

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S REPORT 2024**

**(AS ADOPTED AT THE 2024 AGM ON 17<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2025)**

### **Society Matters**

The Objects of the Society are:

- **To promote high standards of planning and architecture in, or affecting the area of benefit, which is 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.**

The Executive Committee is as follows:

Chair: vacant

Vice-chair: Joy Brown

Treasurer: Martin Thomas

Secretary: Andrew Slater

Les Cheshire

Mary Nother

John Swift

Subscriptions remain the same as last year and we have continued our subscription to 'Civic Voice', which keeps us up to date with the activities of other civic societies and of civic issues which are being raised and dealt with nationally.

Owing to the unavailability of volunteers, it has unfortunately again not been possible to hold any coffee mornings since the last AGM.

This year, we have been unable to hold a meeting of the Executive Committee, but three site visits have been made by members of the Executive Committee in connection with the funding programme (see below).

Sadly, the membership of the Society continues to decline, owing to which it is becoming increasingly difficult to continue the full range of the Society's activities. Over the years, many of the functions of the Society have been taken over by new groups which have been formed for specific purposes. Therefore, on completion of the distribution of our funds through the funding programme (see below), we will formally review the feasibility of the Society's continued operation, and identify any functional gaps which may be left if the Society were to be wound-up. The membership will, of course, be fully involved in any resulting decisions.

### **Funding Programme**

As we reported at last year's AGM, as a registered charity the Society is seeking to distribute the funds raised from the sale of the Club Room in 2023. A programme has been devised for funding projects benefiting the residents of the civil parish of Whaley Bridge (which is the Society's area of benefit), including the wards of Fernilee, Furness Vale, Taxal and Yeadsley.

Expressions of interest have been received from several organisations in the civil parish. They have been considered by the Executive Committee, and as a result, the following grants have been awarded:

- Whaley Bridge Community Trust (Footsteps) for a replacement lift.

- Furness Vale COGS for additional drainage at the sports field in Furness Vale.
- Furness Vale Community Association and Social Club for improvements to their building.
- First Taxal Scout Group for improvements to their scout hut and access.

We anticipate that the funds will have been largely distributed within the next year.

### **Toddbrook Reservoir**

The Canal and River Trust's construction of a new spillway for Toddbrook Reservoir continues, following the emergency in 2019. This will be followed by the removal of the old auxiliary spillway, which failed in 2019, and the work is now expected to be complete by late 2025, with the re-filling of the reservoir completing naturally over the winter of 2025/26. The Society will continue to monitor progress.

### **High Peak Local Plan**

As we highlighted in our previous report, High Peak Borough Council (HPBC) has embarked on a review of its Local Plan, which was adopted in 2016, to cover planning matters in the borough outside the Peak District National Park, in the period until 2031. Circumstances have changed and it has been determined that the Local Plan needs to be updated. The new Plan will cover the period to 2041.

The UK Government published a new National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024 and in response, HPBC has produced an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS), which has been published on its website (see <https://www.highpeak.gov.uk/article/853/Local-Development-Scheme>).

The LDS includes the development of the Local Plan and contains a timetable of events, which includes the early engagement phase of 2023, followed by a Preferred Options Consultation in the spring of 2025 and the Proposed Submission Consultation in the winter of 2025. Adoption of the Local Plan is aimed at the autumn of 2026 (it was previously expected during mid-2026).

Changes in the revised Local Plan may have implications on the associated Neighbourhood Plans, and in particular on that for Whaley Bridge, which was adopted in 2024, and it may need to be revised as a consequence.

The Society will maintain a watching brief on these matters and will make contributions where appropriate.

Links to further details on the above local matters are available on the Society's website at <https://www.wbas.org.uk>.