

# Update

## Marple Civic Society

NEWSLETTER November 2019



### The Wharf: where's the car park?

Marple Civic Society has considered the latest application at Marple Wharf which consists of both the conversion of the wharf canal warehouse building into a cafe, exhibition and interpretive centre with recreation and meeting space on the first floor - and seven new dwellings, *all comprising one application for planning permission.*

The society has written to Stockport Council to object to the proposed development on the following grounds.

- the bank of the Macclesfield Canal is a Conservation Area. The wharf warehouse and the attractive stone bridges at either end of this section of the Canal are Grade II Listed Buildings. They are of nationally recognised importance. It is the duty of the Council to protect their character and appearance and their setting.
- they are also of great importance to Marple as its greatest heritage asset
- the proposed visitor centre and dwellings together would attract a great deal of traffic to the site without proper

- parking provision to serve the visitor centre. Without space around the building it would be difficult for it to function.
- besides the visitor centre and the housing there is to be a refuse disposal building for use by the occupants of the houses, the visitor centre and boat users on the canal - access to all these by cars belonging to visitors, residents, boat users, and the New Horizons canal boat would cause congestion along the cul de sac
- planning standards would be infringed: the proposed houses would be too close to the existing ones on Church Street in terms of privacy and overlooking; and the access road would be the existing canal service road which would not meet highway standards for this amount of development.

*Marple Civic Society is concerned about the application as a whole which comprises both the conversion of the Wharf building as well as the houses. However applications for planning proposals cannot be split into parts to be considered separately - they must be decided as one. The Society is quite clear in its support for the proposed use of the building as a visitor / recreation centre and cafe and wholeheartedly supports this part of the application for the benefits it would bring to the conservation area of Macclesfield Canal, the setting of its associated Listed Buildings, and as a visitor attraction for the town. With a little more car parking and a scheme of public open space and landscaping to open up the canal bank on the part of the site proposed for housing, an existing asset would be greatly enhanced and protected for the future.*

### Pool project: trading water

Since the last newsletter Marple Civic Society has been active in trying to find some more information regarding the Marple Pool Project. We have contacted Mr. W. Wragg, M.P. as well as local councillors and Stockport Council. We also submitted a question to the Marple Area Committee Meeting on 25 September.

It would appear that once the design options have been drafted and circulated to councillors for their consideration then a decision will be made as to how to proceed. It would seem to be "common knowledge" that Memorial Park is the preferred site although there has been no official announcement.

We asked the question:

"Following closure of the Marple pool on 13th March 2018 can the council please provide an update on progress of the proposed new Marple pool / community amenity? In particular could you please comment on: the planned structure design/footprint and type of leisure facilities; location; time-line for commencement and best-case completion date?"

The latest reply received says:

*I can confirm we are now at the final stages of working with the commissioned Architects to work up a concept design for a proposed new leisure facility in Marple. At the same time, we have been working to develop funding options for the scheme. We are scheduled to receive information back from the architects in the next couple of weeks. We hope to be in position to provide a public update later in November. This will be released via the Council website and Life Leisure social media feeds. Georgia Buckley (November 6, 2019)*

Peter Ashworth (Head of Culture at Leisure at Stockport Council) can be contacted directly at [peter.ashworth@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:peter.ashworth@stockport.gov.uk) Another link is: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/news/updated-statement-on-marple-pool-july-2019>.

### Where are we?



**Can you identify where this road sign is located? And can you then decide whether it is helpful, or misleading?**

## *“It’s not dead, it’s just resting” ...*

### **Whatever happened to the Greater Manchester Strategic Framework (GMSF)?**

It’s not currently moving, but just like Monty Python’s Parrot, GMSF is still very much alive. It will set Green Belt boundaries and where development will happen, so it’s very important to Marple. The initial ‘build everywhere’ version inspired by the ten councils (including Stockport) and developers was revised under pressure from Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham. Comments, including those from Marple Civic Society led to a second version which was much better – for instance at High Lane 4,000 houses in the middle of the Green Belt became a 500 house urban extension. Not perfect, but at least progress. We have commented on the second version as well.

There are two ways that GMSF can now legally proceed. The way GMCA want to go requires Government to make a simple administrative order. So far Government has refused to do this, so GMSF is ‘delayed’. It won’t be submitted for examination before the Mayoral election in May 2020. If GMSF doesn’t go ahead at all it will be bad for Marple in a number of ways:

- Salford have taken 5,000 of the Stockport housing allocation – if GMSF doesn’t proceed this means 5,000 extra houses in our Green Belt, and almost certainly the High Lane allocation will be revived.
- GMCA/The Mayor are much more in favour of brownfield/town centre development than Stockport officers.
- Similarly they are much more in favour of public transport/walk/cycle. Stockport is road-obsessed and determined to press ahead with two roads (A6 to Bredbury and High Lane bypass).
- GMSF emphasised sustainability, environment and carbon emissions – without it, SMBC would be less constrained to uphold those objectives.

So how can MCS members get involved? We need individually to keep up the pressure on our local Councillors and Council to avoid Green Belt

development and build sustainably. It is essential that GMSF goes ahead – remember that if it doesn’t, Stockport will have to find the land for the 5,000 houses that Salford has taken from us, and that would mean extensive *additional* Green Belt development around Marple and High Lane. But at MCS we still feel GMSF could be better.

If you would like to get involved or would like to see our responses to the two consultations, please look on the news section of the website or contact Peter Black ([peterblack62@gmail.com](mailto:peterblack62@gmail.com)).

## **Marple Neighbourhood Plan: latest news**

The Vision for the Marple Neighbourhood Plan is for Marple to grow as an attractive community to live or work in and to visit. The Plan aims to retain our character and heritage as a small town with a village feel. High levels of education and economic activity will mean a good quality of life and well-being. It acknowledges the challenges of traffic congestion, and to the changing climate for retail shopping in the town centre; there are valuable community and leisure facilities which need to be protected; and a continuing demand for good-quality affordable homes.

More compact development will reduce the need for travel reinforce local facilities, reduce the need to develop open land and will allow us to retain the existing settlement boundaries.

Several drafts of the plan have been prepared since its inception in 2016. It continues to be updated and modified with planning policies for the town centre including measures to improve its environment, and to provide for a new food store of appropriate size; better provision for cyclists and pedestrians, introduction of speed limits in the town centre, better waiting facilities at Marple and Rosehill railway stations, and housing development close to the railways stations to make the most of public transport.

It is intended to encourage a supply of new homes in Marple, including higher densities for developments of more than 9 houses, units suitable for older people, a proportion of self-build dwellings and the development of live-work accommodation.

Marple’s green spaces will be protected under the Plan, including Memorial Park and the canal towpaths. Existing business premises will be protected unless they have become unviable; and new businesses and micro-businesses will be encouraged.

Special consideration will be given to the future use of Goyt Mill having regard to its heritage value, and value as lettable business space, and not excluding the possibility of part residential development also

Other policies will deal with education, heritage assets, tourism, and green infrastructure.

The AGM of the Marple Neighbourhood Forum was held in October and a presentation by various members of the Forum was made on the different topics of the Plan listed above. The officers of the Forum were re-elected with the exception of that of Chairman. There is now a vacancy since the existing chairman has moved away to a different part of Cheshire.

The Forum issues monthly Newsletters. If people are interested your views may be submitted on our facebook page, which you should find under “Our Marple Plan” or our website which tells you other ways of contacting us and contributing to the debate about what should be in the Neighbourhood Plan. You can visit our website at [ourmarpleplan](http://ourmarpleplan.co.uk). You can also contact us by e-mail at [info@ourmarpleplan.co.uk](mailto:info@ourmarpleplan.co.uk).

For those not using electronic media, you can leave us written communications in the traditional way in Marple Library. We welcome and need your views, opinions, comments and feedback and encourage everyone to get involved. Please mention the Forum and The Plan to others.

## *Contact us*

We welcome members’ feedback on any aspect of The Society’s work.

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