



## Chairman's Message

First and foremost, I hope that you and your families are keeping safe and well in these uncertain times. As you know, we have already cancelled all our events until June, and have now decided to cancel the visit to Weston Hall and Church in July. We will try to re-instate this for 2021 and cheques sent to Robin for this visit have been destroyed.

I hope that you enjoyed the excellent variety and quality of the latest Journal, covering life in North Craven from the end of the ice age to the present day. We are working on another must-read publication from the keyboard of David Johnson: *Settle – A Historic Market Town*. Published with the aid of a generous grant from *Stories in Stone*, it will provide another excellent read when it is released in, we hope, a couple of months' time.

We are all very aware of the economic impact of the virus on individuals and businesses. The key purpose of this special newsletter is to make a strong appeal to our members to help North Craven successfully weather the present difficulties. In particular, two of our critical heritage and community assets, both managed very professionally, are facing exceptional challenges. The Victoria Hall and The Folly need our substantial support; they need it now and for some months to come. Please read what follows and, if you are in a position to do so, make a commitment for the future of North Craven.

John Asher  
Chair

## The Victoria Hall

Ann Harding writes: We now know that Settle Victoria Hall will be without any significant income until mid August at the

very earliest, when we hope to open with a mini 'Love Settle' festival. We have gone from having a positive inflow of cash every day, to zero income, overnight.

The figures are accurate as of mid-April but, as you can appreciate, we are on a bed of shifting sand and things change on an almost daily basis. However, hopefully there shouldn't be too many major surprises from now on in. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic we were in a healthy financial position but did, always, work on forward cash flow to finance the business. We used the available cash liquidity when lockdown started to immediately pay invoices due and we quickly started using the overdraft facility, which we had never previously used. We have £25k available on overdraft.

Unfortunately, on top of everything else, we have lost our 2 major income events of the year – the Beer Festival and Ferocious Dog Band weekend. These cannot be rescheduled again for 2020. I was banking on both these being available to pay the wages and costs for July/August (after furlough) but both of these have dropped this morning. This has left us with an additional 19 k loss on turnover, and an irreplaceable 7k net contribution. As these are now gone, any further loss from other events is probably academic as the business will be unlikely to survive without a major external cash injection.

We are working as hard as we can to get in grant funding and are hoping for some successful bids.

We are also, as you are aware, running the Community Response Centre which is helping the local community during this crisis which shows how important Settle Victoria Hall is to our local community and economy. I could do a whole raft of words and numbers and percentages about how much money we bring into the local

economy - but maybe I will leave that for later! ...

[Ann's figures go on to show a shortfall of some £21k by the middle of August, which includes the cost of the Community Response Centre at £400 per week] and she also writes:

As this is less than the available overdraft we are in a position to continue to trade using our bank overdraft. But it will be a very very difficult 12 months.

I feel a huge amount of responsibility to get us through this. Not just for the Victoria Hall but for the many £10's of £1000's of funds we bring into the wider local economy and business'.

We are, of course, already plugged into just about every funding stream in the UK , but any help we can get would be appreciated.

Please support us online at:

<https://www.settlevictoriahall.org.uk/donate> or by cheque to Settle Victoria Hall, Kirkgate BD24 9DZ.

## The Folly

Heather Lane writes:

### **The short-term future for The Folly**

As you know, we closed our doors on 20 March. We have furloughed all staff apart from Caitlin Greenwood, our Heritage Development Officer, whose post is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. She continues to promote the Museum online and we have developed virtual versions of our latest exhibition and trail on life in 19th century Settle.

We have already received the £10k small business grant, which will help defray running costs for the first three months of closure. However, we are still providing 20% of salaries to support our immensely dedicated staff. A further 15% of matched

funding has to be found for the remainder of the HDO project, about £6k in total.

Unless we can reopen and begin to generate retail and admissions income, by the end of September we will have used all of our unrestricted reserve. At that point, we may have to consider closing the coffee house and operating a very limited museum service with volunteer help only, which would undo at a stroke all the advances that have been made in the last couple of years. We have applied for assistance from Arts Council England and will know by mid-May whether we have been successful. We are also making approaches to other, smaller funders, but competition in the sector is high.

### **How might the community help now?**

Offers of financial assistance would be hugely welcome. We have a Charities Aid Foundation online donation button on our website

<https://www.thefolly.org.uk/support-us>.

I've also added a page on gift aid to our website:

<https://www.thefolly.org.uk/support-us/donate/gift-aid/>

This gives the option of providing your details either via a downloadable form or by using an online contact form.

We are still offering Coffee House vouchers for sale to be redeemed when we reopen. These are available in multiples of £5 and can be requested by sending an email to our Operations Manager, Gary Chadwick [gchadwick@ncbpt.org.uk](mailto:gchadwick@ncbpt.org.uk). We hope to have an online payment option available shortly.

We are about to launch a campaign to help us acquire the Horner Collection of glass plate negatives, which has been offered to the Museum, and need to raise £5k. This project will give us a focus for new activity once we reopen. Anyone who would like to contribute to this fund can

write to me at The Folly, Victoria Street,  
Settle BD24 9EY or email  
curator@ncbpt.org.uk

The community might also like to join the NCBPT supporters' group (details on our Support Us page as above) to provide us with a regular source of income. All donations can be gift aided and we can post or email forms for any tax payer wishing to notify us that they wish to assist us in this way. Facebook and CAF provide a way to indicate this at the time of making a gift online.

### **What support might you need to re-open or after re-opening, which we could prepare for now?**

A call for new volunteers is high on our list of priorities and we would be grateful if this could be publicised. We are concerned that many of our older volunteers may prefer to continue social distancing until risk of a resurgence of the virus has passed or a vaccine becomes available. We anticipate that we will have relatively few wishing to return to front of house or visitor engagement roles, which will make it more difficult for us to reopen. Caitlin will be glad to offer training to a new cohort of (potentially) younger volunteers, but we would be keen to hear from anyone who would like to train specifically to give tours of the house, as a script is already available. A list of volunteer roles can be found here: <https://www.thefolly.org.uk/support-us/volunteer/>

We will, in common with other local cultural organisations, need support with marketing (including via social media) and it would be good to discuss how to coordinate this across the district. If, as we suspect, people decide to take holidays in the UK later this year, we would like to be ready to make the most of higher tourist numbers and to ensure that The Folly has a high enough profile to attract a larger

market share and a wider demographic than hitherto.

On a practical note, we will need a small team willing to help with a deep clean before we reopen, as all cleaning is suspended while we are closed.

In-kind support from heritage builders, decorators, carpet fitters and other tradespeople with experience of working in listed buildings, or professional advice from surveyors, quantity surveyors, heating engineers, etc., would help us recover the momentum lost on the Zion development project, as well as helping us prepare for our quinquennial review in 2021, at a point where we will have no reserves to cover the costs involved. Letters of support for the work of the Trust are always welcome.

### **How can you help?**

We know these are difficult times for everyone but if you could help by volunteering or donating to these organisations you will be helping to secure two very important parts of North Craven life. The Community Response Centre that has been set up in the Victoria Hall over the last few weeks is exceptional in the way that it has helped the community and is the envy of other areas. This is a fine example of why we need to consider what life would be like in North Craven without such assets and why it is imperative for us all to act now!