

Chairman's Report WBTC April 2018

It has been an eventful year.

In April WBTC resolved to purchase Frederic Robinson Ltd's rights to what used to be the stables (following on from work done in preceding months) at the west end of the Mechanic's Institute. Through the year this space has been cleared, decorated and made usable as a community workspace. Discussions and meetings have been held with the Well-Dressers who will be using this space after many years in a temporary marquee.

WBTC has throughout the year attempted, as always, to support the community, often in areas where it does not have any direct power, but can add its official voice to a local campaign. In August the council convened its normal planning meeting in the Hall of the Mechanics and gave time for residents of Macclesfield Road to voice their concerns about the prospective housing development; as a result a fairly detailed comment was sent by WBTC to HPBC on this issue. More recently WBTC have been supporting both the FV Social Club and Community Centre following the installation of fencing blocking off the car park. WBTC involvement has, I hope both encouraged residents as well as the leader of HPBC to seek the opinion of a barrister with expertise in planning matters.

There has been some tidying up organisationally: we have moved to Unity bank which seems more user friendly; the terms of reference of both W4W and the Sports Association have been rationalised. W4W and its many volunteers have done great work throughout the year on litter picks, and painting. The Sports Association is now properly under the umbrella of WBTC although the details are still bedding in. I hope that over the next 12 months we will be able to implement a much slicker, simpler booking and invoice system in tandem with the new council website.

There have been a few changes of cllrs. Cllrs Goldfinch and Wild resigned in the autumn and at the time we expressed gratitude for their service. Normally, new councillors are co-opted onto council. The process being that sitting councillors choose from those who have expressed a willingness to serve – this is perfectly legal and in just like other parish councils. It is also perfectly legal for 10 members of the public to request an election, which duly happened. The turn out for one election was very low and relatively low for the second and together resulted in a charge of over £8000 on town council funds. As a direct result the tc precept was raised for this year to replenish the reserves. Nevertheless, at the end of the process WBTC ended up with two new and excellent additions in Cllrs Dean and McCarthy.

Looking ahead as well as a new website and booking system to develop we are looking to develop the Mechanics itself with th objective of refurbishing it, greening it energy wise and making it more user friendly for the business and local communities.

Finally I would like to close by thanking everyone for their support this year.

In the spirit of all the changes to personnel, Dave Johnson our car taker for many years has chosen to hang up his boots. We are most grateful for his service.