

# Lower St James's Street **HERITAGE ACTION ZONE**

**Burnley Council has been successful in securing £1.2 million from Historic England for a Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) focussed on the lower St James's Street area of Burnley town centre.**

Lower St James's Street was designated as a Heritage Action Zone earlier this year to encourage economic growth using the historic environment as a catalyst. It provides a unique opportunity for investment into the built environment, combined with community engagement to enhance the streetscape, reduced building vacancies and increase visitors to the area.

The goal is to make the high street a more attractive, engaging and vibrant place for people to live, work and spend time.

The project is starting to take shape; however, there are many programmes of work to be delivered, including:

- > **Public realm works** – more on this below
- > **Heritage Grants for Shop owners** – keep reading for more
- > **An exemplar project** to develop a creative hub in the area with workshops and exhibition space for contemporary visual artists
- > **A programme of cultural events**  
eg open studios, street art and street theatre
- > **Empire Theatre vision** – to work in partnership with the Empire Theatre Trust on short-term and long-term aspirations for the building
- > **Community engagement** – to engage the local community in local heritage and culture through events/activities as well as heritage skills training opportunities

**Here's what's been happening and what is still to come...**

## **PUBLIC REALM WORKS**

**The first milestone of the project will see public realm and street scene improvements to match the rest of St James's Street.** Burnley Council is working in partnership with Lancashire County Council to develop new wider, high quality footways and carriageway. The public realm works are underway to include upgrading of paving and highway surfaces, incorporation of pedestrian crossing points, decluttering of redundant street furniture/signage

and improved traffic flow and access.

The initial phase of paving works are taking place on the section of footway between Bethesda Street and Brown Street. The road at the junction of Hammerton Street (outside Marks & Spencer) has been closed to allow works to go ahead. Unfortunately, this has resulted in all bus operators servicing St James's Street to be suspended. It is anticipated this closure will remain in place until the bridge

works at the lower end of the road are completed and access to the Active Way/Queen's Lancashire Way junction is reinstated. Arrangements have been placed to maintain deliveries to M&S and its Click and Collect service to the rear of the store.

Separately, Lancashire County Council are also undertaking essential works on 'The Brig' bridge to strengthen and improve which has meant a full road closure.



**We apologise for any inconvenience caused during the works and appreciate your patience and cooperation.**

## Heritage Grants for Shop Owners

**Grant applications are being invited from property owners of target buildings within the HAZ project area.**

Grants will focus on essential repair works, the restoration of historic features, sympathetic and well-designed shop fronts, and bringing vacant portions of buildings back into use. Funding grants will be made available for 80% of eligible funding works, with a 20% contribution from shop owners.

For more information please visit our website [www.burnleyhaz.org.uk](http://www.burnleyhaz.org.uk) or contact HAZ Development Officer via [chughes@burnley.gov.uk](mailto:chughes@burnley.gov.uk)



## A Dedicated HAZ Officer

**The council has recently appointed a dedicated HAZ officer, Charlotte Hughes.** Charlotte, who will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the HAZ scheme, said, "It's great to be working with Historic England and other partners to deliver the HAZ scheme. There is untapped potential in the buildings of lower St James's Street, which through sensitive restoration combined with wider community engagement can enhance the streetscape, reduce vacancies and sustain the heritage for future generations."

## HAZ Steering Group

**A steering group has been established and consulted with on proposals during the programme design phase.**

It comprises of representatives of Burnley Council, Historic England, and other stakeholders (business and community reps) to act as an over-arching group to plan and coordinate a long-term vision for the Heritage Action Zone. In the coming months, we are looking to reconvene this group to support the delivery of the scheme. Separate working groups will stem from the partnership during the delivery of the scheme to plan and coordinate community activities and wider cultural plans for the area.

# CULTURAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

**In addition to the £1.2m already awarded, the HAZ has been invited to develop a cultural programme to:**

- > encourage **new and sustainable cultural activity** in the high street
- > help **improve perceptions** of the high street and its heritage
- > **restore and enhance** the local character of the high street

The programme will develop the high street as a central place to experience the culture of the area – a site to engage with people, experience heritage and participate in creating the identity of the street.

We will be establishing a Cultural Consortium to take this forward and prepare a bid to Historic England and the

Arts Council. The cultural programme will run alongside the HAZ project, to be completed by March 2024.

Due to COVID 19 Historic England and the Arts Council postponed the call for Cultural Programme bids, but invited HAZ programmes to bid for a small pilot project to be delivered this year. The lower St James's Street HAZ has recently received additional funding of £10,000 from Historic England and the Arts Council for a pilot project called **Raise The Curtain**. This initiative aims to tell the story of St James's Street through street level artworks on properties in the area, using art to engage people in our local heritage and culture.

External surfaces such as steel metal

shutters are to be at the forefront of transformation with implementing artworks on other surfaces such as windows/boards to be explored, depending on the uptake from property owners. These blank canvases provide an opportunity for **street artists to tell the stories of the area**. It is anticipated two local street artists will be commissioned to deliver the works.

As much as shutters can be an unwelcomed addition to the architecture of the conservation area, they are a large and readily available black canvas, which can be brought into temporary use to illustrate the events and characters that have shaped the high street through this opportunity.

## Do you own a property on lower St James's Street?

We want you to get touch if you would like to be involved.

For more information please contact [chughes@burnley.gov.uk](mailto:chughes@burnley.gov.uk)