 42: Some 29 buildings and other structures within the Parish of Whaley Bridge are registered as Grade II Listed Buildings at English Heritage's website: <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/results.aspx?index=26> and one, the Canal Warehouse, as Grade II*. Of particular interest at this time is Network Rail's railway bridge (aka 'Bridge 42') on Buxton Road, near Forge Road. It was constructed circa 1863 in readiness for the extension of the railway line from Whaley Bridge Station to Buxton on 16th June in that year. Its citation reads '*Quarry faced grindstone abutments with dressed stone caps. Double track bed carried on four cast iron arched ribs cast in two parts and joined in the centre. The spandrels each have five rectangular headed openings diminishing towards the centre. Cornice and solid parapet above, also iron.*'
(Reference: <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1119771>)

Network Rail had been refused Listed Building Consent by the Local Planning Authority (HPBC) for work that would strengthen the railway bridge. Network Rail's intention is that the restriction of a 10mph speed limit across the bridge for goods trains be removed. Planning permission is not needed – but Listed Building Consent, for this Grade 2 Listed Building, is.

Last year, an appeal by Network Rail (using the 'Written representations' route) was abandoned by the Inspector. This year, the appeal resumed (using the 'Public Inquiry' route). It was confirmed that in the event of remote monitoring revealing that a trigger point had been reached the likely outcome would be temporary closure of the line and of the road to enable evaluation and possible propping.

As the loss of a listed structure should be exceptional, there must be a clear balance in favour of public benefits against the harm caused to heritage significance. In this instance, the Inspector found that the case has not been made either on grounds of safety or of other public benefits to justify immediate replacement of the bridge. He upheld the decision reached by HPBC, and dismissed the appeal.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAYS (PROWs): The Society continues to make representations to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) about matters as they are

brought to our attention. The claim for a footpath in Furness Vale between Station Road and the canal towpath is awaiting DCC's attention. The Town Council's claim for a link between PROW WB61 and Chapel Road at Cadster is progressing. The Society has recently made comments to DCC during the public consultation stage of their Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) (2012-2017).

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.wbas.org.uk (The Society's website)

www.whaleybridge.com (Whaley's 'Community' website)

www.merseybasin.org.uk (The Campaign's 'legacy' website)

www.civicvoice.org.uk (The successor to The Civic Trust)

www.britishwaterways.co.uk

<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk> (Canal & River Trust is the successor to British Waterways)

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/rights_of_way/default.asp
(Information about Public Rights of Way within Derbyshire)

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2011.08.01%20RP2%20Goyt%20Valley%20Greenway_tcm44-176204.pdf (DCC Officer Report on Shallcross Incline Greenway)

[www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2011.09.12%20\(3\)%20Mins%20of%201%20Aug%2011_tcm44-188353.pdf](http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2011.09.12%20(3)%20Mins%20of%201%20Aug%2011_tcm44-188353.pdf) (DCC Decision and Conditions to approve Shallcross Incline Greenway)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2012/2013:

Friday, 23rd November: 6.45pm: Doors open and Refreshments at Mechanics Institute. 7pm: Talks, followed by 7.30pm: Start of Whaley Bridge Amenity Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, 6th April: WBAS Coffee Morning, Mechanics Institute

Saturday, 22nd June: Civic Voice's 'Civic Day 2013'

Saturday, 24th August: WBAS Coffee Morning, Mechanics Institute

Annual 'spring clean' of Club Room: To be notified

John A T Pritchard (Chairman)

1st November 2012