

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013

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.

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 continues to remain uncertain.

CANAL & RIVER TRUST: Canal & River Trust (CRT) is the successor organisation to British Waterways. Interested parties are in talks with CRT to seek a way forward for the 'Transfer Shed' (aka the 'Transshipment Warehouse') to be used for the benefit of the community. The Transfer Shed is one of the two Grade 2* Listed Buildings in the Parish, the other being St. James' Church, Taxal.

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

REGENERATION: In 2011, High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) introduced the Councillors' Initiative Fund. The Friends of Furness Vale Station Group received £300 for the completion of the Ann Picot Memorial Garden on the Manchester-bound platform. The COGS (Community Organising Green Space) group in Furness Vale has received £2,850 towards the cost of levelling and drainage of the field off Yardsley Lane. A further £2,850 has been awarded to HPBC's Horticulture Department to inhibit the use of motor bicycles on the Linear Park.

At Whaley Bridge Station, Network Rail has completed the reconstruction of the waiting room on the Manchester-bound platform. In the matter of Bridge 42 on Buxton Road, there is nothing further to add to my report of 12 months ago. The matter is left with Network Rail to find a way of securing Listed Building Consent to repair the structure.

PLANNING: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012. At its heart, NPPF has a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, 'a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking'. HPBC has to 'identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land' (Para 47).

'Planning applications for housing should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should **not** be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites' (Para 49).

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! A further revision of the timetable was agreed in July this year: Publication of the 'Submission Document' (March 2014), Submission for Examination (July 2014), Examination (October 2014) and Adoption (February 2015). The procurement of affordable housing to meet local needs will be an important issue.

LOCALISM ACT 2011 and NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: The complex Localism Act 2011 received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. It gives communities through their local Town or Parish Council the [General Power of Competence](#) (Whaley Bridge Town Council, a Quality Council, has GPC status), Abolition of regional strategies, and Community rights to challenge, bid and build. Some funding for Whaley Bridge will become available through the Community Infrastructure Levy arrangement if and when it is introduced by HPBC. The Society has several members actively involved with preparation of the Whaley Bridge Neighbourhood Plan through its Steering Group, and its two 'topic' groups; Housing and Regeneration, and Countryside and Wildlife. Funding for the Whaley Bridge Neighbourhood Plan is available through the National Programme on Planning.

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNRs): Brookfield Pond (formerly known as CPA Pond), designated in 2007, is one of 46 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.

Natural England leads the process of Local Nature Reserve designation, details at:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/lnr/declaration.aspx>.

The Society should invite the Whaley Bridge Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to make a joint approach to Derbyshire Wildlife Trust with a view to having the wildlife interest at the Jodrell Road woodland (and other suitable sites in the Parish) assessed by the Trust's Wildlife Sites Officer, from which point Natural England can become involved.

PUBLIC ACCESS: The Society continues to make representations to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) about matters relating to Public Rights of Way (PROWs) as they are brought to our attention. Applications to DCC (for new rights of way or modifications to existing rights of way) may be tracked at DCC's Modification Order Application Register; please see: http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/Access/rights_of_way/register_of_application/default.asp.

The claim for a footpath in Furness Vale between Station Road and the canal towpath is awaiting DCC's attention. It was submitted in March 2011; (Reference: 03735). We have been advised that a new claim (Reference: 02872) is being prepared for three rights of way in the Park Crescent/Yeardsley Lane area of Furness Vale.

The Town Council's claim for a link between PROW WB61 and Chapel Road at Cadster has been approved. The interesting Officer Report may be seen at: http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2010-11-29%20%20FP%2061%20Whaley%20Bridge_tcm44-152051.pdf.

The new Shallcross Incline Greenway is proving very popular. The DCC Greenway Officer has visited Whaley Bridge to meet members of the Town Council for a walk and discussion about extending the Greenway network.

DCC is receiving many applications for the designation of land as Village Green status, and reported recently that 32 applications await processing. The Growth and Infrastructure Act of Parliament (GIA 2013) received Royal Assent in April 2013. An application for Village Green status at Pitt Green Fields (Reference: VG135) in our Parish was received by DCC by February 2013, and it is understood that this application will be determined under the Commons Act 2006 (CA 2006) legislation; see: http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2013-03-18%20T%26VG%20Update_tcm44-221545.pdf.

Section 16 of GIA 2013 inserts into CA 2006 a new section (15C), which provides that an application may not be made under section 15(1) of CA 2006 'where a trigger event has occurred', but may be revived if there is a 'related terminating event'. Examples of trigger and terminating events are the lodging of a planning application and the withdrawal of that planning application respectively.

A provision of GIA 2013 reduces from two years to one year the 'grace period'. This important change will to a degree be helpful to landowners in some circumstances.

What this means is this. CA 2006 provides that an application for the registration of a town or village green may be made within two years of the use of the land 'as of right' being brought to an end (eg by the fencing off of the land, or the erection of notices making such use by permission). GIA 2013 reduces this two year period to just one year.