

### **Hebden Bridge: the Planning Committee and after**

You won't be surprised that much of this newsletter this time is about the aftermath of last week's Planning Committee. As you'll have gathered, councillors voted at the Committee to reject our application for twenty affordable homes in Hebden Bridge. The voting was three councillors against our plans, and two in favour. (The officers' recommendation was to approve).

We are naturally feeling bruised and we'd like to thank everyone who has been sending us emails (and also posting on social media) in support of the CLT's work. We'd also like to thank everyone who came along to sit in on the Planning Committee. By our maths, there were 23 people there supporting the application.

### **What we think now**

Our planning application was a very long time in preparation (over three years), and the overwhelming response in the town to the early consultations we held in 2016 and 2017 was positive. Negative voices only began to be heard in any volume last summer, when of course we were very well advanced with the plans and were about to put in for planning.

We continue to believe that, by bringing High Street back to life, our new street of homes would have very quickly become a feature of Hebden Bridge life that people would have been proud to show off to friends and visitors. Sustainable, energy-efficient, well-designed, offering homes to our local young people – this is surely what a lot of people in Hebden Bridge would want for their community.

### **The arguments against**

You might expect us to want to rip into the arguments raised against the proposal, which we think were generally weak. We'd feel better if we did let rip, no doubt, but that's not what we intend to do. Planning is a democratic process, and people are entitled to oppose as well as support. (All we will say is that quite how the development would have adversely affected air quality is beyond us. Town centre developments within walking distance of trains and buses seem to us exactly what we should be doing to reduce traffic).

### **Want to find out more?**

You can read Calderdale planning officer's considered appraisal of our application in the report which went to committee. You can also see a webcast of the actual committee discussion. We have put links to both of these on our own website, at <http://caldervalleyclt.org.uk/hebden-bridge/>

### **What next?**

A commercial developer would at this point almost certainly decide to appeal the planning decision, and/or would resubmit the plans (no doubt slightly tweaked).

The CLT is not a commercial developer. We're a charity and we seek to be properly accountable to our communities in the upper Calder Valley. So the trustees decided

when we met earlier this week that we are not going to rush in to taking any hasty decisions. We intend to weigh up all the options. We also want to be careful not to incur unnecessary further costs if we can help it, when the outcome is clearly uncertain.

What we *have* decided is that the final decision on what the CLT should do or not do about the High Street proposal should be taken not just by the trustees but by all the CLT membership. (CLT members are the CLT's sovereign body). Details in due course.

### **A positive way forward**

In the meantime, we are very aware that there are a lot more than our current 95 members who endorse what the CLT is trying to do, so we have decided to be resolutely upbeat and to launch a new membership drive. The membership form is on the website, at [www.caldervalleyclt.org.uk/docs/membership.pdf](http://www.caldervalleyclt.org.uk/docs/membership.pdf) . If you've been in touch recently supporting our work but haven't yet become a member we'll also email you separately. (Members take out a £1 membership share in the CLT, which is constituted as a community benefit society – a kind of member co-operative).