

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