

LITTLEBOROUGH CIVIC TRUST

England & Wales · Charity number 1174714

Details

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2017-09-19

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address c/o 15 WHITEGATE
Littleborough
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Activities

Objects: TO PROMOTE HIGH STANDARDS OF PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE IN OR AFFECTING THE AREA OF BENEFITTO EDUCATE THE PUBLIC IN THE GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, NATURAL HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE AREA OF BENEFITTO SECURE THE PRESERVATION, PROTECTION, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF FEATURES OF HISTORIC OR PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE AREA OF BENEFIT

Activities: Within the wards of Littleborough Lakeside and Wardle and West Littleborough; to promote high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting the area; to educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area and to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information
- **What:** Arts/culture/heritage/science, Environment/conservation/heritage, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Rochdale

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31		£742	£376	-
2023-12-31		£506	£473	-
2022-12-31		£713	£834	-
2021-12-31		£200	£645	-
2020-12-31		£311	£592	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
IAN SPENCER JACKSON	Chair	2017-11-14
Ada Ann Pratt		2025-07-14
GILLIAN PRICE		2017-11-14
John Butterworth		2024-12-09
John Kevin Hooson		2025-07-14
MICHAEL PRICE		2017-11-14
Michael Darnbrough		2025-07-14
SHAUN PETER CLANCY		2018-11-06

LITTLEBOROUGH CIVIC TRUST

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Accounts

Chairman's Report 2024

February (no meeting is held in January)

Several local planning applications were discussed; along with local eyesores in need of demolition.

Members of the Littleborough Flood Resilience sub-Group along with a representative from Rochdale Council and another from the National Flood Forum attended a presentation at the flood alleviation scheme site at Gale. Places were limited as we had to share with the Wardleworth Flood Group. The presentation was very informative with lots of visual content and covered the recently completed Riverstone Bridge project and an up-to-date account of the Gale site. Lots of preparatory work is still to take place before actual construction of the flood defences starts. The National Flood Forum are going to prepare a presentation for the members and will be given at our March meeting.

One member/trustee was given Life Membership of the Trust in recognition of all her work over the past years.

The council litter picking policy only seems to favour groups and not individuals who are concerned they could be accused of "fly tipping" when leaving bags by litterbins. Councillors Taylor and Jackson volunteered to look into the matter.

Why is there not 3-hour free parking at Hollingworth Lake similar to car parks in Rochdale? Parking at the Lake was free after 6pm, this has now been pushed back to 8pm, local businesses were not consulted and are concerned that this will cause loss of trade.

Recent filming by TV companies resulted in the car park being closed to accommodate film crew vehicles. Local businesses expressed concern that this had caused loss of trade. Walkways around the back of the Lake were closed off when filming took place there. Members of the public have paid for memorials to loved ones which are placed at the back of the Lake but were denied access to them by the film crew security people.

March

Wallis's Amusement arcade has kindly offered assistance to litter picking groups with provision of equipment and use of bins.

Monies from TV filming at Hollingworth Lake given to Rochdale Council are to contribute towards improvements of footpaths and car parking at the RSPCA site.

As always, local planning applications/updates were discussed.

Following concern regarding a major housing development on a former brownfield site the Environment Agency have visited the site following complaints of water run-

off into the canal and mud being deposited on Hollingworth Road by HGV's leaving the site. The EA were happy that these issues have been dealt with.

Greater Manchester Save The Greenbelt Group are still fundraising to finance a judicial review in an attempt to stop Greater Manchester Mayor's scheme called 'Places for Everyone.

April

The site has been cleared and construction work has now started on land that was the Smithy Bridge pub.

An email has been sent to the MP, George Galloway's office inviting him to a Trust meeting. A reply has been received stating that as a new MP he is very busy but will get back to us when time permits.

Members expressed to local councillors present regarding Neighbourhood Watch.

Lots of reports of Anti-Social Behaviour in the area, cars damaged and written off in the Todmorden Road and Calderbrook Road area as a result of dangerous driving. In one incident the perpetrator fled the scene.

Groups of youths throwing eggs at passing vehicles.

There is a gang of youths riding around on off road bikes with no number plates and the riders not wearing crash helmets but covering their faces with balaclavas.

Vehicles are regularly exceeding the speed limits, driving on the wrong side of the road to avoid traffic queues, particularly on the A58 and Smithy Bridge/Hollingworth Road area.

Inconsiderate vehicle parking blocking pathways. Dog walkers failing to clean up their dog's mess.

As a member of Neighbourhood Watch the Trust will upload these concerns to the Neighbourhood Watch website. Anybody can do this, just go on their website, and sign up. Photo/Video footage is always welcome.

Lots of trees have recently been planted in the Ealees / Whittaker area, nobody seemed to know who by but one suggestion was it could be part of a carbon offset project.

The Trust are to contact Star Academies for any updates on the proposed new High School.

May

Planning updates.

a) Rake Wood Higher Mill.

It has been deemed not necessary to make disabled access compulsory in this application. Persons with disabilities may wish to object to this.

b) High Nets, Hollingworth Lake.

There are still concerns about the validity of the planning application and these have been highlighted in an email to RMBC. The Trust is still waiting for a reply from the Case Officer.

c) Spar, Smithy Bridge, Smithy Bridge pub.

Spar are expected to appeal the latest planning application refusal.

Construction of the apartment block continues at the site of the old Smithy Bridge pub.

d) Bloor Homes.

Nothing to report.

e) AKZO

Construction work has now started. The stonework being used appears to be artificial and not real stone as stipulated in the Littleborough Town Design Statement.

Issues were raised over the new bus timetables. Complaints can be made on the Transport for Greater Manchester website.

June

Planning updates:

Greater Manchester Mayor's scheme called 'Places for Everyone: one member gave an update about the proposed judicial review. The costs of £30,000 already accrued and appears it will take a long time and be very expensive.

Flood update: major works at Gale to continue until end of 2027. Mr Butterworth agreed to help with data collection from Blackstone Edge moors.

Food and drink festival a great success.

A member informed us that Pennine in Bloom are running a competition for children to name the boat at canal side and has had great engagement from local primary schools

Barkers Wood, of which the Trust are custodians. A group of children will be going in for forest activities with the countryside rangers from Hollingworth Lake.

July

Gale flood defence work. Local residents have complained about tree felling on the site. Members of the Trust's Flood Group have met with site management who insist they are in regular contact with the residents. Piling work is to start circa July 15th.

Network Rail

Following on from complaints about the regular failure of the level crossing barrier at Smithy Bridge, Network Rail have responded by stating it is a result of increased rail traffic preventing repairs to what they say is ageing equipment. No reply has been received following complaints of the level crossing subway flooding during periods of heavy rainfall.

Local amateur photographer Andrew Lupton gave a brief talk to the members expressing his concern over wildlife on the Akzo building site, mainly deer. There seem to be a number of gaps in the security fencing around the site. He was to meet with the RSPCA and council but the meeting was cancelled. Councillor Jackson volunteered to report the issue to the council Enforcement Officer.

A Trust member spoke to the meeting to expand on his original submitted document on the upkeep by volunteers of the three church graveyards. 'Action Together' have donated a cordless lawn mower and strimmer. Anyone wishing to volunteer in the upkeep of them would be most welcome.

August

Guest speaker Sturt Mendelsohn gave a short presentation on the archaeology of the area. Roman coins and lead artifacts have been found close to Hollingworth Road suggesting that a Roman Road passed through the area. A full archaeology survey is incomplete so there could be more to discover. Geophysics survey also suggests the existence of a Roman Road.

Local councillors are against the Bloor Homes plan and are working together to formulate an official objection.

Anybody wishing to make their own objection should include valid reasons for their objections. A simple "I object" will not carry any weight.

Members have noted that Heavy Goods Vehicles are parking on Hollingworth Road and on the pavement making it difficult/impossible for pedestrians to pass.

Members of the Flood Group attended a workshop hosted by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. Organizations represented at the workshop were The National Flood Forum, Environment Agency, RMBC. Presentations were given covering various aspects of the impact of flooding in the community including insurance and access to personal flood protection equipment. As mentioned in a previous email. The Environment Agency will be holding drop-in sessions at Littleborough Library.

An Olympic Event was held in Hare Hill Park, Sunday August 18th. mainly for the kids by the Archery Club to celebrate local girl Sybil Fenton Newall (17 October 1854 – 24 June 1929), best known as “Queenie” Newall who won Olympic Gold for archery in 1908 and who lived at Hare Hill House.

Work is to start on the drains under the railway subway at Smithy Bridge to address the flooding problem.

Members were advised/given advance notice of the following:

There will be no rail services between Rochdale and Manchester from Friday September 6th. until Monday September 23rd. for replacement of a bridge over the M62 west of Castleton. There will be a replacement bus service from Rochdale to Manchester.

Latest information is that trains from Leeds to Manchester will terminate at Hebden Bridge where there will be a replacement bus service.

Trains from Blackburn to Manchester will terminate at Todmorden where there will be a replacement bus service.

The tram service from Rochdale to Manchester will restart on Monday August 19th. following the closure due to a land slip.

The M62 will close on Friday September 6th. pm. until Monday September 9th. am.

It will close again on Friday September 20th. pm. until Monday September 23rd. am.

Diversion signs will be in place but there could potentially be a lot of traffic on the A58 through Littleborough on these dates.

It was noted that Network Rail could take advantage of these closures to make permanent repairs to the Level Crossing at Smithy Bridge.

September

Bloor Homes.

The Trust have pointed out to the Planning Dept. that they feel there are numerous flaws in the planning application one of which is a breach of data protection and should be withdrawn. Local councillors have submitted a comprehensive and detailed objection to the application.

The playing fields at the side of the Cricket Club where the proposed new School is to be built, Littleborough Junior Football Club have played on this field for a long time, but now the council has stopped cutting it because it has been handed over to the Education Department and they don't want anything to do with cutting the grass.

The Football Club has to cut it with a little hand mower, and there is now a big loss of playing ground in and around Littleborough.

October

Councillor Taylor requested a Public Meeting to discuss the Bloor Homes planning proposal but was unsuccessful, he plans to re submit the request.

It is understood that Rochdale Council's Planning Department and Highways Department would not attend any such meeting.

'Your Trust' (an organisation/offshoot of Rochdale Council) have submitted an application to increase parking charges and extend the hours they will be applicable. This will be discussed at a Pennine Township meeting at No. 1 Riverside 6pm on November 12th.

November

Bloor Homes.

There has been much recent discussion about holding a public meeting concerning the Bloor Homes potential planning application. It seems that neither Bloor Homes or the Planning Department would attend such a meeting. Councillors Jackson and Dearnley suggested it would be better to make a constructive objection to present to the Planning Department once the details of the application are fully known.

At previous meetings with Bloor Homes, we were assured that access to the development from the Smithy Bridge Road side would be limited to emergency vehicles only. Members have seen plans that show what appears to be public access for vehicles to the site.

Information requested by the Trust in connection with planning matters has still not been received.

Work to convert the building commonly known as the Toll House at the junction of Todmorden Road and A58 into a community hub has been delayed due to it being listed and carrying a Blue Plaque. Littleborough Historical Society advise that it was never a Toll House and as such should not have been given listed status. The Trust accept this and the Blue Plaque will be removed; Historical England informed and the building will be de-listed, this will allow refurbishment work to commence.

Pennine in Bloom achieved Gold as this year's awards

Littleborough achieved Gold which covers Shore, Canalside, fire station, Smithy Bridge Library, Little Clegg Road in Smithy Bridge, and a back alley in Smithy Bridge.

Hollingworth Lake, Hare Hill Park and Watergrove reservoir all received Gold

All areas were judged to be outstanding. Winter pansies, primulas and bulbs have been planted in all areas now plus Smithy Bridge playing field

Remembrance Day service was well attended, many thanks to all who assisted.

Members commented that it is a pity the church clock is not working. It was suggested that the council is responsible for maintenance of the clock but it seems that there is a health and safety issue with access to the mechanism.

Road markings in the village need repainting, in particular at the junction of Hare Hill Road and the A58.

The AGM will precede our next meeting which will be strictly members only. In line with the Constitution, three Trustees will stand down so there will be vacancies for a secretary and a minute taker. Would anybody interested in either position please give forward notice.

December

Local playing fields.

Money has been earmarked by the government to go towards playing fields. It is hoped that Pennine Township will receive some of this funding. Councillor Jackson volunteered to investigate.

New Street.

Work has started on the second phase of the New Street development. Reports of heavy plant vehicles using the existing residential roads to access the site are to be investigated by Councillor Branton.

Local bus services.

There seems to be confusion over local bus services, in particular No. 590 which is run by Calderdale. TFGM are willing to meet with residents to discuss Bee Network routes, timings and frequencies. Councillor Jackson volunteered to act as go between.

6 Church Street, 2 Todmorden Road.

The building known as the Toll House has now been delisted by the Historic England and work has now commenced on renovation. The first phase will be to make the building safe due to its poor condition.

Parish Church clock.

It is understood that the clock, which has not worked for some time is the responsibility of the council for maintenance/repairs. It seems that there is an issue with Health and Safety concerning access to the clock mechanism.

Chairman, Ian Jackson has volunteered to approach local businessmen at an upcoming Gentleman's dinner to ask if they would be willing to contribute to the cost of repairs.

Amendment to November minutes.

Approximately a week before the Remembrance Day service, the Council's contractors placed the black/yellow road signs around the Square and relevant points around the centre of Littleborough, advising of travel disruption on Sunday 10th.

Unfortunately, the one at the junction of Hare Hill Rd., and Church St., also had a 'Road Ahead Closed' placed with it.

During the week leading up to the 10th, bus drivers were taking heed of the 'premature' signage and refusing to enter Hare Hill Rd., thus causing significant travel disruption for the residents of Shore and Calderbrook. Councillor Richard Jackson volunteered to investigate.

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CHAIRMANS REPORT 2023

January

John Butterworth was elected as the new Treasurer, Chairman Ian Jackson expressed thanks on behalf of the membership to John Kay for his services over the years.

A resident contacted the Local Government Ombudsman re the proposal to sell land classified as "Green Space" to Russel Homes, the argument being that the land has not been put on the open market despite the resident offering to buy the land and being told it was not for sale.

The council have already built over its allocated number of housing and there is no need for any development of this land.

Local Councillors, meeting at 'full council' expressed concerns over various aspects of the Rail Corridor Strategy / Littleborough SPD. One area of concern was the council purchase of Littleborough United Reform Church with the aim of establishing a Community Hub. Littleborough already has several Community Hubs, Littleborough Coach House, Littleborough Boxing Club, Littleborough Cricket Club, Hare Hill House, Holy Trinity Church. Some of these hubs are struggling financially and the addition of a further Hub would not help.

None of these hubs have been consulted about the council proposals, and the council does not appear to have followed a democratic process when it comes to using public money to purchase land and buildings.

The land behind the opticians, café and pet supplies has now been fenced off, reasons unknown!

Local shopkeepers have been given conflicting information by council representatives that businesses will/will not be subject to Compulsory Purchase Orders.

February

A local Councillor stated that the public were being treated badly over the issue of the sale of land at Dearnley and not being informed of any updates re planning meetings. It was also pointed out that Russell Homes is not complying with the Littleborough Town Design Statement.

Two Councillors along with Tracy Furnell and Ian Jackson attended a Planning Inspectorate meeting for "Places for Everyone". Bloor Homes and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority were represented by KC's. Tracy and Ian were allowed to speak in opposition to the Bloor Homes proposal. A link to the meeting has been posted on the Trust Facebook page.

Car parking in Littleborough is an ongoing issue, it is felt that the old gasworks site on Hare Hill Road would make a good car park. Previously the council have said it would be too expensive as an environmental survey would be needed due to possible contamination in the ground.

Other rumours circulating is that there are to be houses built on the site or a nursing home. Suggestion was made of a possible petition to make council take a more serious view of the car parking issues. Younger people's needs in the area also seem to be ignored, particularly the need for affordable homes within all the planning applications.

March

The Trust have had further conversations with Planning but have got no further with their request to have the planning application for the back of the Lake withdrawn due to the number of errors.

Trust member Thomas Quine informed the meeting that activity was taking place on the Akzo site, clearing scrub, and ploughing.

Questions were asked as to where the funds to buy the United Reformed Church would come from and what would the building be used for? Councillor Dearnley suggested it could be the home of Wardle Anderson Band in the event they are evicted from Wardle School, a Township Office (the present one is totally unsuitable) Potential use by "Your Trust"

Members who attended the Planning Inspectorate meeting were been asked to provide further feedback, regarding the over-capacity of the roads being one of the subjects. An ecology report has also been submitted.

It was suggested that a Gazebo be purchased with suitable logo to attend public events in Littleborough such as the Rush Bearing Festival.

April

An article in the Daily Mail newspaper reported the potential demolition of a substantial number of new homes due to contamination in the ground. A communication from the Trust has been sent to the Daily Mail and BBC News outlining the situation at the Akzo site with respect to the reported contamination there.

Trust members attended the council planning meeting to raise objections to the development.

Formal complaints have been made by both Councillors and Trust members over the way they were treated during the course of the meeting.

It was reported that the United Reform Church Trustees have revealed that the council have paid considerably more for the church than the original open market price.

An extra day was allocated to the Places for Everyone to deal with transport. Councillor John Taylor and Trust member Tracy Furnell attended to present their views of the lack of infrastructure and over capacity roads in Littleborough and surrounding areas.

On April 13th. Littleborough Historical Society gave a presentation on "The History of Littleborough Civic Trust". None of the current Trust members were invited to contribute despite representations from Trust Chairman Ian Jackson who is himself, a member of the Historical Society.

May

Two members offered the use of a Gazebo. It was suggested the Trust have a presence at the upcoming Food and Drink Festival. The Trust have a couple of 6ft. banners featuring the Trust logo and the Flood Group logo which can be used with a gazebo.

The Freedom of Information request made to the council concerning the High Nets application was passed to a Nathan Matley of Your Trust.

The Russell Homes planning application will be before the Planning Committee on May 25th. Local residents will be allowed to speak for 5 minutes to voice any objections. Councillor John Taylor will also be allowed to speak in his role as Ward Councillor. Councillor Taylor urges as many people as possible to attend the meeting, meet at No.1 Riverside at 5.30pm. Placards will be provided. Councillor Taylor has also arranged a meeting the day before (May 24th.) at Dearnley Methodist Church from 6-7pm for residents to attend and make their feelings known.

It is believed that the Planning Committee have been misled over the Akzo planning application due to the fact that underground water sources have not been disclosed. Anybody who observes any kind of activity on the Akzo site are encouraged to contact the Trust due to the possibility of contaminated ground being disturbed.

Peter Reed expressed his thanks to the meeting for the members support during his tenure as a councillor.

June

Barker's Wood: It was reported that there had been a number of camp fires and, possibly maliciously, some weed killer had been put down around the edges which was killing some of the plants.

Also, a memorial plaque to Marjorie Barker is to be erected within the woods.

Albeit nothing was declared under this item, given the fact that Cllr. John Blundell and Cllr. Richard Jackson attended the meeting, the Chairman, mid-way through the meeting asked them both if they wished to have an opportunity to speak.

They declined, stating that they were attending as local residents.

Inevitably, the attendee's attention turned to them which resulted in them putting everything and everyone down, no matter what the subject, which of course mainly related to planning matters.

We are reviewing our attendance policy as a result.

July

One minutes silence was held in respect of the tragic death of Trust member and Trustee Daniel Ames.

It is understood that the planning application by Spar, to turn the former Lake Garage into a convenience store has been “called in” by Cllr. Besford due potential to excessive noise that will be produced by ventilation fans running 24 hrs. Smithy Bridge “Mini Mart” have also raised objections. There is also concern for traffic issues.

Work has now started on the former AKZO Nobel site with initial ground clearance. Assurance has been received to say only the top layers are being removed and not disturbing the contaminated ground. Our concerns have been given to the council. Members have asked if the trees that have been felled will be replaced. Was an ecological survey carried out to ensure there were no birds nesting in these trees, no survey results can be found.

Members asked what has happened to the educational program that used to be a part of the old visitor centre. This was run by a company by the name of Nature Ed who appear to have gone into administration. There are rumours that the pond is to be drained. Councillor Jackson offered to make enquiries.

Discussions are still taking place with the Places for Everyone and the Planning Inspectorate. It appears that Andy Burnham only asked for greenbelt and not brown field sites.

Cllr. Jackson informed the meeting that the badly potholed section of the A58 Blackstone Edge Road is to be resurfaced 2024. The Greater Manchester “Clean air charging zone” is to be discontinued and a new “Clean air plan” is to be developed to meet government emission targets. Once developed, the plan will be subject to government approval. Full details can be found at cleanairgm.com

August

At the July meeting questions were asked about the educational facilities that used to be in the Visitor Centre prior to the RSPCA taking over the building and also the apparent loss of the Sensory Garden. Councillor Jackson volunteered to make enquiries.

Rake Wood Higher Mill.

The planning application for the site has to be re submitted due to inaccuracies in the original. A previous use of the building as an educational “energy centre” was linked to the wind turbine that is on site. It is unsure if the change of use of the site will result in the turbine being removed.

High Nets, Hollingworth Lake.

No new proposals at the time of writing, the Trust are still awaiting a response to our Freedom of Information request which has now exceeded the timespan for a reply.

Spar, Smithy Bridge, Smithy Bridge pub.

There are still concerns within the Planning Department over plans to develop the old Lake Garage site by Spar.

The Smithy Bridge pub site was to have been developed by RBH but government funding for them has been put on hold. "First Choice Homes", Oldham, have now taken over responsibility to build the proposed flats. It was suggested they are sent a copy of the Littleborough Town Design Statement to ensure designs are within keeping of the area.

Bloor Homes.

The proposed Bloor Homes development is Greenbelt land. With the refusal of the planning application for a farm shop and children's activity centre at Bank Top Farm on the grounds that it is Greenbelt land, it was asked, will the Bloor Homes proposal be refused for the same reason or will Andy Burnham remove the Greenbelt status for them?

AKZO

Enforcement Officers have visited the site. Action taken to halt development work until all pre commencement plans are satisfied. The location of unrecorded water course is still an issue to be resolved.

RSPCA / Visitor Centre

The education service provider is no longer trading, Your Trust (formerly known as Link4Life) has now taken over this service. Negotiations are taking place with the RSPCA for facilities to enable the education service to resume operations as funding is in place.

Funding has now also been approved to reinstate and increase the size of the Community Sensory Garden on the RSPCA site.

A complete set of rechargeable batteries have now been purchased for use in the time lapse cameras on the data logging site.

A set of readings were to be taken last week but have been postponed until next week due to Flood Group members being away on holiday or unavailable due to other reasons.

The Flood Group had a presence at the Picnic in the Park event with relevant literature available for the public to take away.

Work on the flood defence project seems to have restarted on Todmorden Road, hopefully the long-awaited visit to the Environment Agency staff on site will now soon go ahead.

Trust members attended the Rush Bearing Festival in Hare Hill Park with our new gazebo which was kindly donated by a member. Civic Trust and Flood Group banners were on display and associated literature. Hopefully the Trust will be able to

be present at future events, Treasurer John Butterworth has registered with LEAF our wish to be part of future events.

On a sad note, the Trust was represented at the funeral of the wife of Trust member John Kay and the funeral of Trust member Daniel Ames.

John informed the meeting that monies raised in donations will be given to the NSPCC.

Donations at Daniels funeral will go to the North West Air Ambulance.

September

Lots of activity on Facebook, Discuss Littleborough concerning the former AKZO Nobel site. Prime concerns seem to be the presence of wildlife on the site (deer) where deep excavations and earth moving is taking place which could result in the deer falling into or being trapped in the holes. The presence of the deer seems to indicate that the site is not secure which could result in children gaining access and being exposed to the same danger.

Members were encouraged to email their concerns to spcarochdale@btconnect.com Debris has been reported on Hollingworth Road, left by HGV's leaving the site, there seems to be no vehicle wheel washing facility on site.

With it locally known to be contaminated land being disturbed, any rainfall run-off is going into the canal.

An employee on site has informed a Trust member of the lack of any PPE or RPE on site as well as restrictions on mobile phone use and photography.

Our observations were sent to the council.

Questions were asked about the nature of the large metal mast and wooden posts that have been erected in and around Smithy Bridge.

They have been erected by a company called iX Internet and will be used to carry 6G fibre optic internet data.

October

A lot of earth moving is now taking place at the former AKZO Nobel site and HGV's are leaving lots of debris on Hollingworth Road. A street sweeper is being used at the moment but it is understood that a wheel washing facility should be in place on site.

Recent excavation has revealed a buried black substance. Speculation is that it could be bitumen from the time that Armour Hess, as Akzo was once called, were involved in the processing of hydro carbon products.

Recent rainfall has resulted in groundwater from the site finding its way into the canal making the water cloudy and people have stated that there is also a smell. The Canal and River Trust have been informed and have stated they will investigate.

Numerous emails have been exchanged between the Trust and council environmental department.

The Sensory Garden is soon to be planted.

The Education Hub will be restarting in line with the start of the school year next September but may also offer events next summer.

Parking bays beyond the RSPCA are to be clearly marked out to encourage more orderly parking.

Councillors have met with Your Trust who have outlined their future plans, some short term, others long term. A couple mentioned a new bird watching hut, the existing hut has been subject to vandalism.

November

The new National Flood Forum rep for our area attended the meeting and gave a short but informative presentation on all flood related matters both locally and nationally.

A set of data logger readings were taken on Friday November 9th.

RMBC have purchased the Toll House and the property next door at the end of Todmorden Road at the junction with the A58. The aim is to develop an Information Hub.

There is an e-magazine which covers everything talked about.

A visit to the Environment Agency works at Gale is still to be arranged. Drone footage of the site can be viewed on the "Flood Hub" website.

December

As most members will be aware, the Trust has been asked to vacate our Monday slot at the Boxing Club. Alternative dates and times were offered but none were deemed suitable. Consequently, the Trust have been offered a room at Littleborough Coach House which we have gratefully accepted.

Giving all time to recover from the Festive Season, our next meeting will be at the Coach House on Feb.12th, start time 7pm.

Ian Jackson
Chairman

Littleborough Civic Trust Finances 2023

Balance from 31st December 2022 **£2,868.90**

Income:

Membership (44) £440.00
Interest. £66.19

Expenditure:

Room Hire (13 Months) £325.00
Remembrance Wreath £25.00
Flowers & Card £31.58
Rush bearing Pitch fee £15.00
Civic Voice Fees £45.00
Misc' Items. £31.81
(Batteries, etc)

Total Income: £506.19

Total Expenditure: £473.39

Balance at 31st December 2023: **£2901.70**

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England & Wales - Charity number 1174714

Accounts

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT JANUARY - DECEMBER 2022

January

Local Councillor Ashley Dearnley informed the meeting he is to attend a meeting with Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham to discuss the controversial proposed clean air zone and the effect it will have on the community.

Again, one member asked for the old gasworks site to be discussed for the development of much needed parking space in Littleborough.

Ashley Dearnley reported that 50-60 trees were to be planted in Barkers Wood on Friday January 14th. An application is to be made to the Pennine Township for funding for more trees and to also remove old/diseased trees.

February

A meeting had been arranged with Tony Lloyd MP on February 16th. but this was cancelled due to him having to self-isolate after having tested positive for Covid.

It is hoped to rearrange the meeting. He was sent a "Bullet Point" list of the various concerns raised by the members.

The Flood Groups application to the Pennine Township funding committee for funding of a laptop computer for use with the data logging project and also for a member to attend an Environment Agency conference was successful.

The laptop has been purchased and the relevant software installed. The group have undertaken refresher training with Liverpool University and the River Ribble Trust.

The Zoom meeting with representatives of the EA, NFF and RMBC was hosted by a lady who is leading a project in the Peak District and was interested to hear of our own experiences as a flood group.

The group have taken part in a survey by a Lancaster University PhD. student concerning various aspects of flooding and the impact on communities.

March

Concern was raised again about the lack of community engagement with the council over planning matters, most recently being the Littleborough SPD. A letter was sent to the Govt's. Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities expressing the Trust's concern.

April

The Vistry/Akzo planning application was expected to be re-submitted on May28th.

A climate change impact report was posted on the Trust's Facebook page.

Reports have been received that allotment holders in the Smithy Bridge area have, without reason, been given notice to quit.

Boat still for sale but Rochdale Connections Trust expressed an interest. Refurbishment of the boat could be used as a project to teach young people skills in areas such as plumbing, carpentry and electrical work. There would be a requirement of somewhere to store the boat. The local greenbelt group became concerned over the potential use of Bridge Bank Drive and nearby streets for access to the Akzo site. The "Places for Everyone" Scheme may be out of date and may have to be redone due to changing circumstances"

The new Flood Resilience Group laptop has been used to take a set of readings from the data loggers at High Peak with the assistance of Hazel from Liverpool University.

Two or three years ago members of the group took part in a meeting with Juliet de Little who was doing research at Sheffield University. Juliet has been seconded to the National Flood Forum for a short period and will be based at Rochdale.

Pennine Funding has been granted to make improvements and a further 200 trees have been planted in Barkers Wood.

Members of the Trust attended a council meeting for a presentation of the results of the Littleborough S.P.D. consultation. Concerns were expressed that the results of surveys by a local councillor and a Littleborough businessman had not been included. The presentation did, however, highlight objections by the general public to a number proposals in the S.P.D. resulting in the council admitting they had got it wrong and needed to review the document. Of particular interest was the statement that Hare Hill Road would not be pedestrianized except for special events and that the A58 carriageway would not be narrowed, the meaning in the S.P.D. was that the pavement would be extended into the parking bays and bus stop.

The Trust made representations to the planning officer stating that a number of national guidelines had not been followed during the consultation period.

Attached is the planning departments response.

Past A.G. M's have been held in December or January. Last year, because of Covid restrictions the A.G.M. was not held until June as it was desirable to meet in person and not via Zoom. With June being a time when people are potentially away on holiday it was proposed and accepted that the next A.G.M. will be held in December 2022.

Tony Lloyd MP. It is still proving difficult to re-arrange an appointment to attend a surgery with him.

The Trust's bank account was originally with the Yorkshire Bank, in recent times it has been taken over by Virgin Money and has resulted in all manner of problems with access to the account. Virgin Money are charging for all our transactions plus a monthly "maintenance fee." As our only income is from membership subscriptions, a free banking service would be more favourable.

Numerous banks offer free banking to societies and charities. Investigations will be carried out and any suitable options will be presented at the next meeting.

May

As reported last month J■■■■ from Sheffield University has spent some time with S■■■■ from the National Flood Forum and took the opportunity to meet up with flood group members and visit the data logging site at High Peak.

DEFRA contacted the flood group to ask if we would take part in an online survey/questionnaire. This was duly done. It was a series of approx. 50 flood related questions to be placed in order of importance. Collated results would then be used to produce a help guide for flooding matters.

The Environment Agency now have a small visitor unit at Riverstone Bridge where the public can get information on all the flood defence work taking place in the area.

Members of the group continue to take part in the Zoom meetings hosted by the National Flood Forum.

June

Members attended the "Speed Watch" event conducted by GMP on Blackstone Edge Road, close to the location where a lady was killed a few weeks ago. Needless to say, a great proportion of vehicles going up and down the road were exceeding the speed limit.

July

Mark Bramah, the council officer for climate change gave a talk on climate change and the councils targets for reducing carbon emissions. His presentation was well received and was followed by a question-and-answer session.

Chairman Ian Jackson and Trustee Barry Cropper gave a PowerPoint presentation The purpose of the presentation was to highlight all the proposed developments in and around Littleborough and the impact and effect they would have on the community.

August

Members of the Trust met representatives of Bloor Homes on Thursday, August 11th. Trust members were asked to submit any questions that they would like answering. Unfortunately, they were only willing to discuss

aspects of design and not any objections or concerns that members had raised. Another meeting to be arranged.

September

Concerns were raised that the position of the new Rangers Hut at what was the old Visitor Centre at the Lake has been moved and is not in the original position on the planning document. Trees have been felled to accommodate its new position.

A planning application has been made by "Your Trust" formerly known as "Link for Life" for an "activity centre" at the back of the Lake. It is littered with mistakes and errors. An objection was made by us, [the Trust] outlining this. The Trust are not in objection to the proposed development but a lot of considerations have been overlooked.

No mention of the old Sea Scout facility is in the application, could this not be used as an indoor activity centre during the winter months?

Anybody with objections to planning applications can attend council planning meetings and make a request to speak (normally 5 minutes) subject to the permission of the Chair of the meeting.

A number of members voiced concerns over the inconsistency of local bus services. Councillor Taylor wrote to Places for Everyone highlighting how poor the bus services are and also other shortcomings in the area. TfGM did respond.

October

A planning application has been submitted for a farm shop/café/community room at Bank Top Farm off Hollingworth Road., which the Trust support.

Members of the Trust and local residents attended a council meeting held to discuss the potential sale of land off New Street to Russell Homes. Representations were made by both councillors Taylor and Dearnley outlining the fact that the land is designated as Green Space and grazing land. A local resident had previously made an offer to buy the land from the council but was told that the land was not for sale. The council committee (most of whom had no idea where the land is, none of the council had any idea of the value of the land) agreed in principle to sell the land subject to further investigation of value.

If a sale is to go ahead the Trust and residents group feel it should be on the open market and not as a "done deal" with Russell Homes.

Bloor Home have a copy of the Littleborough Town Design Statement and using it as a guide to design features in the proposed development. No decision has been taken as to whether there will be a school on the site or an alternative car park by the visitor centre. If no school is to be built the car park will remain where it is. The Bloor Homes team have given us a

Plan of the proposed development, to be displayed at our next Trust meeting.

November

Following the Trust email to TfGM concerning the standard of local bus services an initial reply acknowledging our complaint was followed by a further reply to say that in the first instance any complaints should be made to the bus service operating company.

Chairman Ian Jackson gave an overview of all the planning applications likely to be submitted soon which would result in up to 800 new properties being built in and around Littleborough. Trustee, Barry Cropper outlined numerous omissions/inaccuracies in a number of these applications and these have been highlighted in the Trusts communications with the Planning Department.

Members are encouraged to visit the council's planning portal website to lodge their own objections to any of these developments that may affect them. When the Trust lodges any objections to planning proposals, it only counts as one objection. It is, therefore, important that individuals lodge their own objections.

Every planning application has a "Case Officer" to whom any questions can be sent, copy your local councillor in on any communications.

Anybody needing any help in these procedures can email the Trust for assistance.

Taylor Wimpey have indicated that the current economic downturn may have an effect on their proposals to build on land in Smithy Bridge.

The Littleborough Masterplan public consultations are being held in one of the smallest rooms in Littleborough (the railway station waiting room). Some of the artistic impressions show that Hare Hill Road would be only wide enough for one way traffic. The final date to view these proposals was Tuesday November 22nd. 12pm. - 7.30pm. at aforementioned station waiting room.

Members of the Trust have had a further meeting with Bloor Homes. As with the first meeting, the Bloor Homes representatives were only prepared to discuss design principles, they did, however, leave us with design drawings that we were able to display at last Monday's meeting.

The Local Government Act of 1972, Section 123, Sub Section 2 and 2a states that any council land put up for sale should be advertised publicly and not a private deal, as seems the case with the land at Stubley wanted by Russell Homes for a development of a further 62 homes. Members were informed of this and encouraged to communicate with the council.

December

Trust Chairman Ian Jackson attended a training event in London, by the Town & Country Planning Association which was aimed at giving people knowledge of all the requirements and regulations the planners have to adhere to in any planning application. One of the requirements that seems to have been omitted in a lot of local applications is the “Climate Change Strategy”, which the Trust will now begin to address with the council.

Councillor John Taylor is to request a “Call In” for the New Street West site development proposal.

Following the well documented controversial events within Rochdale Boroughwide Housing and their funding being temporarily suspended it is unsure what effect this will have on the proposed developments at Stansfield, Brown Street or the old Smithy Bridge pub.

Car parking charges are to change at Hollingworth Lake. Free parking will change to after 8pm from the current 6pm. Free parking on Bank Holidays is to be removed.

Littleborough Civic Trust

Accounts for the year to 31st December 2022

Income from membership subscriptions		£383.50
Grant Funds received		<u>£329.71</u>
		£713.21
Flood Resilience Group (Income less expenses)	£ 58.96	
Donation to Holy Trinity Church	£100.00	
Overheads	<u>£675.45</u>	<u>£834.41</u>
Excess of Expenditure over income		£121.20
		=====
The balance in the Bank at 31 st December 2022		£2,868.90

LITTLEBOROUGH CIVIC TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1174714

Accounts

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER 2021

January

Planning applications were again a matter for concern as it is becoming more and more of concern that there doesn't seem to be any plans for improving infrastructure in the area, traffic on the A58 being a prime example.

A letter was sent to the council planning department highlighting our concerns.

The Flood Resilience Group sub-committee raised concerns regarding a recent planning application (now passed) to the council for the capping of an "Artesian Well" at a large housing development, which raised a number of questions.

With the potential demise of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework document in its current form, attention has turned to the proposed Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy, being championed by one councillor. This strategy would involve all stations within Rochdale Borough and include the two within Littleborough's boundary.

The Trust felt that a structured response to this document be made, highlighting what we, the people of Littleborough and surrounding area would like to see.

We then asked for the opinions/suggestions of the membership also looked to social media to gain the views of the general public of Littleborough and the surrounding area to gather their hopes and aspirations for the future.

This subject gathered pace later in the year.

The A.G.M was postponed until Covid restrictions were lifted and members/trustees could meet in person.

February

A trustee spoke with Homes England who promised to send a copy of the Planning Design Framework for the brownfield Akzo site when it is available. A new planning application is needed and also an Environment Impact Assessment screening opinion could be requested.

The Canalside Development sub-committee discussed the boat which is now for sale and details were sent to various organizations. A member commented on an article that appeared in a recent issue of "Waterways World" which was not very complimentary of the area. The author took the trip along the canal in November/December so obviously would not see the area at its best. In a recent Rochdale Development Agency webinar on the Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy, no mention was made of the canal. The general feeling is that the council could do much more to promote the potential of the canal for leisure activities as can be seen in nearby places like Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge and Todmorden; all West Yorkshire.

The Flood Resilience Group sub-committee again raised concerns, following recent heavy rainfall. Groundwork Greater Manchester invited members of the flood group to take part in a "River Roch Catchment Environment Improvements" – Action Plan Workshop in March.

A general feeling was that the Trust needs to do more to connect with local people, particularly the younger end of the population. More emphasis will be placed on social media, something the Greenbelt Group are very good at.

March

Concern was expressed by members of the increase in fly tipping in the area, in particular Blackstone Edge Road. It was pointed out that this is the first thing anybody crossing from West Yorkshire will see and thus not giving a good impression of the area. A letter was sent to the council expressing our concerns.

The Trust began to slowly expand its presence via social media and which resulted in increased responses and interaction with the public.

April

It was noted that the Hollingworth Lake Country Park Visitor Centre has been taken over by the RSPCA, these include a dog friendly café, children access to the animals and a sleepover pod for the wardens should the need arise.

A company called Vistry (formally Bovis) were appointed as developers for the former Akzo site. They need to submit a further planning application. The Trust asked Rochdale Council for an Environmental Impact Statement but they have deemed this is not necessary.

The Flood Resilience Group took part in a Zoom meeting with the Environment Agency who showed plans for the flood defence work currently taking place in Littleborough. Numerous comments were made on social media concerning the felling of trees on Todmorden Road, The Trust informed the public. This is to provide access for the heavy plant machinery that will be used to carry out the flood defence work. The felled trees will be recycled and used in other flood defence work such as "Leaky Dams"

The Trust were contacted by a representative of Friends of Barkers Wood with the proposal of becoming a sub group of the Trust for the purpose of renewal of the Community Asset Status of Barkers Wood which was due to expire. This was agreed and a local councillor was nominated as Friends of Barkers Wood representative to the Trust. Relevant documentation was submitted to the council for renewal of Community Asset Status of Barkers Wood.

A decision was taken to remove the Minutes from the Trust's website, due to suspicious activity by persons unknown. It was also noted that most other Civic Trusts/Societies do not publish their minutes publicly.

May

Vistry; developers for the former Akzo site asked the Trust for access to the Littleborough Town Design Statement, which was duly provided to them. It was also made freely available to view on the Trust's website

It was pointed out that the proposed design of buildings on the Akzo site do not meet the recommendations of the original Littleborough Design Statement (2004), examples being building materials and location of utility boxes.

Rochdale Council were understood to have stated that the Littleborough Town Design Statement was only advisory and not a binding document.

Given the lockdown restriction easing date of Monday June 21st. it was proposed (subject to lifting of restrictions going ahead) to hold the next Trust meeting on Tuesday, June 22nd. and not Tuesday the 8th. as would be normal. The later date allowed us to meet face to face for the first time since March 2020.

June

The monthly meeting included the delayed A.G.M.

In line with the Constitution, three Trustees stood down. Having no other nominations, all three Trustees stood for re-election. This was proposed and seconded accordingly. Another member offered his services as Membership Secretary; was proposed by the Secretary and unanimously seconded.

Changes to the constitution were proposed; as follows.

- a. A clause stating that the Trust is a non-political organisation.
- b. Local councillors are welcome as members, their local government knowledge often proving invaluable.
- c. Members with political connections should not use their connections to try and influence other members.
- d. There will always be a minimum of two administrators for the Trust social media accounts.
- e. Any communications to outside agencies, other than routine notifications, will be circulated to the membership for approval twenty-four hours beforehand.

The Flood Group hoped to resume responsibility for collecting moorland data logger readings once final Covid restrictions are lifted. It was felt that refresher training with the Liverpool University team would be beneficial.

With the ongoing uncertainty of access to the Trust's normal meeting venue due to Covid and restoration work it was decided to relocate the flood refuge centre. A Zoom meeting was held with the Rev. Ian Bullock who kindly offered the use of one of his churches for this purpose.

Official confirmation was received from Rochdale Council that the Trust has been granted Community Asset status for Barkers Wood.

July

Due to disruption to monthly meeting dates, for various reasons, no monthly meeting was held in July.

August

Planning concerns by local residents regarding proposals to build 20 dwellings on a particular area prompted The Revd. Ian Bullock to make Land Registry enquiries to the Manchester Diocese who confirmed that there is no church involvement in this land, contrary to local rumours. The Trust reimbursed the Land Registry costs. The land is currently owned by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing.

The Revd Ian Bullock indicated that he would like to arrange a public meeting at St. James Church to discuss the planned building of houses on these playing fields and a date of 16th October was agreed.

Regarding the Akzo site, the Trust will continue to contact Vistry to ask what “green” features will be included in the buildings, e.g. what type of heating systems will be installed, will the roofs have solar panels fitted and will there be electrical charging points installed for charging electric vehicle batteries?

‘Places for Everyone’ having replaced the old Greater Manchester Spatial Framework plan went out to consultation and the Trust formulated a response in addition to supporting any response from the local Greenbelt Group.

The Trust registered with “Lancashire in the Know” which is a police-driven forum where members of the public can register their concerns on various subjects. We highlighted anti-social behaviour, car crime, drug dealing and fly tipping as our main areas of concern.

The proposed changes to the Constitution at June’s meeting were agreed and it was updated accordingly.

September

Before the monthly meeting started, members had the opportunity to engage in a question/answer session with representatives of Greater Manchester Police to express their concerns of the increasing anti-social activity in the area.

A local resident showed video footage of a number of incidents involving motor vehicles.

Questions were asked why there never seemed to be a visible presence of police officers on the streets, especially a Traffic Car to monitor the reckless driving which is taking place regularly around the area. Other suggestions included installation of a “Speed Camera” at a suitable location.

PC Archer explained that they were Community Officers and not always able to respond to the kind of events that were being described and suggested that it would be best to make these reports to the police station who could then pass the information to a “Response Team” if one was available.

October

As reported in Rochdale Online, Rochdale Observer and Manchester Evening News, the Council's Pennine Township meeting, attended by the Trust turned out to be rather a heated affair. Members of the Trust and local business owners were present at the meeting with some of the business owners expressing anger that the council were proposing demolishing their premises without even bothering to consult with them beforehand. The Trust would wait for the official minutes of the meeting to be published before making any further comment.

Following the Council's Pennine Township meeting (as above), interest in the Trust's activities and actions grew at quite a pace with new members joining and also a Council document named Littleborough Supplementary Planning Document, proposing radical changes to the village centre.

Business owners especially, found it controversial and not supportive of sustaining their businesses. One specific resident who is also a relatively local councillor began to spread rumour and blatant lies around the project which would have worked in his favour.

Challenges have been made on many fronts and the Trust advised that public consultation meetings were to be held by the Council.

Previously proposed, a meeting was held at St. James's church with local residents concerning the proposed development on the play area, RBH were invited but declined to attend; even suggesting that the Trust cancel the meeting. A "Straw Poll" taken at the end of the meeting showed that residents were 100% opposed to the plans.

November

More documents have recently come to light concerning the Akzo site and levels of contamination there.

A "Call In" letter has been sent to the relevant government department outlining the concerns over contamination. This "call in" means the government may intervene in any planning application if it thinks there are reasonable grounds for doing so. Receipt of our letter has been acknowledged.

Regarding the Littleborough Supplementary Planning Document, Rochdale Council held three consultation sessions; all attended by members of the Trust.

Angie member expressed concern over a number of complaints from some specific Rochdale councillors who have accused the Trust of not acting as a charitable organization, with particular reference to the Trust's criticism and objections to planning matters. One councillor in particular became quite abusive and it was suggested that representations be made to the Standards Committee.

The "Objectives" section of the Trust's constitution, as registered with the Charity Commission, were read out to the meeting to allay the member's fears. As below:

- To promote high standards of planning and architecture in or affecting the area of benefit
- To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area of benefit
- To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest in the area of benefit.

December

Over the last few weeks there has been a number of instances of flooding in Smithy Bridge at the bottom of the hill where the road crosses the river.

The council drainage engineer has been to access the situation and arrived at the conclusion that we have been stating for a number of years. In addition to blocked gullies there is also blockages in the connecting pipework. The engineer stated to a member of the Trust that funding would need to be applied for to fix the problem! A local councillor stated that this is not acceptable and repairs should be given priority.

A visit to the flood defence work taking place at Gale is hoped to be arranged in the New Year.

A grant application was made to the Pennine Township for funding to purchase a small laptop computer for use when collecting weather data from the various dataloggers in the area for uploading to the Liverpool University website.

After much delay by the manufacturers the flags arrived, one with the 50th Anniversary logo and one with the ordinary Trust logo. The 50th anniversary flag has been flown from the flagpole in the Memorial Garden and the banners are on display at a number of locations.

Emails were sent to Rochdale MP Sir Tony Lloyd and Lisa Nandy MP, Shadow Minister for Levelling Up, asking for their support to our "Call In" request to Secretary of State Michael Gove outlining our concerns over contamination on the Akzo site. So far, no replies have been received.

A suggestion was made to attend our MP's surgery to pass on our various concerns. Enquiries were made to ascertain when his surgeries take place and make an appointment for any interested members to attend. It transpired that he does not hold surgeries. The Trust will explore other official routes.

As many residential developments are proposed and also add on the Littleborough Supplementary Planning Document it is anticipated that 2022 will again be a busy year for the Trust.

Ian Jackson
Chairman

Financial statement for year ending December 31st. 2021

Littleborough Civic Trust Financial Statement for year ending 1

Starting balance brought forward from 2020

£3,345.55

Income

Subscriptions	£200	£6.00
		£8.38
		£30.00
		£187.07
		£414.00
Total Income	£200.00	£645.45
Balance at year end	£2,900.10	

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December 31st, 2021

Expenditure

Land registry search

Domain name

Civic Voice membership

Zoom fees

Banners

Total expenditure

LITTLEBOROUGH CIVIC TRUST

England & Wales - Charity number 1174714

Accounts

CHAIRMANS REPORT JANUARY – DECEMBER 2020

LCT have continued with the theme of protecting Littleborough's heritage and history by working with other groups/agencies in an attempt to conserve the village we currently have, in a state of equilibrium amenable to all concerned.

At the 14th January A.G.M. The following were duly elected into the following positions:

- Chairman – Ian Jackson
- Secretary (incl. membership) – Michael Price
- Treasurer – John Kay
- Minute Secretary – Gillian Price
- Trustee - Daniel Ames

January

Planning applications for the AKZO site and Honresfeld were discussed; again, the committee noting that despite all attempts, no infrastructure projects are forthcoming from Rochdale Council.

Work is ongoing on the Café Boat with Trustee Julian Farnell donating his own time and effort refurbishing it, with materials donated by his suppliers.

Members of the Flood Resilience Group received training on the data loggers installed by the Environment Agency at High Peak on Blackstone Edge to enable them to collect the data for various interested parties.

February

Local councillors were invited and four of them attended February's meeting.

Star Academy, who will provide the proposed new high school, had contacted the Secretary to inform him that there was nothing for them to report at this time.

Concerns were expressed that small developments are being built, over and above the building that is proposed within the GMSF. These developments are having a detrimental effect on the infrastructure of Littleborough.

A productive discussion took place and all parties agreed to work together to address the issues raised.

March

The meeting was informed that funding from Crook Hill had been applied for, to use on LCT's 50th Anniversary celebrations. Cllr. Paolucci advised the meeting that she was willing to apply for sponsorship/funding.

The Chairman and two more members attended Wardle and Littleborough Forum to inform the wider public re infrastructure concerns.

The national Covid-19 lockdown then interrupted meetings until a 'catch-up' meeting via Zoom was organised for 30th June.

June

Matters discussed were mainly around the amount of planning applications, both potential and proposed.

Funding was secured to the amount of £2k from Crook Hill Wind Farm; and further funding was being applied for from the Co-op Community Fund for the LCT 50th Anniversary.

July

The Flood Resilience Group informed the meeting that they had been holding regular Zoom meetings with the National Flood Forum throughout most of the lockdown period; mainly discussing the proposed changes to the Govt's planning application process and its potential effect on flood risk areas.

It was requested in June that the Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy, being championed by a councillor be an agenda item and thus, the Chairman opened the discussion, outlining information from the public domain and potential conflicts of interest. However, another local councillor and also one Trustee took great exception to this and protested and interrupted what was being discussed.

The Chairman agreed to write a Planning Strategy document which he would send to the membership for their approval.

August

One Trustee called for a proposal for a Vote of No Confidence in the Chairman.

The motion was proposed and seconded by at our last meeting 11th August 2020
This Trustee meeting was convened to take this vote

The Chairman read out facts against the allegations made, namely bringing the LCT into disrepute at the meeting held 14th July 2020

At this point the Secretary called for the vote to take place by a show of hands.
Result of the vote:

Votes for the motion included one proxy vote

- Votes for the motion including one proxy vote 3
- Votes against the motion 6

The motion was not passed and the meeting was concluded.

September

The Chairman questioned the meeting as to why LCT have 'Planning Application Updates' as a standing agenda item, when previous comments and emails from a local councillor indicated to members and Trustees that Rochdale Council's Planning Committee members are 'unapproachable'.

No answer to the Chairman's question was forthcoming.

A discussion took place regarding the Café Boat project, due to a Trustee sustaining an injury, thus delaying the project. The request was to see if any other options were available.

Constitution reform

The Secretary opened the item by stating that events of the previous few weeks had shown that the constitution may need to be tweaked in order to deal with certain situations.

Before the January 2021 AGM the membership would be invited to submit any suggestions that they might feel are needed to be discussed at the AGM.

Several attendees expressed the opinion that no-one in political office should be a Trustee.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that he believed that the Constitution at 11.2 (e) had been breached by a certain faction within LCT, (who had attempted to take political control), indicating that he had been the victim of a concerted effort by the same faction to remove him from office.

One Trustee resigned as both a Trustee and a member.
Another Trustee stood down as a Trustee.

October

Current Covid – 19 restrictions still hamper the Café Boat project.

The Save our Greenbelt Group are planning to launch a social media campaign once more information is available regarding the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework document.

The Trust, at the request of Juliet M de Little from Sheffield University has distributed her advert for volunteers to take part in her research on the psychological effects of flooding. The advert has been placed on the Trust's Facebook page and also on Discuss Littleborough.

It was recognised by all that the Trust should attempt to promote itself within the community and that social media was probably the best way forward. Most members though, are not experts of Facebook etc.

The Trust issued a comprehensive 'press release', to highlight and consolidate all proposed/potential planning applications for residential development, both within, and areas surrounding Littleborough. This would assist the residents of Littleborough to appreciate the impact on infrastructure etc., if they were to go ahead.

The press release would also demonstrate LCT and the Greenbelt Group working together to minimise any such impacts.

Funding application (in June) applied for from the Co-op Community Fund for the LCT 50th Anniversary was unsuccessful.

November

Albeit a 'brownfield' site and a derelict building, it was noted that demolition work had started on Phoenix Iron Works on Newall St., and concern was raised that the surrounding streets are inadequate to handle current traffic and that the traffic that will be generated by the proposed 20 residential properties will further exacerbate the situation.

The Canal/Café boat project was discussed due to significant ongoing delays due to various reasons.

It was decided that it would be prudent at this stage to make enquiries further afield to ascertain if the project was still viable.

The Save the Greenbelt Group have put out a petition which has been overwhelmingly received by Littleborough residents; culminating in over 2000 signatures opposing current GMSF proposals and other planning strategies.

The Crook Hill grant application was successful and monies have been awarded for promoting the Trust's 50th anniversary in 2021. This will be used for the printing of banners to hang on the various shopfront flagpoles around the borough and also to cover the cost of printing literature to showcase the Trust's 50-year history.

Member Frank Carter has put together a DVD featuring photographs with an audio background of Rochdale Canal between Sowerby Bridge and Manchester and ending with a photo of the unveiling of the memorial to Brian Holden in Littleborough. Frank very generously offered copies of the DVD free of charge.

Controversy surrounds the fact that Rochdale Council's resolution to dispose of surplus assets, one of which is Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre. Reasons given being that it was not feasible to continue with little investment to enhance the visitor experience.

The Visitor Centre has been leased to the RSPCA, it seems it was a done deal and not put out to tender as one would reasonably expect with a publicly owned asset.

An article in Littleborough United Reform Church parish magazine reports that the Church Elders have been approached by a councillor who stated that Rochdale Council would be interested in purchasing the church with a view to developing a Community Hub.

It was commented that "Are there not community hubs"? Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre, Hare Hill House, The Coach House and Littleborough Boxing Club?

Several Trustees/Members expressed their disbelief that our local councillors will not engage with the Trust, constructively or otherwise; acknowledging that the situation is continually unacceptable [as they are our democratically elected representatives].

The discussion terminated with a request for attendees to highlight where this situation could possibly be reported.

December

One of the local councillors had a conversation with the Chairman and was asked why our local councillors were not prepared to interact with the Trust, as stated by another local councillor at a previous Trust meeting. The councillor replied that as far as he was concerned, this was not the case and would engage as necessary.

The Canal/Café boat project has come to a halt and will now be the subject of a feasibility study.

The Save the Greenbelt Group informed the Trust that sales of a 2021 calendar they have produced are going well. The funds raised by them will contribute towards funding professional legal services to challenge planning matters. The Group's website is now up and running and they are to produce a newsletter shortly.

The Secretary accompanied a representative of the National Flood Forum to the New Street development. The Flood Forum representative raised a number of questions concerning the Artesian Well which she will pursue with the relevant bodies.

Link4Life [which is in reality, a standalone arm of Rochdale Council] has contacted The Trust and has offered to provide regular updates of their activities.

The Rochdale Rail Corridor Strategy which should have been discussed at the July meeting but was postponed was raised. It was decided it should be an agenda item at the January 2021 meeting.