



Littleborough Civic Trust - Chair's Report – November 2016

The year began with a great deal of uncertainty about the future of the Civic Trust. Fortunately, some of the members of the previous Committee stayed on and their knowledge of what had happened in the past has been invaluable.

A lot of the activities of the Committee throughout the year have been focused on getting policies, procedures and action plans in place as well as becoming more pro-active across a wide range of actions and activities.

One of the first things that needed to happen was a re-writing of the LCT Constitution which had become somewhat confused over the years. The Committee took the decision to establish LCT as a Community Interest Organisation and Nick Andrews has been the driving force in developing the documentation necessary for this to happen.

Mike Price has done a sterling job in sorting out our membership list which was very confused and even included several members who were no longer with us.

Ian Jackson has been pivotal in ensuring that the Committee stays focused on laying the foundations for future development of LCT and none of what we have done to move forward would have been possible without the support of the rest of the Committee.

Before the new Committee's feet had touched the ground, the December flood hit Littleborough. LCT played a key role in coordinating the community response and worked closely with the RMBC team to ensure that as many people as possible were kept informed of events. We also worked to ensure there was a coordinated response to fundraising and we are grateful to the Lions for taking the lead on this. Many lessons were learned that are being fed into any future flood response. (Not least of these is that we now have a deep knowledge about the supply of sandbags.)

Out of this has come the Civic Trust Flood Resilience Group who have been working closely throughout the year with Sarah Parkington from the National Flood Forum. A community response plan is now coming together. The group is also hoping to co-ordinate with, and learn from, other flood response groups in the Greater Manchester and Calder Valley areas. Thanks to everyone who has given up their time to make this happen. (As a side issue, the role that LCT played in the flood response helped to raise community awareness of the Trust.)



We have been active in our role of protecting and developing Littleborough's heritage. This has mainly focused on planning applications:

We were delighted that we were able to bring together seven local organisations to develop a co-ordinated response to the proposed development of the Proofings Site which has yet to be decided.

We were successful in the response we prepared with Bernice Clifton from The Co-operatives History Group regarding the proposed development of the former Co-operative Dance Hall and we are currently waiting to gain entry to the building so that it can be properly documented prior to conversion.

We have worked closely with the residents of Rakewood and have engaged the support of the Environment Agency in developing a response to the proposed development of the mill site which has yet to be decided.

We have also successfully worked with the residents group from the area adjacent to Barker's Wood with a focus on LCT being able to offer secure long-term protection for the wood. We are very pleased that, in a recent meeting with RMBC, it was agreed that the "Care of the wood will largely be in the hands of Littleborough Civic Trust". With this in mind the residents are forming a group which will become a sub-committee of LCT and be called "The LCT Friends of Barker's Wood and Environs" and take the lead in protecting and maintaining this community asset.

It is probable that from 2017 a named member of the Committee will be responsible for monitoring planning applications and triggering any necessary response.

Initially, it was agreed that regular monthly meetings would only involve the elected member of the committee with 3 or 4 "open" meetings to which we would invite all members and a speaker to look at an area of community interest. This has not been successful with the two speakers identified subsequently cancelling. We will return to trying to make this happen next year.

The issue of parking continues to raise its head and, as part of LCT's response to this we organised a moderately successful public meeting to look at the issues. A variety of solutions to the parking issue were discussed ranging from building a new car park through to more effective use and signage for existing provision. Also, the possibility of asking RMBC to conduct a detailed traffic and parking survey was suggested. We are still awaiting RMBC's response to this and other possibilities.

The Canalside Group has now become a sub-group of LCT and reports to our monthly meetings. The latest development is that the "pleasure boat" project that has made little



progress over quite some time has now been dropped in favour of converting the boat to a floating café. It is early days for the exciting project but it seems to be making rapid progress. Once again, many thanks to those that have given up their time to move this forward.

LCT is keeping a watchful eye on the possibility of developing a marina at Durn. So far, there has been little interest in the purchase of the land from RMBC. If and when this happens, LCT will be pro-active in monitoring progress.

The Neighbourhood Forum has made slow progress over the past year or so. A meeting of the group will be held on the 30th November to review progress so far and consider the future of the Neighbourhood Plan. If it is decided to continue developing the Plan, the Forum will become a sub-group of LCT and develop an action plan for the next 12 months which will be public.

The Committee will also be keeping a watchful eye on the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework and respond as and when necessary.

Rae Street has been generous in handing over to LCT the work John Street was doing to update his excellent book of walks around Littleborough. There is much work that needs to be done on this to ensure paths are still open, etc. Nick Andrews is taking a lead on attempting to bring John's work back to life and develop this as part of attracting more visitors to Littleborough.

Over the past year the LCT Committee has gone through considerable change in the way it operates and is now in a much healthier position to become an important contributor to Littleborough's future and development. To achieve our aims, a key issue for the Committee over the next twelve months must be to engage with our community more and increase our active membership.