

“You make
the world a
brighter
place”
Stone On
Bin in
Harland Way



WETHERBY

ISSUE 73
Until 7 Feb 25



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Contents overleaf



Promo copies at *Morrisons, Pubs, Cafés, Dentists, Care Homes, Churches, Hairdressers, Shops ...*

The Free Press

NEW YEAR HONOURS



go to all the CARERS who do
such a Brilliant Job looking after
the Elderly, Disabled,
Relatives with Illnesses

Thank You

*More on
page 6*

Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM)

Margaret Dabell.
For services to the
community in Wetherby.

(including Wetherby in Bloom)

CONGRATULATIONS!



See Page 6

WHAT A GREAT START TO THE YEAR!



**Planning
Permission
Approved**



“At present there are no on site or opening dates”

Full planning permission was granted on 16 January 2025, though there are a lot of conditions.

This drawn out saga started 3 years ago when we reported that discussions with Sant Angelo had started.

Sept 2022 - our Spoons confirmed they have exchanged contracts to us. We were the first to break the news. They bought it for £1.7M and willing to invest £2.25M, creating 50-60 jobs.

Oct 22 - we reported on the Sun and other national media portraying the town as too posh for a Spoons, because of a small minority not wanting one here.

Aug 23 - Wetherspoons put building on the market.

Apr 24 - Plans back on. We were the first to break the good news on social media.

Let's hope this much-needed boost to the town progresses quickly.

For planning details, go to www.publicaccess.leeds.gov.uk/online-applications/ and insert application reference 24/02368/L1

More on Page 9

Let's Make This A Year Of Change - Wetherby Deserves Better

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



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

Compare Car & Bus Costs	Page 3	Reader Removes Hartlepool Banner	Page 10	Plus more jokes, What's On, Leeds Utd & more
'You Cannot Be Serious' 2024 Review	Page 5	Dreadful Parking & Poor Attitude	Page 12	
In Praise of Cllr Alan Lamb	Page 10	More Goosemoor Nature Delights	Page 11	



Only £1.73 per fortnightly issue with annual subscription



How Christmas telly has changed over the years

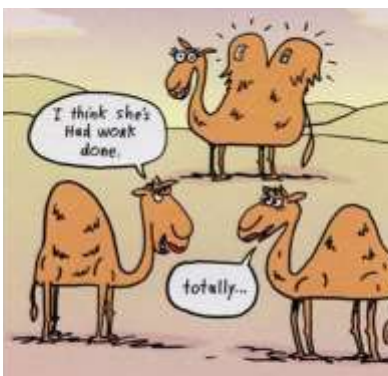
BBC 2007 highlights

- Wallace and Gromit
- Outnumbered
- Gavin and Stacey

BBC 2024 highlights

- Outnumbered
- Wallace and Gromit
- Gavin and Stacey

* What do you call a spelling mistake on a tombstone? A grave error * Why do the numbers 3 and 5 make such a great team? Because together, they thrive
* I had to fire the guy I hired to mow my lawn. He just didn't cut it * Since I started a boat building business in my garage, sails have gone through the roof



Wetherby Town Council Mtg - Nov & Dec

- * No residents attended either meeting
 - * Big Rise in C Tax Precept? £200K needed for Town Hall Roof
 - * Town's Wi-Fi to end. Money wasted? Will anybody notice?
 - * 'Frustrating' Road Issues but no frustration about bus issues
 - * More Parking Enforcement after 20 tickets a day in trial
 - * More Staff Recruitment: Market Supervisor & Town Hall Relief Caretakers
 - * Jon Kent to join Welcome to Wetherby - No details who he is
 - * Bonfire made £5K profit. 93% tickets sold. Reduce ticket price?
 - * Artisan Butcher accepted for Market Stall
 - * Cllr Ager-Mills queries police figures. No detail provided
 - * No All-Day Market at Xmas Light Switch-on. No explanation
 - * One anon. Cllr votes against a) wildflower meadow and b) replacement trees.
- No details. Why would anyone vote against these things?*
- * Town Hall Bookings Down since July. No reason provided
 - * New Website: Cost nearly £10,000. How much to maintain and update? No image of Town Clerk. Unlike many other councils Political Party of Cllrs not stated. Why not?
 - * Cllr Moss attended Police Meeting (PACT). No details provided
 - * Council Xmas cards cost £200. Better donated to Foodbank?
 - * All-Conservative Chairs of Cttes will decide 25/26 budget
 - * Local and National Publicity about Bus Blocking ignored. Town Clerk's award was mentioned



See pages 7, 8 & 9 for details

Next Wetherby Town Council Mtg

Tues 11 Feb 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 

Now £4.50 Return to York & Harrogate

..... on **Connexions Buses 412 & X70 only, or £2.50 single**. Harrogate Bus Company are charging the full national maximum fare of £3 per journey ie £6 return.

The £2 fare stays for trips in West Yorkshire until 31 March 2025. Then it goes up to £2.50.

The national increase of 50% increase in the maximum fare from £2 to £3 came as a shock to many. It is not known whether the £2 fare attracted a significant number of new passengers, but we doubt if these increases will.

Will a car owner like the Editor be tempted to leave it at home and get the bus? Let's look at the facts:

Comparison of Costs - Petrol Car & Bus

Return Trip	miles	Petrol only Car Cost	Bus Cost
Leeds	25	£3.49	£4 then £5
York	26	£3.63	£4.50 Connexions
Harrogate	18	£2.52	£4.50 Connexions

Car cost is calculated with average size car & fuel consumption of 46 mpg with petrol costing the 2024 average of 1.41p per litre.

If there are two of you travelling, then it is a no-brainer. Who would want to pay £9 to go to Harrogate when it costs just over a quarter of the cost to go by car?

Bus companies do nothing to attract 2 people travelling together, which is why you see so many people travelling alone on buses. And the less people that use them, the more likely it is that services are withdrawn.

Incidentally, this proves yet again that it has always been much cheaper travelling by bus in West Yorkshire than North Yorkshire. There is no day ticket you can use on all buses in North Yorkshire either.

Car Fuel Costs Much Cheaper Now

We calculated the same table as above 2 years ago. Petrol must be one of the few common purchases that has gone down in price. Average price of a litre was 20p more at £1.63 and journey costs were:

Return Trip	miles	Car Cost Cheaper than 2 years ago by	Bus Cost in 2022
Leeds	25	£1.03	£4
York	26	£1.07	£7
Harrogate	18	74p	£4 or £4.70

This is because politicians never want to upset car owners by raising fuel duty. There are too many of them who vote. Just look at the fuss by all local councillors over local car parking charges - they know it will gain them much popularity.

If only they put as much effort into making bus travel more attractive to tempt motorists out of their vehicles.

Passenger's View & Poll Results

A regular commuter on the Wetherby to Leeds no. 7 bus writes:

"All the new electric buses are single-deckers and have 4 seats less than the old ones. Since they were introduced they seem to be up to ten minutes later than before. Before Christmas the buses were very busy; the bus towards Leeds at 5pm was standing room only from the Wealstun Prison."

The passenger also quotes the results from a poll on social media designed to find out how many people use local bus services or not.

⇒ 19 per cent (27 votes) travel to Wetherby

⇒ 54 per cent (76 votes) travel out of Wetherby

⇒ 26 per cent (37 votes) don't use it

We thank the reader for their interesting information.

A petition for the 7 bus route to be reinstated to every half hour instead of hourly, is being presented to WYCA / Metro by Cllr Penny Stables and colleagues on

Tues 21 Jan at 11.30 at

Metro / WYCA building on Wellington Street nr Leeds Rail Station, the building after the West Riding pub

Penny is catching the 7 bus arriving in Leeds at 10.44. You are welcome to join her. 1600 people signed the petition.

Well Done to all those involved in this fight for better bus services.



Editor Keeps Library Bus Info Up-to-date

The Editor visited the library recently to find 2 important timetables missing.

One was the *Harrogate Bus Company* leaflet for the main routes 7 & X98/99 to Leeds, dated October 2024. We informed *Harrogate Bus Company* (boss Paul Turner) but they have not sent any through.

The other was the 8 to Knaresborough, the only bus going through Kirk Deighton. The village (*KD Events*) did not want bus timetables in their 'Community Hub' phone box library so Wetherby library is the only place to get them. This bus operator too (Transport 21 of Goole) does not care about promoting their service in the most obvious place.



All timetables now present thanks to Editor

It is therefore left to the Editor to ensure there is a supply of all timetables.

Neither the library or bus services are listed as a regular agenda item of any Town Council meeting. Despite being the only information source for the 1000s of residents without internet access, not one of our 15 Town Councillors monitors printed bus information. You would expect the *Welcome to Wetherby Ctte* (Chair Cllr Dean Buckle) to take an interest but this is more evidence that they don't.

Where are New Buses, Transdev?

We were promised refurbished double-deckers from the 36 route in late 2024 for the X98/99 route to Leeds. So where are they?

A broken promise from *Harrogate Bus Company*. To find out what is going on, you have to ask the drivers. The bosses aren't interested in keeping us informed. Nothing on their website.



The promised newer X98 /99 buses yet to materialise

One driver told us that it is not likely to happen any time soon. Two of the 4 buses needed for the route will be new single-decker all-electric buses. The problem is that there is no charging point at either end of the route, unlike the 7.

First Bus always used double-deckers on this route so *Harrogate Bus Service* are providing a worse service than *First*.

The other two buses on the route will be double-deckers but will be delayed because the older buses from the 36 we were due to get refurbished are still needed.

The Company took over the route in October 2022. Their luxury buses boosted ridership by 21% within a year. Recent passenger figures have not been published. We suspect they are not good with all their recent problems.

On 5 January there were some astounding cuts to Arriva bus services in West Yorkshire. Many of the reduced frequencies were on major routes stretching from Wakefield to Huddersfield. Thankfully the 174 Wetherby to Aberford to Garforth to Wakefield was not affected. At least Kim Cain, area director for Arriva Yorkshire, had the decency to apologise. She blamed the cuts on the continuing shortage of drivers.

Mayor, Tracy Brabin is appalled at these cuts, yet she gave Arriva a lot of money to increase frequencies just 10 months ago, as described in Issue 59. Arriva Yorkshire were the worst of all bus companies in the UK, a professional survey found last year.

On the Metro website they downplay the cuts, constantly referring to 'changes', instead of reductions. They do not provide any figures for the total number of cuts. So we have to do it.

45 routes are affected - most of them have services withdrawn.

Here is a typical example on a major route:

268 Wakefield • Dewsbury • Heckmondwike • Cleckheaton • Bradford Sun 5 Jan 2025

Operated by Arriva

Some early morning and early evening journeys will be withdrawn, curtailed or retimed. The evening frequency will be reduced from half-hourly to hourly.

Cllr Alan Lamb is our Leeds City Councillor who sits on the Board of Metro / WYCA. He informs us of timetable changes on his Facebook page, example on the right, but offers no opinion on the staggering amount of bus service cuts in this post.

We wrote to him and asked him politely to make a general comment on the cuts. We received no response, proving to us yet again that Cllr Lamb has little interest in buses but plenty in helping car owners save money (see Issue 72).



The 174 to Wakefield on the New Box Junction in the Wrong Place

We wonder why First Bus and Transdev do not have such a problem with recruiting drivers. The Mayor and her new franchising system may have the same problem when they take over running buses in West Yorkshire.

Of course, it's the poor passenger that suffers. So what do our elected representatives think of this situation?



Councillor Alan Lamb

December 16, 2024 at 10:30 AM

Please find below details of bus service changes in Leeds District which operators have notified us will be introduced on 5 to 13 January 2025.

1 Wakefield • Pinderfields Hospital • Outwood • Leeds • Leeds University • Headingley • Lawnswood School • Holt Park
Mon 13 Jan 2025

Public Consultation: Talking Transport with Leeds City Council & WYCA / Metro

Time & Place: Banquet Hall, Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley Street, LS1 1UR (entrance on Portland Crescent) – Tuesday 28 January 2025, 15:00-17:00

The session will be led by Transport Engagement Lead Councillor, Cllr Annie Maloney. It will begin with an open discussion of attendees' own transport queries and experiences, before a series of presentations and focused discussions.

Agenda

- Welcome and event introduction
- Your travel experiences and questions (around 30 mins)
- Presentations (around 30 mins) : West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan and major projects
Leeds: what we're delivering locally
- Questions and answers (remaining time)

More about Talking Transport sessions.

They say: "We know that some places are harder or more expensive to get to than they should be. Travel information and fares are too complicated as well. We want to hear your travel experiences to help inform our decision-making.

Our new Talking Transport meetings are led by local Councillors who have responsibility for transport.



Meetings will take place twice a year, bringing together people who shape the way transport works in your area. You'll get to hear what we're doing to improve transport, locally and across West Yorkshire, and to ask questions and share your experiences. Operators of transport services in the area are also invited to join the meeting and answer any questions about their services.

Talking Transport meetings are not part of WYCA's formal governance processes; they are just one of several ways WYCA and local authorities want to hear people's views on Transport. Key discussion points will be shared with WYCA's Transport Committee to ensure people's views and opinions are understood and considered."

Cllr Penny Stables hopes to attend but another commitment (Development Plans Panel) may prevent this. We hope the Mayor, Tracy Brabin is there to hear passenger concerns.

How to sign up

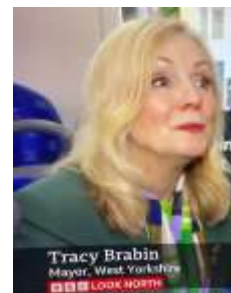
Sign up on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/talking-transport-meeting-leeds-tickets-1113922615529>

You can also find more information here about accessibility at the venue.
Or email yourvoice@westyorks-ca.gov.uk
Or phone 0113 245 7676 (Metroliner)

Still £4 return to Leeds, Otley & Garforth until 31 March

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



It has to be said - Wetherby is a strange town. It is quite unique in many ways.

Our reasonable suggestions for improving the environment or our public services are ignored by almost all of our elected representatives and many of the organisations of the town. They have no interest in making any of the simple improvements we suggest.

And when we point out their mistakes and low standards, in almost all cases they do not thank us, or apologise, or say they will do better. No, they mostly ignore them. Indeed, one laughably told us never to mention their organisation or him (or his family!!!), as if he and his organisation were untouchable and immune from any comment, let alone criticism. We wonder what planet these arrogant people live on.

You have to laugh at the absurdity of it. We publish without fear or favour. Here are just a few examples in the first 6 months of '24:



John McEnroe, the bad boy of 70s tennis



Bus Station missing from new Town Leaflet - But coach pick up point is! Chair of *Welcome to Wetherby* is Cllr Dean Buckle.



These simple signs need to be put on walls, windows, stuck on polls or painted on the road to stop bus blocking by Mojis.

Nothing done after 3 years to inform blue badge holders or illegal parkers that it is a bus station exit. Buses are stuck and 100s of passengers are inconvenienced on a regular basis.

Wetherby Town Council, Leeds City Council & WYCA/Metro are responsible for reporting and putting a permanent, effective deterrent in place.

Wetherby Town Council



Incorrect, unsightly, useless sign for visitors has been outside the Town Hall for years. Nothing done and still there now despite us highlighting it one year ago.

Minutes contained: * old-fashioned term 'Fire Brigade' twice * 'Normington' instead of Normanton 3 times * 'civ comm Committee' * Cllr confusion over purpose of Communications Cttee * 'millennium' spelt wrong twice * no details of grant applications turned down * no details of £1800 spent on dealing with 'malicious and vexatious' correspondence * nothing for 2 meetings of the same Cttee because not enough Cllrs turned up ie both were inquorate and a waste of people's time

Many items of bus information were wrong on their website. So they simply deleted it instead of keeping it up-to-date, despite employing a Communications Officer. *See P9 Issue 62*

The Markets Cttee, Chair Cllr Bradley, produced a sub-standard survey. Their promo material said there was 10 questions when there was only 8. Poor rating scale, important info not requested and they do not even thank residents for completing it! Simply rude. *See P8 Issue 60*

This Council also introduced a new 'vexatious policy' to deter residents from asking embarrassing questions and for them to avoid answering them. We know that WISE has introduced a similar one after the Editor queried how this publicly-funded organisation was being run. Cllr Harrington is a Trustee of WISE.



If the Council had acted maturely and professionally, apologising for their mistakes and low standards, saying they will try to do better, then we would have no reason to mention the incidents again. We wish this Council had people like Cllr Andrew Batty, Chair of East Keswick Parish Council. He is a Conservative who calls a spade a spade and gets things done.



Other Towns & Leeds City Council Parks have Wildlife Displays like this one. Otley have leaflets too. We have the best fed ducks in Yorkshire (over 2000 bags of duck food sold in 23/24).

Nothing done by Wetherby Weir Preservation Trust, Town Council & Clean Rivers Group.



NatWest has been empty and unsightly for nearly 2 years. In Feb we suggested the Town Council, Wetherby Business Association and others did something like Harrogate for this and all the other empty buildings that give visitors a poor impression. Nothing done.



Harrogate



The Path Entrance down to the lovely area by the Weir is still unattractive after 3 years! and unhelpful to visitors We have offered to put up a sign and suggested calling it 'Ginger's Spot' after a WW2 local hero. Nothing done by Wetherby Weir Preservation Trust, Town Council & Clean Rivers Group.

Wetherby Volunteer Awarded British Empire Medal (BEM)

The real heroes of Wetherby don't want any fuss. The *Free Press* awarded our Townsperson of the Year to Pat of the Sally Army in the last issue. She is a modest lady who was not keen to be in the spotlight.

And so it is with Margaret Dabell who likes to keep "under the radar" too. She has been awarded a British Empire Medal for her services to the Community and her medal will be awarded in due course by the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire at a local venue.

Many readers will know Margaret for her dedication to *Wetherby in Bloom*. Please note it is not an MBE she has been awarded but a British Empire Medal (BEM) which was awarded for 'Services to the Community'. She is not sure who or which organisation has nominated her for the award as she belongs to various groups, one of which is the chair of *Wetherby in Bloom*.

Margaret and Pat are an inspiration to us all. They keep out of politics and the cliqueness this town suffers from - they just get on with the job. They do not even want a little publicity for their well-deserved awards. We have respected Margaret's request for privacy and not printed a photo of her.

What a contrast to one of our Councillors who was extremely pleased with themselves for receiving an award last year from one of the clubs in Wetherby. They were happy to pose for a photo and point at their name on a wall display. Looking at their social media they are at the opposite spectrum of self-publicity to Margaret and Pat. We find those without large egos tend to get more actual work done.



Image from *Wetherby in Bloom*

Do you know an individual in our area who deserves to be recognised for their good works. Somebody who does not get paid or is in a position of authority but spends a lot of time or their own money doing good. We would simply like to thank them. Perhaps one of our local shops could present them with a little gift of appreciation.



We see them out and about, on buses and in the shops making the lives of our friends and relatives much better. This important work provides a much improved quality of life for so many in our community. It involves doing things many of us are not able or willing to do ourselves.

Yet they are one of the worst paid workers. Our award doesn't help them pay their bills but the *Wetherby Free Press* would like to acknowledge a group of people who make an incredible contribution to our town and villages, and society in general.

We just want them to know:



Wharfemede Productions Proudly Presents

Book by Allan Knee Music by Jason Howland Lyrics by Mindi Dickstein

Little Women

The Broadway Musical

Based on the novel by Louisa May Alcott

18-22nd Feb 25

Find tickets at tickets.41monkgate.co.uk

This amateur production is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International. All authorised performance materials are also supplied by MTI.

wharfemede productions@gmail.com

Wetherby Foodbank

Ways to Get Help

- Ring the helpline on 08082 082138 Mon - Fri
- Talk to a Referral Agent (list on our website)
- Call in at the One Stop at Wetherby Library
- Call in & see us - Wetherby or Tadcaster
- Email us on info@wetherbyanddistrict.foodbank.org.uk
- Text / leave a message on 07840 455 725

Wetherby
Every Friday morning

BARLEYFIELDS COMMUNITY CAFE

Barleyfields Community Centre,
Barleyfields Road, Wetherby

Fridays 10:00am - 11:30am

FREE! Tea or coffee, toast & cake
Come along & have a cuppa & a chat

Community advice & info available, including
Money Buddies every week

NO APPOINTMENTS NECESSARY

EVERYONE WELCOME!

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 a year. 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.



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 Council 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 town organisations are Conservative.

Every one of the 12 Council Meeting Chairs are Conservative.

The Mayor & Deputy Mayor are Conservative.



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 anywhere 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. **The new one still has no images of Council staff, unlike Otley and many other towns,** to help us identify who is who. This shows us that this Council clearly still has great difficulty with being fully open and accountable.



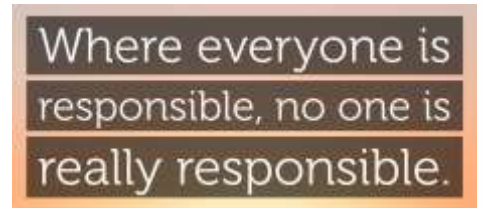
Image we had to put together - New Website Does Not State Political Allegiance

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 have been many staff changes in recent years 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 refuses to make any comment, simply ignoring us. This is poor behaviour, some would say ignorant. The Editor sends it from his personal email address too, writing as a resident of 30+ years, saying "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 Meeting in November 2024

14 out of 15 Councillors attended. Cllr Payne was absent 'due to personal reasons'. No residents were present. The Leeds City Cllrs present were Alan Lamb & Penny Stables. Norma Harrington is both a Town Councillor & Leeds City Councillor.

It was not stated who chaired this meeting. Was it the Deputy Mayor or the Town Clerk? *Why doesn't anybody want to take responsibility for being Chair?*

The meeting lasted 1 hour 37 minutes. *The last one lasted less than an hour.*

City Cllr Reports - Contain 'frustration' about road matters. *The frustration felt by bus passengers because of buses still being blocked at Wetherby Bus Station exit is not mentioned.*

City Cllr Reports - Lack of Detail in Minuting. *The minutes do not state which Councillor said what. Leeds City Councillors are polite by nature, as are the Conservative-majority Town Council. For example, Cllrs Lamb & Harrington criticise Cllr Stables on social media. The public need to know who is saying what and what actions they are taking. How is the public supposed to judge their performance if official minutes of meetings are so vague? The Town Clerk should provide more detail in them eg 'Dominos are being proactive in trying to resolve the issue of vehicles parking in front of their shop on Westgate.' Why not state exactly what they are doing so the public can make a judgement, as no Councillor gives their opinion?*

We suggest brief written reports from each City Councillor are included in the minutes.



Cont'd on next page

City Cllr Reports: 20 Parking tickets were issued a day in a trial. 11 are needed to break even. A report has been written with a commitment given to have an ongoing enforcement presence in Wetherby of 6 shifts per week.

As we have often said this will not stop vehicles blocking the bus station exit by Mojis. Many are blue badge holders who are unaware they are blocking the exit. Motorists who visit off the A1(M) will not know or possibly care about extra parking enforcement.

Staffing Committee, Chair Cllr Harrington - Agreed to recruit a 'Market Supervisor'. More staff. Staff are expensive. Why is this post suddenly needed? Who was responsible for it before and why can they not continue?



After 3 Years this is the only 'deterrent' to stop bus blocking

Communications - Town Council votes to end Wetherby Free Wifi by 13 votes to 1

This issue and another one on spending £582 on traffic management was put to a full vote yet the previous big decision on recruitment costing £1000s was left to the 4 Councillors on the Staffing Cttee. There seems to be an inconsistency. One of the criteria for a full vote should be if it costs us more than £1,000?

Town Hall Management Cttee - Roof repairs could cost £200,000+. This could mean a massive increase in Council Tax precept (again!).

Welcome to Wetherby, Chair Cllr Dean Buckle - The full Town Council voted to accept Jon Kent as a group member. Again, poor minuting. No details about Jon Kent. Who is he?

The 2024 bonfire & fireworks event made a profit of £5,000. 93% of tickets were sold. Perhaps the Council could reduce the ticket price this year in this cost of living crisis to let the less well off residents enjoy this family event. Harrogate's is free and donations collected by volunteers.



Highways and Transport (No Cttee) - No comments on anything. Information provided on the renting of speed guns from Leeds City Council.

Police & Crime (No Cttee) - October stats: 16 anti-social (9 more than Sept) & 125 others (144 less than in Sept!) The second comparison is meaningless as it includes the prisons. Small improvement to include comparisons with previous month. It would also be useful to compare with previous years.

Cllr Ager-Mills said 'reports don't follow through from WY Police's website to the statistics received'. What does that mean? No example provided. No action to follow this up. If figures cannot be trusted, it is a serious matter.

Markets Cttee, Chair Cllr Bradley - Artisan butcher accepted for market stall by 4 votes to 1. Wonder what our well-established town butchers think about this new competition!

'An all-day market will no longer be run as part of the 2024 Light Switch-On event will as previously planned' No reason given.

Property Cttee, Chair Cllr Mulhall - Cllr votes against development of a wildflower meadow at Sandringham Park. We would love to know the reasons why this councillor voted against, when 3 voted for it.

- Cllr votes against quoting for replacement mature trees with post and wire fencing in the Garden of Rest. Again, we would love to know the reasons why this councillor voted against, when 3 voted for it. Please get in touch with us.

- 'A failed tree in the cemetery has been removed, leaving the structurally sound trunk.' What does that mean?

Staffing Cttee, Chair Cllr Harrington - Recruitment of another Town Hall Relief Caretaker. This did not merit a mention in the Full Council meeting.

- Comms Officer has problems with her computer. It is only 1 year old.

Town Hall Cttee, Chair Cllr Moss - Town Hall booking down since July. 'Due in part to discontent at the additional £2 Music Licence Fee for hirers who play music as part of their hire.' An extra £2! Surely that would not put people off. Is it a minuting error?



Why would anybody vote against a Wildflower Meadow at Sandringham Park?

Minutes of Wetherby Town Council Meeting in December 2024

11 out of 15 Councillors attended. Cllr Harrington, Lavocah & Newcombe. We had to work out that Cllr Frame did not send his apologies. Why not? No residents were present, like November's meeting. The Leeds City Cllrs present were Alan Lamb & Penny Stables. Norma Harrington is both a Town Councillor & Leeds City Councillor.

It was not stated who chaired this meeting. Was it the Mayor or the Town Clerk?

Cont'd on next page

Free Press Success: Suggestion Taken Up by Council



Crack open the bubbly! We do not think this has happened before. Out of our dozens of our common sense suggestions to them over 3 years, the Council has at last taken one up. In March 24 they said they would **not** change their www.wetherby.co.uk website address, even though it is not a company and the vast majority of other councils have a .gov.uk. They saw sense and the new Council website address is www.wetherbytowncouncil.gov.uk/



The meeting lasted 40 minutes. *The last one was twice as long.*

City Cllr Reports - General information provided with an emphasis on supporting motorists. *Nothing about the Council C**k-up of painting a new box junction in the wrong place. Do they care about bus passengers or just car owners?*

The Councillors were clearly in a holiday mood. Nothing was discussed in any great detail shown by the short time the meeting lasted.

We notice the heading 'Highways & Transportation' (No separate Ctte, Otley Town Council has one) has changed to just 'Highways'. *More proof if any were needed this Council doesn't think about buses. It should be 'Public Transport' or just 'Buses' as we have no trains.*

Police & Crime (No Ctte) - Cllr Moss attended PACT meeting but reported nothing about it. *Unhelpful, to say the least. No link to any meeting notes, if any have been written.*

Correspondence Received - The Town Clerk continues to ignore the Wetherby Free Press. *She used to acknowledge receipt of our issues but has not done so since Issue 70. It took her a month to acknowledge that one. She has not addressed any of the issues relevant to her that we have raised in recent newsletters.*

New Website cost nearly £10,000 (+ £? to maintain and update)

Town Council Christmas Cards cost about £200 to print +? to post. *We think the money would be spent as a donation to Wetherby Foodbank (an organisation rarely mentioned in Town Council minutes).*

The Chairs of all Meetings will decide on the 25/26 budget. *They are all Conservatives. None of the newer Councillors have any input.*

The Local & National Press Coverage of the Bus Blocking Issue was ignored. But the Town Clerk's award was mentioned. *Fancy that!*



We had to laugh when we saw this on Social Media.

It's the word 'ALL' we take issue with.

Cllr Harrington has been a Conservative Councillor for a very long time in powerful positions as a Town & City Councillor.

She is Chair of the Staffing Ctte and an influential member of many other committees.

Cllr Harrington is also involved with many other Wetherby organisations like WISE and Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd.

She has not fully involved herself in the issues the Editor has raised with her as a resident of 30+ years.

We have never had a meeting together and she has not requested one.

Cllr Harrington is quite happy to ignore all the legitimate questions I ask and issues I raise.

She has not informed me why she refuses to engage with me. I must have committed some heinous crime for her to behave in this manner. (For info, the Editor has never been found guilty of any crime against her, her family, her friends, or anybody ever in fact.)

Norma, you clearly state you look forward to working with us all. Does that include me?

If this is an olive branch, then I gladly accept it.

Please contact me at your convenience, and let's start a professional and fruitful relationship.

I look forward to it.

Cllr Lamb seems to have gone off me in recent months for no good reason. We met a couple of times and got on well, though ultimately it's actions that matter to me, more than words.

If they both continue to cancel the Editor in this way, it says much more about them than it does about me.

I will keep on telling the uncomfortable truth and asking difficult questions, along with some reasonable opinion, whatever they do.

And the *Free Press* will continue to publish whatever is sent to it, unedited, from any Councillor or their supporter. You can't say fairer than that, can you? See next page for example of praise for Cllr Lamb.

First to Tell You the Good News - JD Wetherspoon

The Free Press was the first to tell everyone on the professionally-run social media platforms of the news. Indeed, we were the first to tell the Spoons PR people. They told us "We are delighted that planning has been granted for a Wetherspoon pub in Wetherby. We are certain that this will be welcome by people in the town. At present there are no on site or opening dates."

One of our knowledgeable, beer-loving readers tells us there are still hoops to jump through, such as

"Construction above ground slab level for the rear extension shall not take place until details and samples of all external walling and roofing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Samples and details shall include: - a stone panel with coursing and mortar finish to match existing Notwithstanding the approved details, works above the ground floor slab level shall not commence until full details of cycle/motorcycle parking and facilities have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved cycle/motorcycle parking and facilities shall be provided prior to first occupation of the development and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development."

But he tells us "This is fantastic news. If you have a long wait for a bus after Morrisons Cafe shuts, there isn't anywhere cheap to kill time - but in Spoons you can get a bottomless tea/coffee mug for about £1.50. It will probably be open 08.00 - midnight with food served 08.00 -23.00. Monday club real ale costs about £2 a pint, and about the same on 'Real Ale Wednesdays'. I particularly like 'Curry Club Tuesday' and 'Steak Club Thursday'.

It should be very popular with all ages wanting a cheap meal in comfortable surroundings, just like in Knaresborough, Otley & Garforth. And anybody needing the toilet!

It took 9 months to open the one in Marlow after work started and now it is so popular, it is difficult to get a seat.

It should bring lots of visitors into town, which is great for all other businesses too. Fingers crossed, it will be open for Xmas."

Great Value Prices in Oct 2024



In Praise of Cllr Alan Lamb



Issue 72 of WFP contained an article containing criticisms of our Conservative Leeds City Councillor Alan Lamb regarding what he has said and done over the bus blocking situation.

Reader Paul Hutchinson felt the need to write and thank Cllr Lamb for something he did to help him in December.

Paul writes:

"A few weeks ago, I posted in Nextdoor that our bins in Micklethwaite had not been emptied, and I added as an aside, that an extra black bin that we had ordered and paid for had not been delivered. Alan contacted me and told me that he would chase it up (which he did) and ascertained that Leeds refuse services "thought that it had been delivered". He got them to organise another one which was delivered yesterday."

We are pleased to write something positive about Cllr Lamb to provide some balance. If you send it, we will print it.

But it does not in any way make up for the poor service provided by Cllr Lamb to one resident (the Editor). He treats the Editor's simple questions and issues differently to other residents; ignoring them, which is poor behaviour. He should not bear a grudge against the Editor just because he does not like the Free Press. It should be irrelevant - the Editor is first and foremost a Council Tax paying resident.

Good deeds should never override the bad ones, obviously.



Resident Grateful for Cllr Lamb's Help with Bins

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



Two unrelated accidents on Deighton Road on same day. The one in the image happened in the morning and required emergency services. The other near Home Paddock House occurred at 4.30pm and both car occupants required hospital treatment after the driver lost control.

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.



You may have heard of 'Couch to 5K'? What about 'Couch to Carbon Zero'. Let's get climate fit together this new year, with the first of our 3-minute videos. Find out how good your bank is, and get paid to move to a better bank.

We've plenty of activities planned for 2025, so don't miss out, keep subscribed to our newsletter. For example, *Yorkshire Wildlife Trust* is talking to *Wetherby U3A* on 27th March.

Read about all this and the usual Green Library, 'Have Your Say', good news stories and new initiatives, in our January newsletter found under 'News' at

bostongreengroup.co.uk/

Making a New Year's Resolution? Help support us with our recently launched Just Giving campaign. The group is run by local volunteers who give their time freely, yet need regular resources to continue our initiatives and accomplish our plans. You may not be able to physically support us, but a contribution (big or small) would make a difference (bostongreengroup.co.uk/just-giving).



Christmas Social Event

Wow! Have you seen the natural hedge laying work started in Churchfields over recent weeks? We've loads of local projects this New Year, so check out the dates in our latest newsletter and get involved with some local community, nature restoration.



A Big Thank You from Adrian, Chair *Boston Spa Wetherby and Villages Community Green Group*.

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.

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

Reader Removes Hartlepool Banner by A1(M)



Here is an email we received before Christmas.

Hello Paul,

Seasons Greetings to you. Your newspaper reminded me about that annoying sign about the Hartlepool event. I often run that way and it's about time it came down so I ripped it off, folded it up and ran back into town with it under my arm. It's now in my bin!

Cheers,

We thank the resident for his community-spirited action. This banner had no business being there and certainly no permission. It promotes an event in 2023 in a town 60 miles away on the North East coast.

Yet there it stayed for at least 1 and 1/2 years! It is incredulous that not one of our local Town Councillors did anything about it. We think if the banner had promoted the Wetherby Free Press they would have removed it immediately and taken action against the

Editor.

More disappointing is that Wetherby Business Association (Director, Jamie Hullah) and Wetherby Town Council (Welcome to Wetherby Chair Cllr Dean Buckle) have not produced a similar banner to promote our town. Hundreds of thousands of potential customers pass us by every week on the A1(M). They could spend many 100s of £1000s in our shops and businesses every week. But neither the WTC or WBA seem interested in attracting people into town. They seem happy for motorists to spend their money at Wetherby Services, which does not benefit local businesses.

Back in April 2022, nearly 3 years ago we suggested a banner or a sign on a lorry, like the one shown. We have reminded WTC and WBA of this idea in the Newsletter on many occasions but they have done nothing.

Yet WTC produce their own banners for use within the town. More evidence to us that these town organisations have little creativity or imagination.

This is to the detriment of the town and the people involved should be accountable for their behaviour and lack of action.

We will keep reminding people about this easy, cheap way to help Wetherby businesses until the Town Council and Business Association inform us why they do not want to take it forward.

Our hospitality businesses would do a roaring trade!

For Wetherby to prosper, this town needs to do much more to attract motorists. What about having 2 big signs on the A1, one in each direction? Look at the M62 where there are dozens of signs all along it on farmer's land, see page 2. Large ads would be very effective, especially when highlighting the large difference in fuel prices. See example below.

The Incredible Wildlife at Goosemoor Nature Reserve

Message from the Reserve:

“On behalf of myself and all the amazing small team of volunteers who have over the last 12 months attended events with a stall promoting the Reserve, kept on top of the Balsam! Planted trees, fenced ponds, maintained paths, given guided tours to U3A, organised work days for the Cubs and Scouts, applied for grants, kept the books, ordered birdseed and taken delivery of goods including Compost Loo going in this next fortnight hopefully with enough help, and just generally made GNR an amazing place to be part of, without them we could not continue, you know who you are, thank you”



Stoat



Buzzard

There are two Facebook groups - Goosemoor Nature Reserve and Goosemoor Nature Reserve Group.

The latter has more wonderful images like these.

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.

Both of these brilliant images are kindly reproduced with permission from



Wetherby & Boston Spa Men's Forum 2025

15-Jan	Gillian Walters	The Siege of Skipton Castle
22-Jan	David Davies	The Big Freeze of 1947
29-Jan	Malcolm Johnson	The Road to Big Sur
5-Feb	Roger Browne	The Great American Songbook
12-Feb	Alan Pugh	Titus Salt of Saltaire
19-Feb	Tony Burkitt	Australia - Cairns to Tasmania
26-Feb	To Be Confirmed	
5-Mar	Geoff Queen	In the Steps of the Incas
12-Mar	John Clithero	Sporting Knights & Dames
19-Mar	Angela Beaumont	Patagonia in the Autumn
26-Mar	John Lyte	Funny You Should Say That - Part 1
2-Apr	To Be Confirmed	
9-Apr	AGM	

Meetings take place

9.45am

Wednesdays

St. James' Scout Hall

Church Street

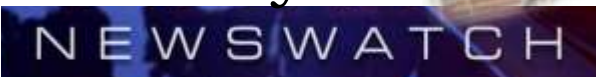
Wetherby



Wetherby & Boston Spa Men's Forum currently has about 50 members and new members are always welcome. Meetings are held in the Scouts and Guides Hall, at the end of Church Street (off Bank Street), Wetherby at 9.45am on Wednesday mornings from September until April (with a short gap during the Christmas period). After a cup of tea or coffee and a chat, the Chairman starts the meeting and an interesting and entertaining talk by a visiting speaker is then enjoyed by members. Meetings usually end shortly after 11.30am.

More Details at www.mensforum.wetherby.info/ or call Mike Earle, Chairman on 07526 007508

Wetherby News



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 2 Jan 2025

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

Martin House Press Release.

Lughably, they tried to make a story in Sherburn-in-Elmet a 'Wetherby' story. It is a town in a different county a good 12 miles away.

This edition was possibly the thinnest ever.

Issue of 9 Jan

News Items - 2 Letters - 0

(Another) Martin House Press Release

Kirk Deighton (KD Events) press release)

Issue of 16 Jan

News Items - 0 Letters - 0

It's true. No news!

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.

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



We monitored 48 editions of the Wetherby News. In those papers we found only 55 items of news about Wetherby.

That is an astonishing **1.15 items** in each paper on average

1 news item costs you £1.91

No of Letters about Wetherby in 48 editions (from a Reform candidate thanking supporters)

1



Many items are business and charity press releases, not fact-finding news reports. They have ignored the Wetherby bus blocking issue for 3 years. Their coverage is disgraceful. The *Free Press* is free and carries much more news. They are free to use our stories, images and text but don't.

Conservative William Hague says a poor local press is bad for democracy and accountability. See Issue 60 of WFP.

Town Hall Staff write their own pieces for the Yorkshire Post. Objective, independent journalism? Where are the real "journalists"?

WE DESERVE BETTER



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

Leeds Struggle to Beat Harrogate in FA Cup

United were fortunate that the BBC decided to put this game on iPlayer instead of BBC1. The team at the top of the Championship should have easily beaten a team near the bottom of the football league.

As you would expect, Leeds were dominant in the first half but could not convert any of their chances. They hit the woodwork but it was the men from Wetherby Road who were unlucky not to get a penalty, when a Leeds man clipped the heels of Josh March. No VAR in any of this round's matches so the refs decision was final, letting Leeds off the hook.

The frustration of 31,000 home fans ended when Ramazani nodded in Solomon's chipped cross on the hour mark. But Harrogate weren't done and upped their game to create many chances, giving much hope to the hardy 4,000 fans who made the short journey down the A61.

You have to credit the Leeds fans for paying £40 upwards to sit in the cold to watch this game in the early round, especially when you could stay at home and watch it for nowt on the BBC.

They welcome one of their least favourite clubs at home in the next round - Millwall.

The games come thick and fast in the Championship - Leeds play 4 games in less than 2 weeks.



Different type of fan to Harrogate's in next round

Harrogate fans at Elland Road



LEEDS FIXTURES 2024/25

EFL CHAMPIONSHIP

All games on **sky sports**

Utd v Sheffield Wed on Sun 19 Jan at 12.00

Utd v Norwich on Wed 22 Jan at 19.45

Burnley v **Utd** on Mon 27 Jan at 20.00

Utd v Cardiff on Sat 1 Feb at 15.00

Coventry v **Utd** on Sat 8 Feb at 15.00



News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

Your Not-for-Profit Community Newsletter

www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press

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Please Donate Online to Cover Printing Costs

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.



Listen to Both Sides

Dreadful Parking .. and a Poor Attitude

A reader sent us the image, right, to highlight thoughtless parking that does not just happen at the bus station exit. He wrote:

"I thought that you might be interested in the attached photo showing yet more inconsiderate/illegal parking in Wetherby at around 09.00am, in the Market Place on Mon 23 Dec. The driver was very abusive when he saw me taking the photograph. I reported the incident to the Wetherby Neighbourhood Police Team, via their website. A member of the West Yorkshire Incident Room rang me later in the day, to say that I should have rung 101 and that they would not be taking any action. I didn't ring 101 because I didn't think that the call and a suitable response would have been made within an appropriate time frame. I felt that I had wasted my time in recording the incident and had suffered abuse to no avail.



Selfish Parking

We like to think of all possibilities to explain people's actions but this is a hard one. Even if it was an emergency, is there any reason why it was parked in such a way? Whatever the circumstances, there is no good reason for the driver to be abusive.

Some may find this type of idiocy funny but just look at the scooter having to make a dangerous manoeuvre into the road.

The attitude of the Police is very disappointing. Cllr Lamb wants us all to call the Police when a vehicle blocks the bus station exit. If that is the reception we get, why should we bother?

We thank our reader for highlighting this and having the courage to take the actions he did, on our behalf.

In April 2024 we had 1000 online visits in 2 days

NEXT ISSUE 7 Feb 2025