

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016 (John A T Pritchard)

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 Joy Brown (Vice-Chairman). All are busy people with other community commitments. Anne was first in the queue on October 3rd this year at the Mechanics to select in person a date for our first Coffee Morning in 2017. We are grateful too to Andrew Slater who monitors the energy consumption (ie electricity) at the Club Room, and has taken on the management and maintenance of our website following the departure from Whaley Bridge of our former webmaster Dr Bernard Treves Brown. 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, too, go to Barbara Pritchard for preparing the Club Room for our meetings and to Eileen Burt for auditing our accounts. During the year, we learned that Peter Garlick, a former Chairman of the Society, had passed away. We were represented at his funeral; our deepest sympathy is extended to his family.

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.

GOLDEN JUBILEE: It was 50 years ago that the Society's first Constitution was adopted on 22nd March 1966, so this year marks our Golden Jubilee; on 18th June 1971 the Society became a Registered Charity. There will be a Jubilee Cake at AGM 2016.

CLUBROOM: The future of the Clubroom continues to remain uncertain. There have been four meetings attended by various officers of the Society in connection with interest shown by a certain party. The electricity consumption has not been as excessive, nor as costly, as it used to be before the current automated control arrangement was introduced. Thankfully, there has been no problem with the drains this year.

CIVIC VOICE: Our Society became a founder member in 2010 of the new civic society movement **Civic Voice**. Its campaigns include: **Street Pride** (see:

http://www.civicvoice.org.uk/uploads/files/Street_Pride_campaign_briefing_-_final_1.pdf) and **Local Heritage List** (see: <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/>). Nearby members include: Bollington Civic Society (see: <http://www.happy-valley.org.uk/civicsociety/civicsociety.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>).

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

- the discussion in a HPBC Officer Report dated 21st March 2016; see:

http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/sites/default/files/meetings/papers/papers-1225493352/6._land_adjacent_secondary_school_bankhall_chapel_en_le_frit_h1.pdf

- the HPBC Annual Monitoring Report webpage:

<http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/hp/council-services/local-development-framework/monitoring>. This shows that on 30th September 2016 the land supply in High Peak was assessed as 7.0 years.

DEVELOPMENT: Toddbrook Sailing Club has carried out major improvements to their on-shore facilities off Reservoir Road, and the Club held an Open Day on 25th September to celebrate. The Club has in recent years widened access to their sport, particularly with local schools. A new planning application (HPK/2016/0516) has recently been submitted to the relevant local planning authority High Peak Borough Council (HPBC). (NB Remember that there are two independent local planning authorities responsible for development control in the local government parish of Whaley Bridge; the other is the Peak District National Park Authority). This application seeks outline planning permission 'with all matters reserved (except access) for proposed residential dwellings and associated works'. The approximate description of the seven hectare site (see plans at the Mechanics Institute for precise details) is that it is bounded by Public Right of Way WB 60 between Mevril Road and the Scout Hut at the bottom of the Shallcross Incline Greenway (to the north), by the Shallcross Incline Greenway (to the east), the existing housing at Manor Road and Vaughan Road (to the north west) and the A5004 road (to the west). Access between the site and the A5004 is

shown at a point some distance to the north of existing housing. The southern boundary is a line across the existing agricultural land.

During the year, a legal lease agreement between HPBC and COGS has been signed, and COGS have been able to commence the drainage and levelling of the field off Yeadsley Lane in Furness Vale.

The HIGH PEAK LOCAL PLAN: The new High Peak Local Plan was adopted on 14th April 2016. It sets out the Council's vision and strategy for the Borough until 2031, the proposed locations for development and policies which will be used in determining planning applications. The Local Plan covers the administrative area of High Peak Borough Council (except for that part within the Peak District National Park) and replaces the 'saved' policies of the High Peak Local Plan (2005). The Plan, the Summary, the Examination Library and the Inspector's Report of 24th March 2016 may be seen respectively at:

<http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/pages/High%20Peak%20Local%20Plan%20Adopted%20April%202016.pdf>

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

http://highpeak-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/high_peak/exam_library

<http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/pages/Inspector%27s%20Report.pdf>.

Members' attention is drawn to Paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf and, in particular, to the extract: *'local planning authorities should ... ensure that their Local Plan ... identifies key sites which are critical to the delivery of the housing strategy over the plan period'*.

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. Canal & River Trust are 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; there has been a church on this site since 1286).

I am not aware of anything that has happened over the past 12 months regarding Network Rail's Bridge 42 on Buxton Road. An application for Listed Building Consent had been submitted to HPBC in June 2010, and was refused in March 2011. A subsequent appeal was dismissed in June 2012.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: Members of the Society have been involved with other members of the community 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 (ie our Society's 'area of benefit'; this area was 'designated' by the Peak Park Authority on 13th September 2013 and by HPBC on 24th October 2013. Topics which have been suggested for investigation and inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan include: Car Parking, Design of Buildings, Wildlife Corridors and Local Nature Reserves. It is anticipated that the town Council will be announcing in its next quarterly community newsletter that a public meeting is to be convened to progress the Neighbourhood Plan.

GREEN FLAG AWARDS: This year there are two Coveted Green Flag Awards to be celebrated. These awards are awarded by Keep Britain Tidy for a year, and must be re-applied for annually to achieve another flag. Eight strict criteria include environmental standards, cleanliness, sustainability and community involvement. Thanks to the Whaley Bridge Canal Group, led by Nev Clarke, for their part in helping to secure a Green Flag for a seven-mile section of the **Peak Forest Canal**; see: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/news-and-views/news/peak-forest-and-macclesfield-canals-awarded-prestigious-green-flag>. For the second year running, a Green Flag was awarded to **Whaley Bridge Memorial Park**; see: <http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/hp/council-services/parks-and-open-spaces/memorial-park-whaley-bridge>. Thanks, too, to the Friends of Memorial Park Group, to the organisers of the Park Run <http://www.parkrun.org.uk/whaleybridge-juniors/>, and last, but not least, to Paul Evans the Park Ranger.

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 was submitted in March 2011; (Reference: 03735). It was taken to DCC Regulatory Licensing and Appeals Committee on 25th July 2016 and the officer report may be seen at: http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/images/2016-07-25%20Item%206%20Whaley%20Bridge_tcm44-282053.pdf. It was resolved

that approval be given to make an Order under section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to add a footpath from Station Road to Footpath No. 2 via Calico Lane, in Whaley Bridge.

The status of the claim (Reference: 02872) for three rights of way in the Park Crescent/Yeardsley Lane area of Furness Vale continues to be shown as 'Awaiting Action'; see: http://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/access/rights_of_way/register_of_application/app-details.asp?appID=02872.

The Shallcross Incline Greenway has for several months awaited essential repairs necessitated by the egress of water from a field to the west. This Greenway lies on the line of a section of the former Cromford & High Peak Railway. I am advised that the land drainage system in the field had become damaged and ineffective over many years, possibly due to erosion by weather and cows, and that repairs have been carried out recently. Repairs to the damaged surface of the Greenway over 200 yards or so must now be carried out so that this popular Greenway can once again be used safely by walkers, cyclists and horseriders. There has been no progress (understandably, because of this problem on the existing Greenway) to report on the matter of the extension of this Greenway towards the Shady Oak Public House and beyond, eventually to the southern boundary of the parish of Whaley Bridge and onwards to Fernilee Reservoir.

It is noted that HPBC has recently carried out repairs to the surface of the old Cromford & High Peak Railway bridge over the River Goyt near the Canal Wharf car park. Canal & River Trust have repaired and reopened the closed section of PROW WB 28 across the Toddbrook Reservoir dam. I also reported in my last Annual Report that DCC have agreed to repair the re-aligned PROW WB 15 at Bridgemont following storm damage; this work continues to be outstanding and the Society has drawn this matter once again to the attention of DCC.

During the year, we have given our support in principle to a group of walkers wishing to promote a David Frith Memorial Bridge at the Cheshire end of the 'easement', the path along the northern bank of the Toddbrook Reservoir. They seek, too, a further easement to connect with the existing Public Rights of Way network to enable walkers to enjoy the beauty and tranquility of a walk between Reservoir Road and Kishfield Bridge (itself a Grade II Listed Building) on the Derbyshire/Cheshire boundary.

TODDBROOK RESERVOIR HISTORIC VALVES PROJECT: Work is continuing on the preparation of the Interpretation Board to accompany the valves at Reservoir Road. The proposed text and pictures for the Information Board have been revised.

RETIREMENT: I gave notice at last year's AGM that I would not seek election as Chairman at the 2016 AGM. I have been Chairman for 25 years, possibly longer. I shall be in my 80th year by the time of the AGM, and am willing to continue to serve as a member of the Executive Committee. I thank past and

present members for their support, and (at times) their tolerance. I extend my very best wishes to my successor.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2016/2017:

- **Friday, 18th November 2016: 6.45pm: Doors open and Refreshments at Mechanics Institute 7pm: Talks, followed by 7.30pm: Start of Whaley Bridge Amenity Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. GOLDEN JUBILEE CAKE, GUEST SPEAKERS, FREE RAFFLE (Non-Members welcome)**
-
- **Saturday, 22nd April 2017: WBAS Coffee Morning, Mechanics Institute**
- **Saturday, 17th June 2017: Civic Voice's 'Civic Day 2017'**
- **Saturday, 19th August 2017: WBAS Coffee Morning, Mechanics Institute**
- **Annual 'Spring Clean 2017' of Club Room: To be notified.**

John A T Pritchard (Chairman)

28th October 2016