

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2014

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), Vice-Chairman Joy Brown 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, too, go to Barbara Pritchard for preparing the Club Room for our meetings, and to Andrew Slater for looking after the heating.

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. Sadly, I attended the funeral of Jack Lawford, one of our longest-serving members and for several years our Honorary Auditor.

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 and have been shown around the Clubroom.

CIVIC VOICE: Our Society became a founder member in 2010 of the new civic society movement **Civic Voice**. Its campaigns include: Civicwatch, Street Pride and Local Heritage List. Neighbouring members include: Belper Civic Forum, Bollington Civic Society, Cheadle Civic Heritage Trust, Dronfield Civic Society, Eyam Village Society, Marple Civic Society, The Wilmslow Trust, and Wirksworth Civic Society.

PLANNING: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), introduced in March 2012, has at its heart a **presumption in favour of sustainable development**, 'a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking'. 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' (Para 47). Because of 'underperformance', the 5% buffer has been increased to 20%.

HPBC has continued working since our 2013 AGM on the preparation of an up-to-date evidence-based Local Plan to replace the existing Plan that ceased to be current in 2011. (NB 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.)

During 2014 HPBC has moved through a number of contentious meetings and votes to reach a position of having a 'Submission' version of the replacement Local Plan, and this was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 28th August; (see: <http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/hp/council-services/the-high-peak-local-plan/high-peak-local-plan-publication>). At the present time, HPBC is awaiting notification as to whether or not the Plan may go forward to a Public Examination (in November/December 2014, to be confirmed) and Adoption (in February 2015, dependent on the timing and the outcome of the Public Examination).

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. The High Peak Local Plan also needs to be consistent with the Government's planning principles and policies as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 procurement of affordable housing to meet local needs will be an important issue.

During the year, the Society has supported the planning application by Toddbrook Sailing Club for the redevelopment of their on-shore facilities. The Club has in recent years widened access to their sport, particularly with local schools. We have 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.

HERITAGE: We have suggested to HPBC that Taxal Lodge should be added to HPBC's Local Heritage Register, currently at draft stage. The following link contains the final report of the survey by community volunteers of Grade II Listed Buildings across High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands (but excluding buildings in the Peak Park and buildings in use as places of worship), and a preliminary 'local list': <http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/pages/Counting%20Our%20Heritage%20Knowledge%20sharing%20event%20small%20%282%29.pdf>. The Lodge, built in 1904, was the family home of Lieutenant Colonel Henry Ramsden-Jodrell, the local benefactor. The Jodrell family's 'Muniments' are held at the

Manchester University, John Rylands Library; see:

<http://apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=133-jod&cid=-1#-1>.

On English Heritage's 'Heritage at Risk' Register, there are eight entries across High Peak, of which one is in Whaley Bridge. The Terminal (aka Trans-shipment or Transfer) Warehouse in the Whaley Bridge Canal Basin on the Peak Forest Canal is 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 Cromford & High Peak railway. Continuing to deteriorate with roof needing repairs, its roof now leaks badly. Owners are now exploring a scheme for re-use with the Local Authority and English Heritage.' Interested parties in Whaley Bridge continue to meet with CRT to seek a way forward for the Warehouse to be used for the benefit of the community. (NB The building is one of two Grade 2* Listed Buildings in the Parish, the other being St. James' Church, Taxal). A local architect has prepared drawings showing options for the re-use of the Warehouse, and these have been displayed in the Mechanics Institute for public consultation.

At Whaley Bridge Station, the Friends of the Station Group continue to tend the garden and keep an eye open for misuse. Visitors to a successful Open Day during Heritage Weekend were able to look at the restored station building of 1857, on the Buxton Platform, as well as a new smaller waiting room on the Manchester Platform. Light refreshments were available in the historic waiting room, and there was a heritage walk. Another Friends Group looks after the station at Furness Vale.

Regarding Bridge 42 on Buxton Road, the matter of finding a way of securing Listed Building Consent to repair the structure remains with Network Rail.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING: Members of the Society are actively involved with others in the preparation of the Whaley Bridge and Furness Vale Neighbourhood Plan. The 'designated' area coincides with the boundary of the civil parish of Whaley Bridge, having been approved by the two planning authorities High Peak Borough Council and Peak District National Park Authority. Elsewhere in Derbyshire, Neighbourhood Plans are being prepared at Bradwell, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Hartington Town Quarter, Bakewell and Wirksworth.

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

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

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/lnr/declaration.aspx>. It is hoped that the Whaley Bridge Neighbourhood Plan Group will be able to pursue the matter of designation and that this land will in time become a protected Local Nature Reserve. 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. I am pleased to be able to report that our representations to the Leader of DCC have resulted in the repair to the potholes on PROW WB 105 on the surface of the unadopted part of the Wharf Road highway. We have called upon DCC three times to cut back obstructing vegetation on the east side of the A5004 between the Canal Basin and Bridgemont; a contractor has recently carried out this work.

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_a_application/register.asp?Select_a_Parish=Whaley+Bridge&subParish=Search+by+parish.

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 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 towards the Shady Oak Public House and beyond.

HPBC's Horticulture Department has installed equipment to inhibit the use of motor bicycles on the Linear Park.

TODDBROOK RESERVOIR HISTORIC VALVES PROJECT: A group is preparing the information for the Interpretation Board.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2014/2015:

Friday, 21st 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, 21st March: WBAS Coffee Morning, Mechanics Institute

Saturday, 20th June: Civic Voice's 'Civic Day 2015'

Saturday, 18th July: WBAS Coffee Morning, Mechanics Institute

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

John A T Pritchard (Chairman)

31st October 2014