

CLITHEROE TOWN WELLS CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN



HEALD WELL



STOCK WELL



ST. MARY'S WELL

'To secure a lasting and meaningful future for Clitheroe's three ancient well sites.'

Campaign Support Document CSD 2: Roadmap to "Save the Town Wells"

Overview

Clitheroe Town Wells Conservation Campaign (CTWCC) was founded in 2017. The activities of this Campaign resulted in Ribbles Valley Borough Council (the Council) accepting ownership responsibility for Stock Well and successfully applying for a 'First Registration' from The Land Registry in 2019. To date the Council refuses to make similar applications for Heald Well or St. Mary's Well and remains reticent to accept their established 'de-facto' ownership responsibility to do so.

The positive response of the Public, and Councillors, who attended the Heritage Open Days 2024 Guided Walk of the Town Wells, the launch of Andrew Bowes' book, *'Reflections on the Water'* - to great acclaim in the Moot Hall on 7th Sept 2024, the 'Standing Room only' Public Meeting, again in the Moot Hall on 25th Jan. 2025 and Chairman Steve Ragnall's BBC Radio Lancashire broadcast from Head Well on 3rd Jan. 2025 - confirm the enduring and increasing support for this Campaign to succeed. Clitheroe Town Council unanimously confirmed their continued support for the Campaigns aims and strategy in February 2025.

The sole obstacle to achieving this aim is the absence of title deeds for Heald and St Mary's Wells. Without these, Grant Applications will not be considered, Public Liability Insurance can't be obtained, Listed Building Consent for investigation and repair works can't be accepted. These ancient sites will be condemned to a continued disgraceful decline. With the impending take over of the Council by a larger 'Unitary Authority' within the next two years the meaningful future of these sites is now completely in our Council's hands.

Pre - Registration Strategy

To address this unjustified stance, CTWCC now requests Councillors address the current impasse with Officers 'second guessing' the outcome of further applications to the Land Registry. CTCC is now lobbying all RVBC Councillor to have Officers draw up, near identical, applications to the successful Stock Well submission to HMLR for **Full First Title over Heald and St Mary's Wells**. The legality, truthfulness - and municipal responsibility for doing so is supported by the following evidence assembled by CTWCC :

A: Reference to the legal directions of *'The Local Authorities (England) (Property Etc.) Order 1973'*¹ **This ensured that property owned by Councils before 1974 was transferred to the ownership of the newly formed local authorities.** The transfer relates to *'property, assets, and responsibilities.'*

B: In August 2022 HMLR provided new Guidance for applicants 'Return and rejection of applications for registration (practice guide 49)'² This confirms that this evidence of **'responsibility and maintenance' of an unregistered site over time** will be accepted in support of Title Applications.

C: Information obtained from the Council in response to the Freedom of Information Act Enquiry and a further ruling by the Information Commissioners ruling on that Enquiry.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1973/1861/made>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/return-and-rejection-of-applications-for-registration>
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D: Four previous and/or current Legal Reviews of the Case for further applications to register Heald and St. Mary's Wells which all confirm that the only issue preventing the Council making further applications for confirmation of title to these sites - **'is the will to do so'**.

E: Take such action necessary to raise Public, Municipal and Statutory Awareness of the significance of these three pre-Norman sites to the ancient settlement of Clitheroe/Clyderhowe'.

F: With Professional Academic assistance: Full evaluation of Physical Conditions, Detailed 2 & 3 Dimensional Surveys and re-assessment of Social & Historic Significance to assist re-evaluation of Listed Status and possible Scheduling as Ancient Monuments.

Once Title Deeds are secured for all three sites, the following 'post-registration' programme is proposed.

Post - Registration / Pre 'Secured Funding' Strategy

- 1. Maintain a working partnership with Local Authorities – RVBC and CTC**
- 2. Explore options for transfer of ownership of all three Well sites to some other Municipal Authority or Building Conservation Trust**
- 3. Develop existing relations with Local Community and Regional Academic supporters**
- 4. Funding Assessment:** Review of relevant sources and conditions to fund a comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan for all three sites.
- 5. Develop Programmed approach to site-by-site action.**
- 6. Project Cost reviews and Funding Applications developed**
- 7. 'Match funded' Grant Applications and Project Proposals submitted to Funders**

Post 'Secured Funding' Strategy (based on securing sufficient funds to proceed)

- 1. Professional Project Team considered, assessed, and appointed.**
- 2. Phased Archaeological Investigations prior to detailed Conservation and Interpretation Plans Developed for each site.** If not already completed, in part or in full, by this stage by involvement of Academic 'Stakeholders'.)
- 3. Sustainable Management and Maintenance Plan Developed for each site.** If not already completed, in part or in full, by this stage by involvement of Academic 'Stakeholders'.
- 4. Phased programme of Site-by-Site Conservation, Repair and On-Site Historic Interpretation.**
- 5. Site by Site Project Works Tendered and Contracted, Commenced and Completed.**

Post Contract Works Strategy (subject to any necessary phasing of Works on / between Sites)

- 1. Creative Management and Use Plans for all three sites.**
- 2. Development and Implementation of Promotions and Activities.** Linked to mainstream Economic Development of Parish & District Tourism Events Programme.
- 3. Implementation of effective Annual Maintenance regimes for each site.**

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