

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S REPORT 2022

(AS ADOPTED AT THE 2022 AGM ON 2nd MARCH 2023)

There has been a major change within the Society this year, as our Honorary Secretary, Anne Winter decided to step down after many years of unstinting service. We thank Anne for her dedication and we are pleased to report that she will remain on the Executive Committee. The new Secretary is Andrew Slater.

We also thank Martin Petch for sorting through the papers which were transferred from Mr. Bowles' house to the Club Room. The papers which were deemed to be of interest have now been removed to a temporary storage location pending further review by a local historian and then lodgement with a suitable custodian.

The claimed right of way from Station Road, Furness Vale, to the Peak Forest Canal Towpath via Calico Lane has been confirmed with modifications and designated as Whaley Bridge footpath No. 115. It is now indicated on Ordnance Survey maps.

We have been concerned, for some time now, about the future of the Club Room, and we have continued to explore all available options. Following discussions with numerous community and charitable organisations, it has been reluctantly decided that our only realistic option is to offer it for sale on the open market, and to this effect the Club Room is to be placed in an auction on 15th March 2023, with Botham's of Chesterfield. The monies raised from the sale will be used to fund projects which align with the charitable objects of the Society (see below), within the Society's area of benefit, i.e. the civil parish of Whaley Bridge.

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic and unavailability of volunteers, it has unfortunately not been possible to hold any coffee mornings since the last AGM. We would welcome the support of new volunteers to enable us to resume our coffee mornings (normally two per year), which are an important source of income for the Society.

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.

This year, again in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic we have been able to hold only two meetings of the Executive Committee, whose members are mindful of the Objects of the Society, which 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 agenda for each meeting gives opportunities to discuss and comment on Planning Applications, Public Rights of Way and other matters relating to the four wards of Whaley Bridge.

Sadly, the membership of the Society continues to decrease, although it does maintain a strong interest in Whaley Bridge activities and local issues.

Anybody who is resident in Whaley Bridge cannot have failed to notice the unusual situation of two current major civil engineering projects in the town. The largest of these is the construction of a new spillway for Toddbrook Reservoir, 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 expected to be complete by late 2024. The second project is the partial reconstruction of the Grade II listed railway bridge BEJ42, which crosses Buxton Road between the Uniting Church and Whaley Bridge Primary School. As the bridge is a listed structure, as much as possible (approximately one third) of the existing structure will be retained, with the new sections being in keeping with the old. This strategy has unfortunately necessitated the closure of Buxton Road for a period in excess of ten weeks, which has been somewhat controversial. However when the new structure is unveiled we believe that this will prove to have been a worthwhile sacrifice. The Society will continue to monitor the progress of these projects.

A public inquiry was due to be held in November 2022 into several planning issues at Taxal Edge, off Macclesfield Road. The Society continues to monitor the situation.

High Peak Borough Council 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, with a target date for adoption in mid-2026. The development of the Plan will take place in several stages; the current stage, Early Engagement, in which the public is invited to comment, ends on 3rd March. There will be at least two further public consultation stages: an options consultation in the third quarter of 2023 and a preferred options consultation in mid-2024. The Society will maintain a watching brief 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>.