



Free Press

Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

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Contents overleaf



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LATENEWS

Car Park Charges Given Go Ahead

Leeds City Council have confirmed they will introduce parking charges at Wetherby & 4 other towns in Leeds. It will mainly affect those who park at the Wilderness, as you still get 3 hours free at Station Gardens. You still get 1 hour free at the Wilderness. The £400,000 raised will be spent on vital services, like children and adult social services.

The money will also be spent on the car parks themselves. Currently all Council Tax payers are subsidising motorists who park there.

BEST WISHES to our readers



Yes, It's Happened Again! No surprise there

Since our last Issue, this image was sent to us by a reader. More evidence that the blocking of buses, will not be stopped by one small measure of repainting the double yellow



lines. The reader tells us it happened again on a busy Thursday with 2 cars parked opposite Mojis (one a Bentley) but he was not able to take a photo on that occasion. As we keep saying, it will continue to happen because there are no signs telling Blue Badge holders (or anybody else) they shouldn't.

A simple official sign or cone saying 'no parking' would be a temporary deterrent. Why has nobody put them on Castle Gate?

Local news website *Leeds Live* (leeds-live.co.uk) continue to report on the



Why has neither been put in place, as a temporary measure?

bus blocking issue, see right. We examine the statement from Leeds City Council and find out exactly who has raised this issue with them and whether the new box junction painted in the wrong place.

See Page 5

New yellow box junction in 'wrong place' sparks anger in Leeds market town



'Spoons Delay? Arrests at Leeds City Council Planning Dept

Four Leeds City Council staff members in the Planning Department have been arrested as part of a 'complex' corruption investigation by West Yorkshire Police. Five other arrests were made and it is not known whether they are Councillors or property owners.



Bribery Suspected

Let's hope the lack of staff does not mean any more delay for the massive investment Wetherspoons wants to make in this town.

The arrests did not merit a mention on BBC Look North's main evening bulletin. Nor on ITV Calendar's.

Petition for the 7 Bus Route to return to being every half hour instead of hourly.

One cancelled bus means an hour's wait. Sign the petition organised by Cllr Penny Stables at Wetherby Town Hall.



Townsperson of the Year Announced



See page 6 for a deserved winner - somebody who has selflessly added so much to the community.



No, it's not the Editor!

3 Years and Still Going Strong - Not a Word Retracted. The Private Eye of Wetherby

Please send your News, Views & Events to: WetherbyFreePress@PM.me



Don't Miss Out - Join our ever-increasing Mailing List by emailing: WetherbyFreePress@PM.me

X98 Boxing Day Bus Times (& Xmas Eve etc) Page 4

Let's Promote & Brighten Up W'by Page 9

Plus more jokes,
What's On,
Leeds Utd
& more

Townsperson of the Year Page 6

Leeds German Market now in Page 11

Highlights of the Year - 2024 Page 7

More Goosemoor Nature Delights Page 11

You're having a larf!

* What did Santa say to Mrs. Claus when the sky turned dark? "Looks like it's gonna reindeer."



* My partner has been missing for 6 days now. Police said to prepare for the worst. So I went to the charity shop to get their clothes back.



* I need to find some info on the internet about my conjunctivitis. Been told it's a site for sore eyes.

* What do you call an extinct hunchbacked bird? The Quasidodo.



Wetherby Town Council - Nov Meetings

Committee Meetings in November

* **Planning Cttee Mtg, Chair Cllr Mulhall:** Better Wetherby (BW) Newsletter included. BW are 'disappointed' at Lidl's successful appeal.

Wetherby Free Press is not included or mentioned in this or any other meeting, yet BW is. Proof of clear bias against us. It seems you are ignored unless the Council agrees with your aims.

* **Staffing Cttee, Chair Cllr Harrington:** "A resolution to an ongoing staffing matter has, hopefully, been negotiated by Cllr Harrington and the Clerk"

We don't need to know the finer details or even names but surely the public deserve to know what the general issue is because it was 'ongoing' and clearly a problem. The use of the words 'hopefully' and 'negotiated' is strange. Why are they simply hoping all is well when something has been negotiated? Sadly, this lack of any detail is common with this Council.

* **Staffing Cttee, Chair Cllr Harrington:** "a member of the Town Hall has indicated their intention to retire in Spring 2025."



Ken McCallum,

Why the secrecy? Why not name the person? It will be obvious to anybody who knows the Town Hall set up so why not share it with the rest of us?

There are NO images of staff on the new Town Council website (unlike Otley's).

More secretive than MI5! We know the name and face of the head of that organisation, see left.



More on page 8



This useless incorrect sign for visitors has been outside the Town Hall for years

Next Wetherby Town Council Mtg

Tues 14 Jan at 7pm, Town Hall

Agenda at www.wetherby.co.uk



Lucky Ducky **£1.25 per bag** **Duck Food**



Elderly Caring & Domestic Help

15 years Experience



NVQ Level 2 Qualification

References available

Call Kerry on 07876 525 589

As well as the *Wetherby Free Press* page on **facebook** there's the *Wetherby Deserves Better* page too.

Both are independently run from the newsletter.



Follow & Don't Get



Escape to the Dales this Christmas



This fine bus is ready to take you to the heart of the Dales on Sunday 15th, 22nd and 29th December for a ridiculously reasonable price.

Wetherby Bus Sta 8.35
All stops to Leeds on A58



Paul, pictured, is one of the friendly DalesBus drivers to whisk you off to Ilkley (connection to Skipton & Malham), Bolton Abbey,

Grassington & Buckden. You can't beat the Dales on a sunny day with snow on the ground. Enjoy the view!

www.dalesbus.org
TRAVEL INFORMATION FOR THE YORKSHIRE DALES



Pick up this leaflet from Wetherby Library

Alec Shelbrooke - Our MP

Alec Shelbrooke is our Conservative MP for Wetherby & Easingwold. It appears he is no longer Shadow Transport Minister. None of the 4 main towns in his new constituency has a railway station. Boroughbridge, Wetherby, Tadcaster & Easingwold are all reliant on buses. In the July '24 general election he did not mention buses once in his campaign literature.



Since Alec's appointment, these are his social media posts:

8 July - 12 Dec (5 months): **3 Tweets/Facebook Posts on buses**

* 30 Aug. He asked the Transport Minister "What assessment has she made of the potential impact of parked cars outside bus stations on levels of delays on regional bus networks?" *How would that answer help Wetherby? It wouldn't.*

* 8 Nov. 11 days after Labour announced it, Alec criticised Labour increasing the single fare to from £2 to £3 in 2025 (it stays at £2 in West Yorks until 31 Mar 25).

* 25 Nov. Alec praises the £500K for Tadcaster bus station, *which was not provided by his party's government or Council.*

We have informed Alec about the many bus issues we face in Wetherby and area. He has yet to respond to us about any of them.

It is clear that Alec has very little real interest in local bus services. The number of posts (3 in 5 months) compared to all his others says it all. The poor bus passenger comes way down his list of priorities after farmers, his NATO work and making anti-Labour points.

If you know differently, please send us the evidence and we'll publish it.



Out of Date Timetables in Library

Harrogate Bus Company printed new timetable leaflets for their services 2 months ago but they have not sent any to Wetherby Library. Another example of poor customer service. We have informed them.

The Promise & the Current Reality



New Electric Harrogate Bus Co Buses at Birmingham NEC Bus & Coach 2024



Old Single-Deckers on X98/99 route overcrowded on peak journeys

We were promised the double-deckers from the 36 route 'later this year' for the X98/99 route to Leeds. It hasn't happened yet. A driver told us not to hold our breath, as the single-deckers for the 7 route were months late and they are having problems with the charging points at Harrogate bus station. That means the new electric buses for the 36 may be in service later than planned.

So we may have to put up with old buses for many months to come. This is such a contrast to when their 'Sky Class' buses were introduced 2 years ago. We all thought 'Wow, look at these, amazing, so luxurious!' and ridership grew, they told us. The Chief Executive of Transdev, Alex Hornby, left and things deteriorated. A reliable service became unreliable and they sent those luxury buses off to Burnley!

Alex's replacement Paul Turner has not answered our questions or addressed the issues we raise. That is poor customer service. It's harder for him to ignore Councillors and we are grateful to Cllr Andrew Batty of East Keswick Parish Council for keeping the pressure up. Let's hope the trial of the later bus from Wetherby to his village is a success and will continue. 'Use it or Lose it', as Andrew says.

TRANSPORT NEWS



Mon 25 Dec - no buses

Boxing Day - X98 only

Mon 1 Jan - no buses



Christmas Eve & New Years Eve - normal Sunday times, with last buses around 7pm.

X98 X99 last buses are at 7.05pm from Leeds to Deighton Bar and 6.52pm from D Bar to Leeds.

Last buses on **the 7** are at 6.20pm from Harrogate to Wetherby and Leeds, and at 7.20pm just to Wetherby. Last 7 bus from Leeds to Wetherby and Harrogate is at 6.55pm.

This is roughly the same as last year



Fri 27 Dec, Mon 30 Dec & Tues 31 Dec - Saturday Service ie No Otley Service 923

The 412 to York will run on these dates without the 6.40 from Wetherby & the 18.35 from York



The new Mercedes Benz electric buses are months later than promised but very welcome indeed. Old buses still on route too.

Ten Year Anniversary of Boxing Day Buses (thanks to the Editor of WFP)



In 2014 the Editor ran a successful campaign to introduce a Boxing Day service for Wetherby. There were services in Leeds before then but our town was ignored by *Metro* (WYCA). None of the Conservative Town or City Councillors volunteered to help with the campaign. Just a little reminder for those critics who say the Editor does nothing but criticise. Pressure = Results (eventually)



special timetable for Boxing Day

26th Dec 2024 Boxing Day

towards Leeds

Leeds Boar Lane/Station D
Cross Stamford Street
Roundhay Road Gledhow Wood
Red Hall Red Hall Lane
Collingham Old Star Garage
Wetherby bus station

0905	1005	1105	1205	1305	1405	1505	1605	1705
0911	1011	1111	1211	1311	1411	1511	1611	1711
0920	1020	1120	1220	1320	1420	1520	1620	1720
0930	1030	1130	1230	1330	1430	1530	1630	1730
0941	1041	1141	1241	1341	1441	1541	1641	1741
0947	1047	1147	1247	1347	1447	1547	1647	1747

X98

Same as Last Year

We monitor services to see if they get worse. Nobody else does

towards Wetherby

Wetherby bus station
Collingham Old Star Garage
Red Hall Red Hall Lane
Oakwood Clock
Leeds Boar Lane/Station D

0905	1005	1105	1205	1305	1405	1505	1605	1705
0910	1010	1110	1210	1310	1410	1510	1610	1710
0924	1024	1124	1224	1324	1424	1524	1624	1724
0933	1033	1133	1233	1333	1433	1533	1633	1733
0948	1048	1148	1248	1348	1448	1548	1648	1748

No Boxing Day Service for Thorp Arch, Boston Spa, Clifford, Bramham & Thorner on the 7 route

Why is that? Why should these villages be isolated when Collingham, East Keswick & Scarcroft get a service? One Rhino's fan on the 7 route says she cannot get to the game on Boxing Day because there's no bus.



Only £2 single to Leeds, Harrogate, Otley, Garforth & York

Ben Still, CEO of Metro / WYCA on about £200K

Reminder of Bus Facts for our Councillors & MP, Alec Shelbrooke (Shadow Transport Minister)

- ◇ Transdev's route 7 to Harrogate & Leeds via B Spa was reduced to hourly from half-hourly in Nov '22
- ◇ The late night route 7 service from Harrogate at 11.30pm was cut in Nov '22. The last bus is now 10.20pm
- ◇ There is NO Saturday service to York (Connexion's route 412) or Otley (Connexion's route 923) since May 22
- ◇ WYCA/Metro made a big mess of installing new bus stop flags in 2021. Half the stops are still the old type
- ◇ WYCA/Metro have stopped printing their 7 invaluable network maps. Online but not displayed at W'by Bus Sta



Bus Blocking - Who is to Blame after 3 Years of No Effective Action?

Leeds City Council said that it received complaints from bus operators and says it is 'currently exploring additional measures,' like the inclusion of a 'no-stopping' area on Castle Gate." There is no date in the Council's statement when they were first made aware of this issue, or by whom.

They also said "We have set in motion a package of works that is designed to tackle traffic issues around Wetherby Bus Station following feedback from bus operators and local residents. Public consultation on the plans for Castle Gate is expected to take place early next year, in line with standard TRO procedures"

Both these statements imply that:

1 Only bus operators (and residents) complained about the problem. Councillors are not mentioned. It looks like our Conservative Leeds City Councillors Alan Lamb & Norma Harrington and our 15 mostly Conservative Wetherby Town Councillors have not raised this issue with Leeds City Council.

This is a reasonable assumption as neither Cllr Lamb nor Cllr Harrington nor any Town Councillor has ever sent us a single copy of an email where they have raised this issue with the Police, City Council, Metro/WYCA or the bus companies.

It was confirmed by a Traffic Warden (see last issue) that it is the responsibility of Councillors to raise issues like this and progress matters. Councillors are there to represent us but seem to have chosen to ignore this issue.

2 The new box junction was a Council Ck-up. We strongly suspect it was meant to be on Castle Gate where the problem is. Was it poor communication by Councillors?**

Nobody to our knowledge has complained about vehicles exiting Castle Gate. As a frequent passenger and car user on that road, the Editor has never experienced a problem being let out onto the main road. Particularly as traffic is slow and there is a Pelican Crossing nearby, stopping traffic frequently. Where is the evidence of 'consultation' over the new box junction? There wasn't any that we know of. The silence on this matter from Councillors and lack of detail in the City Council statement makes us think they are trying to cover up this large mistake.



The New Box Junction in Wrong Place



Cllr Alan Lamb's Role

The Editor first informed Cllr Lamb, left, of the Bus Blocking problem in November 2021, over 3 years ago. Part of his response was: "If you'd send me the original photo so the licence plate is clearly visible, I will take the issue up with Leeds City Council who are the highways authority."

The Editor replied: "Thanks, Alan. I have no wish to get this particular driver in trouble. He was on scene, most apologetic and moved his car immediately. In any case, I thought it was legal for blue badges to park on double-yellows, as I say in the article. Is this not the case?"

Cllr Lamb replied "Was the driver a disabled badge holder? You're not correct I'm afraid. Disabled badge holders can't park on double yellow lines. You can stop to drop off a passenger or to load or unload but nobody can park on double yellow lines. If this is a regular issue, I will gladly take it up and see what can be done but if the car moved immediately, I'm not quite clear what point you are making or what problem you think I should do something about? Perhaps I have misunderstood?"

Wrong statement

Cllr Lamb's statement about disabled badge holders not being allowed to park on double yellows was wrong and showed ignorance about basic parking rules that a Councillor should know; that Blue Badge holders are allowed to park on double yellow lines for 3 hours.

Cllr Lamb seemed to think it was a one-off and will not happen again. Why would he think that? And why did he not understand the problem when he says 'I'm not quite clear what point you are making'? It is very simple. And the problem has become blatantly obvious in the 3 years after he wrote that. Our fears have been proven 100% correct and the bus blocking has happened on a regular basis ever since, causing misery to many hundreds, if not thousands, of passengers.

Cllr Lamb then decides to tell us that it is the public's responsibility to report it to the Police. That was the only suggestion he made publicly to resolve the matter. Is that reasonable or realistic? Does he expect possibly hundreds of delayed passengers and street witnesses to call the Police? Would the Police want that? It is common sense to expect the bus driver to report it.

We trust our Councillors to take up issues on our behalf. They have the authority to do something. There is no evidence we have seen (and we have asked) that Cllr Lamb himself has collated any of the evidence of bus blocking in the Free Press or on social media, in order to put a clear case to Leeds City Highways. He preferred to put the onus on the public to complain to Police, and in the first case I put to him, report a disabled driver who may have come off the A1(M) and parked there totally unaware it was a bus station exit.

We wrote to Cllr Lamb asking:

1 Do you withdraw any of your statement above from Nov 2021?

2 Why have you or your close Councillor colleagues not put an official No Parking sign or cone out in 3 years as a temporary measure, like those in the image below? Or a paper sign in Mojis or the empty business next to it?

3 Please send all emails relating to this issue you have sent to officials at Leeds City Council, as proof you have done something about it.

4 Is the recently painted new box junction a mistake? If it was meant to be painted at Mojis, was it a case of miscommunication? If so who is responsible for that miscommunication?

5 Why it is taking longer than 3 years to put the obvious signs and box junction that are needed as a permanent solution and deterrent?

6 Why you yourself have put a massive effort into fighting the inevitable introduction of parking charges when there is a real problem you could help to resolve? 18 posts on your Facebook account about parking charges in November, NONE about bus blocking. Not a single post about bus blocking in the last 6 months, in fact. Please could you explain this lack of interest? Doesn't this show that you are far more interested in motorists than bus passengers? Cynics would say you are chasing the popular vote. Your comments on the points raised in the parking charges article on page 3 of Issue 71 would be most welcome. Thank you.

Best Wishes to you and yours for the festive period, Alan.

Cllr Lamb's Only Response was "Best wishes to you and your family for the festive period as well."

Facebook Posts

in Nov 2024

Parking Charges - 18

Bus Blocking - 0

(None in previous 6 months either)

The Editor has met Cllr Lamb a couple of times on an informal basis ie no notes taken. He seems a nice bloke. It is such a shame he has taken this stance of ignoring perfectly reasonable and legitimate questions. And giving no acceptable reason for doing so.

This is poor behaviour from an elected representative. Surely he can understand the frustration bus passengers feel, particularly those who have been personally affected by bus blocking on their way to work or important appointments. We had faith in him as he is a senior figure in his party and sits on the board of Metro / WYCA. But our faith was misplaced. We cannot understand why he and his Conservative colleagues refuse to put anything in writing. If it's not written down, it means you can often avoid responsibility. We let you decide how much responsibility Cllr Lamb should take in this matter.



Cllr Harrington

Cllr Norma Harrington, Cllr Lamb's Conservative colleague, has been a Town Councillor, as well as a City Councillor for many years, and has refused to inform us of anything she has done to resolve the situation. She has ignored our emails after every edition of WFP containing details of bus blocking. Like Cllr Lamb, we would like to see evidence of any emails she has sent to officials or meeting notes about the issue.

The other Leeds City Councillor Penny Stables of the Green Party was elected in 2023, a year and a half after we first raised the issue. She should not hold any responsibility for the current situation, yet she has shown more interest in it than any other Councillor.

So many unanswered questions

Town Council Not Taken Up Our Xmas Competition Idea (or anything we suggest)

This time last year we had a Christmas Lights competition. It was to thank those people who, at their own expense, make the dark winter days and nights a little bit more cheerful for all of us but especially children.



Our Competition Last Year Attracted Much Interest and Admiration

We had hoped the Town Council would take this up and offer a small prize to the winner. But not one of our 15 Town Councillors took up the idea and made it happen for this year. It would have taken little effort to organise and promote it. We would have helped. Neither Councillors nor Council staff have contacted us during the year about any of the suggestions we make.

This is another example of our Town Council showing no creativity or imagination. They have ignored our efforts this year to brighten the town up with works of art on our dull street furniture (see page 9). They leave it all to Wetherby in Bloom & Leeds City Council (for the wonderful flowers) and WBA for the Christmas trees every year. The small number of events they organise themselves are the same every year.

If you have any examples where the Town Council has shown any creativity or imagination in the past 5 years, please let us know and we will highlight them. A new website introduced years after it should have been is not an example, obviously. A good website is a given. We will review the new one in a future Issue.

Winner Announced in New Townsperson Award - Goes to Ordinary Member of Public!



Our winner has :

- No position of authority
- Given public support to any political party
- No possibility of personally benefiting from the award financially
- The purest of motives

Our Award is different from most awards which are often given by those with power to their friends or supporters, often already in

positions of authority. An example is the disgraced honours system where politicians hand out honours like confetti. Of course, some recipients are deserving.

The Free Press is the ideal organisation to choose this award. They are independent from any business or organisation in the area (we often praise and criticise the same person / organisation).

The public can be confident that no politics or Wetherby cliqueness has played any part in choosing the winner of our award.

The winner of our first ever award was easy: Pat, Salvation Army Volunteer.

Pat has been collecting about £3000 a year for the charity for 20 years. That's about £60,000! She has also sold many copies of *War Cry*, the official magazine for the church. Her incredible work was recognised in May this year by a women's voluntary organisation, the Harrogate Soroptimists. Kind-hearted people like Pat don't accept money for themselves so we popped £20 into the collection tin. Pat has never won the Lions' 'Wetherby Townsperson of the Year' for her role in helping the less fortunate in our community.

Pat is outside the Town Hall on Thursdays in ALL weathers. So please say 'hello' and give as much as you can to a real charity.

The Editor was in the running too, for his community work on free speech, charity and improving bus services!



Talking of awards, following our publication of a press release in the last WFP from the Bridge Inn at Walshford about their winning 2 awards, a friend told me of an experience there recently where they had to complain.

Our inclusion of the Bridge Inn's press release or any business does not mean we endorse them in any way. We do not have time to investigate awards and find out things like whether any payment was involved.

Readers should take many awards with a pinch of salt and do their own research.



January - Wetherby Wombles Wonderful Work



Leader Julie-Ann Starr - Contender for our Townsperson of the Year

April - Wetherspoon's Plans Back On



Your Community Newsletter told you the fantastic news before anybody on social media

July - Wetherby in Bloom's Leaflet & Work



They are always in need of volunteers so please help if you can. Sue Turner - Contender for our Townsperson of the Year

October - Mens Singing Group at Awards



Friendly Spirit of Harmony group always welcome new members - no experience required

February - Money-Saving Idea from Boston Spa Man



Keith Jackson - Contender for our Townsperson of the Year

May - Doug's Video Goes Viral



Local Wheelchair-User Doug Pauley got over 2M views on social media when he could not get on a train because of a station pillar. Contender for our Townsperson of the Year

August - Wetherby Mum's Business



Entrepreneur Zoe Heppell launched new eco maternity products

November - Boston Spa Kids Art Comp



Parents of a B Spa Primary School launch children's community art competition

March - William Hague says Local News Close to Extinction



In an article in *The Times*, Conservative Yorkshireman William Hague expresses his fear for local accountability and democracy as local media continues to decline

June - Hidden Gem Discovered



Goosemoor Nature Reserve nr Cowthorpe is run by volunteers and a wonderful place to relax and watch an amazing variety of wildlife.

Sept - Free Press Celebrates



December - Our Campaigns Continue:

- ◆ Including the 'Digitally Excluded'
- ◆ Brightening the Town Up
- ◆ Promoting our Best Asset - the River
- ◆ Improving Experience of Bus Users
- ◆ Making Public Servants Accountable
- ◆ Promoting Wetherby to Visitors

Thank you for your support



Wetherby Town Council - Continuing to Be Unaccountable To Us

We thank the 15 Wetherby Town Councillors for being unpaid volunteers. Unlike most volunteers they have power and are responsible for spending over **£500,000** of our money. Most are Conservative and raised our Council Tax precept by 80% in a cost-of-living crisis in 23/24, much of it to pay for new staff.



Not political !!!

They claim to be non-political. This is nonsense, shown by the Conservatives spending a great deal of time, money and effort to get their person (Cllr Smith) elected in Feb 24. See left.

In July 2024 Councillors agreed to hide one specific fact about themselves - their political allegiance on the website. They are denying information to the public that many would base their vote on. What possible reason have they got for keeping this basic, vital piece of information from us?

All but one of the 9 Council reps on other organisations are Conservative.



Wetherby Town Council
There are no images of Town Clerk or Assistant Town Clerk

Every one of the 12 Council Meeting Chairs are Conservative.
The Mayor & Deputy Mayor are Conservative.

Image we had to put together - New Website Will Not State Political Allegiance. Why?



Iona Taylor, Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is Iona Taylor. She is manager to an Assistant Clerk (downgraded from an experienced Deputy Clerk in 2023), an Admin Officer (Dawn Murrell appointed in Oct 24), a Communications & Events Officer (Helena Briden since Nov 2023), a Finance Assistant, a Burials Officer, a Facilities Officer (downgraded from an experienced Facilities Manager, started in June 24) and a Facilities Caretaker.

There are 8 members of staff, more than most Town Councils. Employment costs are £150,000+ a year. Work is also contracted out. There have been no official photos of the Town Clerk until recently. She has been a senior and influential public figure in this town for many years (not stated anywhere exactly how many), yet most residents will not know what she looks like. This does not fit well with being an open and accountable council. The public have a right to know who is responsible for managing a £500K+ budget. The first official image of her has been posted on social media recently, see left.

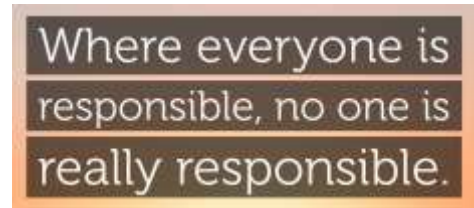
The new website has arrived at last, years after it was first desperately needed. The old one portrayed the town in a poor light (it was dull grey) and contained inaccurate and incomplete information. It has no images of Council staff, unlike Otley and many other towns, to help us identify who is who should we need to see them. This Council still has great difficulty with being open and accountable when basic info is denied us.

What the Council does: Market * Cemetery * Playgrounds * Distribute £5K Worth of Grants * Building Maintenance * Planning Issues * Events *
It spent £562,000 of our money in 23/24. There were many changes in staff in the past year and recruitment is a costly exercise. Two staff who left in 2023 say they would not work for the Council again.

Are we getting high standards and value for money from this Council? We provide evidence in many issues of WFP that suggests we aren't.

Are they open and accountable? Not in our view. Councillors simply ignore the majority of our reasonable and legitimate concerns and questions.

The Basic Problem - No one councillor is ultimately responsible for anything. Joint responsibility means no responsibility. If one person is given actions/leadership, things usually get done. When nobody takes overall responsibility, progress is much slower, standards are usually lower or things don't get done at all. The Committee Chairs should take full responsibility for their Ctte's performance but they ignore our questions. Meetings should have clear actions and deadlines. Few do.



Albert Bandura, Psychologist

Space for any of our 15 Town Cllrs or Their Supporters to Say Anything to Residents Unedited, max 400 words Nothing Sent Yet

After every issue we ask the Town Clerk & the 15 Town Councillors to respond to our legitimate questions and issues raised. Every Councillor ignores these emails and refuses to make any comment on serious issues. The Editor sends it from his personal email address too, writing as a resident of 30+ years, including "I am a constituent of Wetherby East so would like Cllrs Bradley, Lavocah, Knight, Newcombe & Payne in particular to respond." There is no legitimate reason why Councillors ignore these emails, especially when one Councillor admits that she has hardly any direct contact from constituents.

Minutes of Wetherby Town Council Ctte Meetings in November 2024

Town Hall Ctte, Chair Cllr Moss - Refund of over £6500!

The Town Hall has been overcharged for their music licence. The new annual cost for the PRS licence only is £205.71. "A refund of £6595.87 will be received to correct the overpayment."

That is a heck of a lot of money! As usual there is a lack of detail as to why it is such a large amount. How long have they been overcharged and why was it not noticed earlier?



Leeds City Cllrs Meet Chief Officer for Highways and Transportation at Leeds City Council.

Bus Blocking Issue ignored! This meeting on 3 Dec included 'Clerks and residents' too. There was no mention of the blocking of buses coming out of Wetherby Bus Station, despite all the recent publicity nationally and locally. The report by the Assistant Town Clerk says "There is a perceived high rate of vehicular crime in the form of speeding ... Residents are advised to report crime activities to the non-emergency line to help build a case."

Information for Cllrs & Council Staff: Speeding is a 'Minor Motoring Offence' usually dealt with by a Fixed Penalty Notice (speed awareness course, points, fine). It does not result in a criminal record.

Using the words 'crime' or 'criminal' for speeding is misleading.

Campaign to Brighten Up (& Promote) the Town Continues

Wetherby doesn't have any tasteful, incredible street art, like many other places. You can see it on our doorstep in Leeds and Knaresborough Surely our area has some amazing artists who want to express themselves in some way? If we don't, the Council should invite artists from further afield. The wonderful examples below cannot help but make you smile. **There has been no response from Wetherby Town Councillors or their 'Welcome to Wetherby' committee** (Chair Cllr Dean Buckle) to our suggestions, like this. Residents should be encouraged to be creative.



Beautiful Works of Art in Harehills (above) and Knaresborough (right)



Aldi Wetherby

Fahrland, a town in Germany

Let's turn this pelican crossing box into something to admire!



Wetherby Services Roundabout for nearly 1.5 years

One banner like this (promoting Hartlepool) could attract thousands to our local businesses

Meanwhile, the number of banners in town continue to grow. It has become banner-town in the last year.

Yet the one banner that could attract 1000s of motorists every day into the town from the A1(M) still doesn't exist.

You have to laugh at the absurdity of Hartlepool promoting itself better than Wetherby in our area - their banner has been at Wetherby Services roundabout for over a year.

Why has Wetherby Business Association / Wetherby Town Council not produced one for our town to tempt motorists?

Lack of Imagination at Leeds Rail Station

The Editor is fortunate to be able to travel around the country and abroad. He sees many things and often thinks 'what a great, simple idea, why can't we have that?' After yet another refurbishment at Leeds rail station, there is a big empty space that could be used.



Leeds Rail Station - Why Not Use this Space for a Model Railway?



Prague

Many European cities have model railways at their main rail stations. They entertain children (and adults), whilst waiting for trains or meeting their family or friends.

Model railway enthusiasts could set them up and the



Dresden

displays could easily make money for charity or some other good cause.

yappapp
Breaking News & Incidents
 The page that turns you, the public, into anonymous reporters
 Help shape your local news



To find out why you are queuing on the motorway or held up on the bus, the best immediate source for traffic and police incidents is Yappapp, available on all social media.

There have been no serious incidents to report in our area in the last couple of weeks.

Yappapp show many incidents not reported on local TV news. The criminality in society is quite sad and shocking at times, and is not too far away from us.

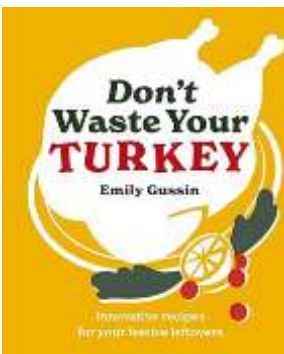
Boston Spa, Wetherby & Villages
Community Green Group

Join us for a social celebration
Pizza. People. Planet.
 on Tuesday 17th December from
 18.30 at Tom Foolery, Boston Spa



If interested, please email adrian.balcombe@bostongreengroup.co.uk

Well, the big day is almost upon us - we've got loads of info in our latest newsletter, on having a **sustainable Christmas**, including **supporting local charity Martin House** (who are collecting trees again this year).



Making a **New Year's Resolution**? help support us with our **recently launched Just Giving campaign**. You may not be able to physically support us, but a contribution (big or small) would make a difference

bostongreengroup.co.uk/just-giving

Plenty of other opportunities too, to have your say, get involved with nature, energy saving tips, monitoring local traffic speeds, as well as the usual Green Library etc.

Wishing you all a safe, happy, warm & healthy festive break.

Adrian, Chair Boston Spa Wetherby and Villages Community Green Group.



Read more in our December newsletter, found under 'News' on our home page and please get involved.

The group is run by local volunteers who give their time freely, yet need regular resources to continue our initiatives and accomplish our plans. Back issues of all our newsletters can also be found under 'News' on our homepage, where you can subscribe to stay informed and not miss out.

The Group's website is: www.bostongreengroup.co.uk

Boston Spa, Wetherby and Villages Community Green Group is non-politically affiliated and is a Charity Number 1204438.

Leeds Real German Market now in Birmingham



All Images of Birmingham

If you ever wondered where the friendly folk of Frankfurt went after Leeds, we can tell you they are very happy in Birmingham. The Frankfurt Christkindelmarkt was a regular feature in Millennium Square, Leeds for many years. The sellers could not make the trip in 2020 because of Covid. The market was also cancelled in 2021. In 2022 Leeds City Council said 'the market was no longer feasible'. It is far more likely they got a better offer from Birmingham. The Council there promote it to the max and it does not disappoint. They have a much larger space in England's second city. And the backdrop of Birmingham Town Hall and other buildings is spectacular. The atmosphere is fantastic with many people enjoying the Gluhwein in the early afternoon, when the Editor visited. Leeds is still way behind most English cities in football, transport and promoting itself to visitors. There has been no noticeable improvements in recent years despite £millions spent. The fact they closed their Visitor Information Centre says it all.

A trip to the Brum market is highly recommended (£20 return by coach)

The Incredible Wildlife at Goosemoor Nature Reserve



Robin



Kingfisher



More stunning images of the diverse wildlife at the reserve near Cowthorpe. Check out their Facebook page for an amazing video of a Kingfisher with a newt in its mouth. If you have not visited the reserve yet, you are missing out. It is a peaceful place to sit and watch some amazing wildlife. Not just an incredible variety of birds but also bats, bugs, newts and moths & butterflies (and rats!). They always welcome new volunteers if you would like to help out.



Squirrel without the fluffy tail (rat)


HAZDEE
Messiah

Music Director: John Dunford
 Registered Charity 510264

Saturday 21 December
 2024, 7.30pm
 St James's Church,
 Wetherby LS22 6LP

**For unto us
 a child is
 born...**

Wetherby Choral Society
 John Dunford - conductor
 Eleonore Cockerham - soprano
 Rachel Gilmore - alto
 James Micklethwaite - tenor
 Terence Ayebare - bass
 Wetherby Pro Musica



Tickets: £20 (under 18s FREE) | Book online: wetherbychoral.org.uk
 • Nicolla Florist, 1 Bank Street, Wetherby (01937 585233) - CASH OR CHEQUE ONLY, NO CARDS
 • Tel: 07443 466254 / tickets@wetherbychoral.org.uk
 • Any Society member • At the door on the day - cards accepted

Bee-Crafty Markets 2025

4th January-Wetherby Town Hall
 1st February-Wetherby Town Hall
 1st March- Wetherby Town Hall
 15th March-Castleford Shopping Centre
 19th April-Wetherby Town Hall
 26th April- Leeds Kirkgate City Market
 10th May-Harrogate Starbeck
 24th May-Wetherby Town Hall
 14th June-Castleford Shopping Centre
 29th June - Wetherby Drivers Day Celebration
 26th July- Leeds Kirkgate City Market
 9th August-Harrogate Starbeck
 23rd August- Wetherby Town Hall
 6th Sept- Wetherby Town Hall
 13th Sept-Castleford Shopping Centre
 18th October- Wetherby Town Hall
 25th October- Leeds Kirkgate City Market
 1st Nov - Tadcaster Riley Smith Hall
 15th Nov- Castleford Shopping Centre
 22nd Nov- Wetherby Town Hall
 29th Nov- Leeds City Kirkgate Market
 13th Dec- Wetherby Town Hall
 14th Dec- Wetherby Dickensian Market

Wetherby News

NEWSWATCH

We are recording the number of **general** news items about Wetherby / Boston Spa & villages. And the number of letters/emails from residents about the area in the published paper, costing £2.20.

We do this in the hope they will wake up and take up some of our stories. Not so far - they are ignoring most of the serious issues in our great town and do not deserve to have the word 'Wetherby' in their title. It makes our role more important than ever.

Issue of 5 Dec
News Items - 2 Letters - 0
 Press Release from *Bridge Inn* (same as in Issue 71 of WFP)
Wetherby Velo Cycling Club raised money for *Resurrected Bites* charity

Issue of 13 Dec
News Items - 2 Letters - 0
 Concert for *Martin House Hospice*
 Karate Club in Wetherby

Incredibly, this paper carried no report on the local election for our Leeds City Councillor and Mayor of West Yorks in May '24. They do not report on, or attend Town Council meetings. The paper is not available in any library or on Leeds Libraries PressReader.

Town Hall Staff now write for the *Yorkshire Post*. Where are the real "journalists"?

WE DESERVE BETTER

Wetherby Foodbank

December 2024 Foodbank Wish List

- Instant coffee (small jars please)
- Instant hot chocolate
- Instant porridge / ReadyBrek
- Long-life fruit juice
- Meat & fish pastes
- Savoury spreads (peanut butter, marmite)
- Long-life puddings
- Squash
- Pasta sauces
- Jams
- Loo roll
- Loo cleaner / bleach
- Laundry powder
- Surface cleaner

Thank you!



**Leeds United -
(Training Ground
at Thorp Arch)**

After losing 1 - 0 at Blackburn, Leeds bounced back at home against Derby with a convincing 2 - 0 victory.

The midweek match at Elland Road against Middlesbrough was more of a test. The Whites were embarrassed by Boro in August, losing 3 - 0. It looked like a different story in this game though, as Gnonto stuck a loose ball in the net after 13 minutes. But the Teeside team were very unlucky not to be awarded a penalty; the slow motion replay left no doubt that it was one.

Leeds scored again but at the wrong end. Wober headed into his own goal after a Middlesbrough corner to make it 1 - 1.

Dan James restored the lead for Leeds with a stunning strike in the second half. Aaronson put the cherry on the cake with a well-worked third Leeds goal in injury time. A win putting Leeds on top for a few hours above Sheff Utd.

Yorkshire Battle for Top Spot in Championship - Two Uniteds

Sheffield & Leeds are 2 cities that should have a team in the Premier League. Both at the top now, it will be a very interesting battle to find out who has the talent and determination to get promoted come May. Hopefully both!

Joke for Daniel Farke, Leeds Utd Manager

**** In Germany they even have a sausage made out of other sausages. It's the wurst of the wurst. ****



Gnonto scores Utd's first

**FESTIVE
FIXTURES**

All games on
sky sports

- Preston v **Utd** on Sat 14 Dec at 12.30
- Utd** v Oxford on Sat 21 Dec at 15.00
- Stoke v **Utd** on Thurs 26 Dec at 20.00
- Derby v **Utd** on Sun 29 Dec at 17.45
- Utd** v Blackburn on Wed 1 Jan at 15.00
- Hull v **Utd** on Sat 4 Jan at 15.00



Celebrating Win v Boro

Wetherby **Free Press**
Est 2021 Facts & Integrity
News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

Your Not-for-Profit Community Newsletter

www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press

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Tel: 07840 862861 Twitter/X: [@wbyfreepress](https://twitter.com/wbyfreepress)

Please Donate Online to Cover Printing Costs



The Editor on the right caught by a Daily Mail photographer a few years ago



We have supported many local events, organisations and businesses in 2024.

Paul & the team would like to thank them for their contributions. We are also grateful to the many local residents who write with their kind words and support. And the many we've spoken to and met face-to-face.

Special thanks to those who make donations, however small. It makes a big difference.

Let's keep this vital organ of free speech going and make it even bigger and better in 2025. We need a Free Press now more than ever.

Thank You



Listen to Both Sides

Everyone mentioned in the WFP has a right to reply. The reply will be published unedited.

If facts are wrong, we will apologise publicly and correct the error.

We don't do interviews, as we are not professionals (but have high standards). We are not 'journalists' - we simply say what we see.

We encourage everyone to write to us with their views, whatever they are. Our countrymen and women have died for our Freedom of Expression so do not be afraid to use it. You can remain anonymous if you wish. We, or you, cannot be sued for libel/defamation as long as what is published is

True or Honest Opinion or in the Public Interest

Unjustifiable threats of legal action can be seen as harassment.

The Editor has had 6 'Meet the Editor' events so far. None of our harshest online critics have turned up yet to have a mature face-to-face discussion.

In April 2024 we had 1000 online visits in 2 days

NEXT ISSUE Jan 2025