

MEDIA RELEASE

OPEN DOORS AT HEBDEN BRIDGE TOWN HALL ATTRACTS HUNDREDS

Hebden Bridge Town Hall was buzzing with activity and ideas last Thursday (October 8) when 230 local people took part in 'Open House' consultation events, linked to plans to transfer the buildings into the control of a locally-managed charitable trust.

During the morning, pupils who are members of Riverside School's School Council were invited to give their own ideas for the future development of the building. They were shown round the council debating chamber by the Mayor of Hebden Royd Town Council, and then met trustees from Hebden Bridge Community Association and the newly appointed architects for the project, Leeds-based firm Bauman Lyons.

They were followed later in the day by a party of school students from Calder High, who also worked closely with the architects and trustees on possible ideas for the Town Hall. Mr Chris Sylge, Deputy Headteacher of Calder High, says: "This regeneration project represents a wonderful opportunity to reinvent an under-used community resource and as such it is critical that our young people are able to have a voice in both the functional and design aspects of its redesign. I was delighted, but not surprised, at the quality of the discussion and opinion exhibited by our students in the consultation process. As a specialist Technology College, Calder High has a strong, creative, design-led character, and I knew our students would be able to

make a great contribution. But frankly I was stunned by the quality of thinking and the superb design ideas our students were providing."

At 5pm, the Town Hall threw open its doors to all, and about two hundred people took the chance to explore the whole building. They saw rooms up dusty staircases they never knew existed and enjoyed entertainment from a range of local people who gave their time for free including Calder Valley Voices, bluegrass duo 'Cow Baby', artists from 59 steps, local magician Johnny McQuade, classical guitarist Fingal Plumpton, and members of Hebden Bridge Local History Society.

After the tours, visitors were given the opportunity to meet the architects, see work done by the pupils earlier in the day, put forward their ideas and comments, and enjoy home-made cakes and refreshments.

Trustee Sara Robinson said, "We are delighted by the response to our Open Doors event, and the wide range of individuals and community groups who came to be a part of it. The Town Hall, its history and its future potential is clearly something many people care about. We have collected hundreds of ideas and comments which will be summarised and added to our website shortly. Lets keep up this positive and constructive discussion so that we can ensure the building's long term future for everyone in Hebden Bridge and district."

The day was concluded in the evening with the first AGM of the recently created charitable trust Hebden Bridge Community Association. Fifty members attended, and heard reports from the interim project team on progress to date. The result of the first election of trustees of the Association was also announced, by returning officer David Dempsey of Hebden Royd Town Council. Thirteen members had stood for election, and a total of 139 members voted. The ten elected trustees are: Janet Battye, Andrew Bibby, Robin Dixon, Sue Fenton,

Peter Hirst, Karen Houghton, Sarah Moss, Dr Linda Patterson, Derrick Palmer,
and Sara Robinson.

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