

# NEWSLETTER

## A heart for Hebden Bridge

**Work is continuing on the ambitious plans which will breathe new life into Hebden Bridge's fine but neglected Council Offices building beside St George's Bridge.**

The community-led project is coordinated by a voluntary team from Hebden Bridge Partnership (the umbrella organisation for community groups locally) who have pledged to continue their work. This follows news at the end of March that the project had not been successful in its bid for funding under the government's Community Assets programme.

"Although this was disappointing, we have made progress recently in negotiating with Calderdale the terms of the proposed transfer of the building into community control," says Andrew Bibby, joint project coordinator. Under the plans for the Council Offices being discussed, Calderdale council would commit to using the building as a first port of call for enquiries from local people about its services. The building would also be opened up for wider community use, with two meeting rooms available for local groups to use. Most ambitious of all, the project team envisage refurbishing the old

housing department offices at the rear which would create a new function room and public hall for the town.

Significant capital funding will be required both to undertake essential maintenance on the existing

fabric and to create the new entrance hall, atrium and hall facilities envisaged.

"At present there is no single pot of money available, and the most likely way forward is to put together a basket of both grant and loan capital to fund the new work needed," Andrew Bibby explains. He adds that the project team are currently also

researching creating space for small businesses, particularly in the creative and digital sectors. Transfer into community control is dependent on the long-term financial viability of the site.

The project has the support of Hebden Royd Town Council, and Blackshaw, Erringden, Heptonstall and Wadsworth Parish Councils. Over seventy local organisations have also endorsed the proposals.

photo: Jim Strom



# The vision



## **Our vision for the Council offices site comprises several key features:**

- First point of public contact for Calderdale's services ("Customer First" base), plus the town and parish councils
- Meeting rooms for community and public use
- A new public hall/function room for the town
- Fully accessible. Wheelchair access
- A commitment to sustainability; innovative energy-saving measures
- Facilities for other advice services

## **Funding permitting, we also hope to meet these other objectives:**

- Facilities for small businesses, particularly in the creative and digital sectors
- Office facilities for community organisations

## **The project team**

**The voluntary project team currently comprises the following people, all of whom live locally:**

- Andrew Bibby** – freelance financial journalist, with a particular interest in social enterprise
- Cllr Janet Battye** – ward councillor for Hebden Bridge on Calderdale MBC; social services manager
- Helen Gilchrist** – educational consultant, formerly principal of Bury College
- Keith Lomax** – partner in the solicitors Davies Gore Lomax
- Derrick Palmer** - Director of Finance, Bradford Community Housing Trust
- Lars Hansen** - clerk, Blackshaw Parish Council; professional experience in property management
- Contact us at 01422 844026.

**Keep up to date with our progress**  
**If you want to know how things are progressing, keep looking at the on-line diary (weblog) we are operating on our website.**

The blog can be accessed at  
[www.hb-bridgecentre.org.uk/news.html](http://www.hb-bridgecentre.org.uk/news.html).

**This leaflet is available in large print format: ring 01422 844026**

## **Wanted: a good snappy name**

**Once the home of Hebden Royd Urban District Council, Hebden Bridge's council offices have always been an important building in local civic and community life.**

But the name 'Hebden Bridge Council Offices' probably doesn't do justice to the range of activities being planned for the building in the future. It's clear that in due course we need to come up with a name for the whole complex.

We've provisionally fixed on the Bridge Centre. The building is right beside Hebden's iconic sixteenth century Packhorse Bridge – and we also hope that the centre will be a real bridge between all parts of the community locally.

Do you share our views on this, or do you think you can do better? Let us know! There's space on our website for comments to be left, or contact us via Andrew Bibby on 01422 844026.

**Let us have your name, address and contact details and we'll make sure we keep you informed as the project develops.**

Either drop the information through the council offices letterbox or post to HB Council Offices project, c/o Hebden Royd Town Council, Council Offices, St Georges St, Hebden Bridge HX7 7BY. Or go on line to:  
[www.hb-bridgecentre.org.uk](http://www.hb-bridgecentre.org.uk)