

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2015

I must thank the Society's Officers and Executive Committee members for their support during the past year - particularly Cllr Anne Winter (Honorary Secretary), Cllr Martin Thomas (Honorary Treasurer) and Vice-Chairman Joy Brown. We have missed Dr Bernard Treves Brown our 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, raffle and tombola prizes. Our thanks, too, go to Barbara Pritchard for preparing the Club Room for our meetings and to Eileen Burt for auditing our accounts.

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. At the time of writing, representatives from two local groups have shown interest. After a number of meetings, one of the groups (Whaley Bridge Brass Band) has decided not to pursue its interest.

The window frame to the left of the front door has been repaired.

Thanks go to Andrew Slater for looking after the Club Room heating, and to Andrew and Jon Hooley for investigating (and making operational again) a blocked drain.

A new fire extinguisher has been donated by our Hon. Treasurer and placed in the Club Room.

**CIVIC VOICE:** Our Society became a founder member in 2010 of the new civic society movement **Civic Voice**. Its campaigns include: Street Pride and Local Heritage List. Neighbouring members include: Bollington Civic Society (see: <http://www.happy-valley.org.uk/index.htm>), Eyam Village Society (see: <http://www.eyamvillage.org.uk/index.html>) and Marple Civic Society (see: <http://www.marplecivicsociety.org.uk/index.html> and: <http://www.slideshare.net/CivicVoice2010/how-we-listed-our-local-heritage-assets-marple-civic-society>).

**PLANNING:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was introduced in March 2012. At its heart there is a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, 'a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking'. High Peak Borough Council (HPBC), the local planning authority OUTSIDE the area of the Peak Park, has to identify and update annually a supply of specific viable and deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against its 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'. Because of 'underperformance', the 5% buffer has been increased to 20%.

**FIVE-YEAR LAND SUPPLY:** The attention of members interested in the contentious and complicated matter of the method of calculation of the 'Five-Year Land Supply' is drawn to:

- Documents X11 and X12 in the High Peak Local Plan Examination Library (see below)
- the commentary provided by Planning Advisory Service; see:

[http://www.pas.gov.uk/local-planning/-/journal\\_content/56/332612/3757749/ARTICLE](http://www.pas.gov.uk/local-planning/-/journal_content/56/332612/3757749/ARTICLE)

#### **DEVELOPMENT:**

The redevelopment of Toddbrook Sailing Club's on-shore facilities is now underway. The Club has, in recent years, widened access to their sport, particularly with local schools.

The Society had objected to the planning application for 'up to 107 houses' on land to the south of Macclesfield Road, noting that the site was not compliant with the site (aka C9) which had been added by HPBC, by a single vote majority, to their emerging replacement Local Plan. Outline planning permission was granted on Election Day.

At the time of writing, a lease agreement between HPBC and COGS had not been signed, and COGS has not been able to commence the proposed drainage and levelling off of the field in Yardsley Lane, Furness Vale.

**The HIGH PEAK LOCAL PLAN:** Local Plans are seen by HM Government as key to delivering 'sustainable development'. They should, as far as possible, reflect the aspirations of local communities and should strive to contribute towards their wider social, economic and environmental objectives. A Local Plan also needs to be consistent with the Government's planning principles and policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

The out-of-date existing Local Plan is that which was adopted in March 2005, as updated by the 'High Peak Saved Local Plan Policies' document of March 2008, as required by Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act of Parliament of 2004.)

HPBC sent its proposed replacement Local Plan (aka the 'submission' version) to the Planning Inspectorate on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2014; see: <http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/hp/council-services/the-high-peak-local-plan/high-peak-local-plan-publication>.

This Submission document covers housing, business, environment, health and well-being, and infrastructure issues. It identifies where development will take place, how new jobs will be supported and how the environment of the Borough will be protected and enhanced. It allocates sites for new residential development required to meet a target of 360 dwellings per annum, generating a need for 7,200 new dwellings over the 20-year plan period 2011-2031.

The current 'state of play' relating to the replacement High Peak Local Plan is summarised at:

<http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/hp/council-services/the-high-peak-local-plan/high-peak-local->

[plan-examination](#)

and the complete set of documents is available at:

[http://highpeak-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/high\\_peak/exam\\_library](http://highpeak-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/high_peak/exam_library).

High Peak BC is now seeking approval for a revised target of 7,000 new dwellings over the 20-year plan period 2011-2031 at an average rate of 350 dwellings per annum.

A Public Examination of HPBC's proposed replacement Local Plan (aka the 'Submission' version) was held during January and February 2015, and a follow-up session was held in Glossop on 3rd September.

**HERITAGE:** We will continue to urge HPBC to prepare a Local Heritage Register (of 'non-listed' assets).

The 'Heritage at Risk' Register 2015 of Historic England (the successor to English Heritage) contains nine entries across High Peak. One of which is the Terminal (aka Trans-shipment) Warehouse (Grade 2\*) at Whaley Bridge Canal Basin on the Peak Forest Canal now in the ownership of the Canal & River Trust (CRT), a charitable trust and successor to British Waterways.

Its citation reads 'Stone built warehouse of three bays dated 1832. Central bay straddles canal, outer bays formerly housed northern terminus sidings of the Cromford & High Peak Railway. The building is currently vacant. The Canal and River Trust is now exploring options for re-use with the Local Authority and Historic England'.

(NB The other Grade 2\* Listed Building in our Parish is St. James' Church, Taxal).

Regarding Bridge 42 on Buxton Road, it is understood that Network Rail are continuing to find a way to secure Listed Building Consent to repair the structure.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING:** Members of the Society are involved with others in the preparation of the Whaley Bridge and Furness Vale Neighbourhood Plan. The 'designated' area proposed by the Town Council coincides with the boundary of the civil parish of Whaley Bridge, and has been approved by the two relevant local planning authorities High Peak Borough Council and Peak District National Park Authority.

**LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNRs):** Brookfield Pond (formerly known as CPA Pond), designated in 2007, is one of 52 LNRs in Derbyshire. It is managed by the Town Council.

Under a Section 106 agreement between HPBC and the developer of the housing in the area of Hockerley New Road, an area of land (to the north of the Jodrell Road Children's Recreation Ground) has been transferred to be maintained in perpetuity by HPBC together with a sum of £10,000. Protection for this site, together with the adjacent site (bounded by Meadowfield, Hill Drive, Stoneheads Rise and Hockerley Lane), and perhaps other sites in the parish could be sought via the Whaley Bridge Neighbourhood Plan.

The site at Hillbridge Wood and Park Wood, near Taxal, is on Derbyshire Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserves list.

Information about Local Nature Reserve designation is available at the Natural England website:

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

**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. We have written this year to DCC about the closed PROW WB 28 at Toddbrook Reservoir.

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/rightsofway/registerofapplication/default.asp>

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

The Shallcross Incline Greenway continues to be very popular. The Town Council has liaised with DCC over essential repairs necessitated by the egress of water from a field. There has been no progress to report on the matter of the extension of this Greenway towards the Shady Oak Public House and beyond.

We note that HPBC has replaced the rotten wooden footway on their bridge over the brook on the path between Meadowfield (opposite Meadowside) and Hill Drive (near to its junction with Hockerley Lane). Do you use this path? HPBC is to carry out 'interim' repairs on the old Cromford & High Peak Railway Bridge over the River Goyt near the Canal Wharf car park, pending the outcome of a detailed 'condition survey' of this bridge.

We have written to DCC and to Canal & River Trust about the closed section of PROW WB 28 across the Toddbrook Reservoir dam (and await progress on this matter); DCC has agreed to repair the re-aligned PROW WB 15 at Bridgemont following storm damage.

In the matter of 'horses on the canal towpath', DCC have issued the following statement:

*'A towpath is legally a part of the navigation of a canal or navigable river. It may or may not also be a Public Right of Way. The public right of way and any right of towage are separate and distinct rights. A towpath is capable of being dedicated as a public right of way. There is no right to ride a horse on a towpath except for pulling boats, unless the towpath is also a bridleway; but this is rare, for most canal companies took steps to prevent dedication of their towpaths for riding. It has been the policy of the British Waterways Board not to dedicate towpaths, although it generally allows the public to use them. The Board is likely to have taken steps under HA 1980 S 31 to prevent a public right of way arising through presumed dedication. Nonetheless, many miles of towpaths along canals are recorded as public rights of way (normally footpaths) on Definitive Maps.'*

**TODDBROOK RESERVOIR HISTORIC VALVES PROJECT:** Work is continuing on the preparation of the Interpretation Board to accompany the valves at Reservoir Road.

#### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2015/2016:**

##### **2015**

**Friday, 20th 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**

**2016**

**Saturday, 16th April: WBAS Coffee Morning, Mechanics Institute**

**Saturday, ???: Civic Voice's 'Civic Day 2016' (To Be Advised)**

**Saturday, 20th August: WBAS Coffee Morning, Mechanics Institute**

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

John A T Pritchard (Chairman)

30th October 2015