



Free Press

Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

Here's to Many More Years!

Full Issue at www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press



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Contents overleaf



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

CONGRATULATIONS ..to us all!

And that includes YOU. If you weren't reading this, we would not have lasted 3 issues, let alone 3 years. So Thank You.

We had hoped that somebody else would take over the important task of informing people what is going on, as well as being a platform for all views. But sadly another newsletter has not



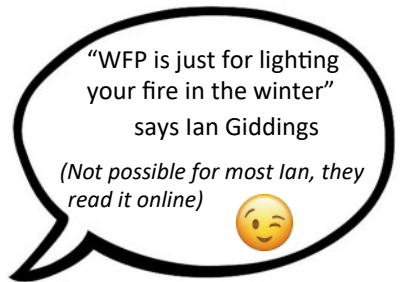
Maggie's Right - Nobody has yet set up an Independent Newsletter to Replace WFP

materialised; we say 'sadly' because we're sure somebody could do a better job than us.

As William Hague has pointed out (Issue 60), the lack of a serious local press means there is no monitoring of any publicly-funded organisation, like councils. Wetherby Town Council have never had a critical press to inspire them to attain higher standards.

So we will carry on: * telling you the facts * making those in authority accountable for poor decisions, performance and mistakes * raising serious issues with the decision-makers in this town

We will also continue to make suggestions to improve the town and attract more visitors. And promote the good work of many organisations and individuals in Wetherby and surrounding area.



One example of our efforts to promote the town is on page 4. We want the best for this town but it's disappointing that some will not engage because of political allegiances or the cliqueness that exists here. The town suffers as a result and there is little progress. There is a distinct lack of creativity and imagination and we will continue to highlight opportunities to make our town a better place to live. Examples are on pages 3 & 9.

Cont'd on next page

JD WETHERSPOON Free House

More Delay by Planners

Most residents want this popular successful, professional pub chain in the town as soon as possible. It will attract many motorists off the A1(M) and make the town more of a night-time destination.

But we will have to be patient as it seems Leeds City Council are delaying the project and it is unlikely it won't be open before Christmas. Our contact at Spoons has told us he will update us as soon as there's more news.

Council's Wrong Figure - Still No Apology

In the last Issue of WFP, we pointed out that the attendance figure stated in Wetherby Town Council (WTC)'s Annual Report was wrong by 8%. The Town Clerk, Iona Taylor responded in an email that they had calculated the figure in a different way to what she originally stated. She originally told us she had averaged percentages which should never be done - it gives the wrong result.



Read their full response on page 4.

This discrepancy in the Town Clerk's account is very concerning. The Council's response is straight out of 'Yes Minister'. It does not mention the word 'error' or 'mistake' or make any admission that they misled the public. Nor is there any hint of regret for doing so. They do thank us for 'taking an interest' but not for pointing out the error.

More on page 4

Yes, It's Happened Yet Again!



The vehicle in the image blocked buses leaving the bus station and was towed away by Police.

We wait now until it happens again and causes misery for 100s more passengers. It will happen again because there is no visible, physical deterrent. The 2 cones are gone. For 3 years we



Another vehicle blocking W'by bus station exit

have been asking for action - where are the signs and paint on road saying 'Do Not Park - Bus Sta Exit'? Why haven't these simple things been done? It is an embarrassment for the town.

More on page 3

100s of Articles Written and Not One Retracted - Proof We State Facts & Reasonable Opinion

Send your News & Views to: WetherbyFreePress@PM.me Twitter / X: WbyFreePress

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

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Calling All Street Artists - Express Yourselves Page 9

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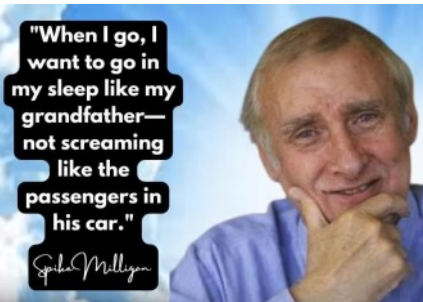
You're having a larf!

* Where do the poorest Italians live? In the Spaghetti.



* Why is Trump unable to be hanged for treason? It would be fake noose.
* If you mention wigs in front of Trump, there will be hell toupee
* People often ask me how I smuggle chocolate into the cinema? Well, I have a few twix up my sleeve.

* My mate got sacked as a TV set designer. It's Ok though, he left without making a scene.
* What does garlic do when it gets hot? It takes it's cloves off.



Translink is the transport operator in Northern Ireland

Cont'd from front page. Because we speak truth to power there are those in authority or their supporters who criticise / insult us on social media. Some extreme comments we ignore and the authors deserve our pity as they are clearly unwell. If they cross the line into persistent harassment or defamation, we will take action.

We welcome criticism, if it is backed up with an example or fact or two. But critics are not willing to discuss exactly what their opinion is based on. Instead they often just use childish emojis to express themselves. The gullible on social media may be influenced by these reactions and comments.

The Editor has a peace offering and proposal for two persistent critics. See page 5.



Wetherby Town Council

- * Council says they are a 'Corporate Body' ! *
 - * They continue to ignore most of the legitimate issues in our emails to them *
 - * Changed their complaints procedure and now talk about 'vexatious individuals' - see page 8 *
- We strongly suspect this is all about labelling residents, like the Editor, as 'vexatious' so that they can avoid their duty to respond to reasonable and legitimate issues. This is disturbing behaviour in a democracy. This shows they do not wish to be accountable to particular residents. Whatever the Council do, we will continue to inform the public of the facts, along with perfectly reasonable comment. This Council clearly don't take criticism at all well. We wish they would spend their time on addressing the issues instead of trying to shoot the messenger.

See page 8

Next Wetherby Town Council Mtg

Tues 8 Oct at 7pm, Town Hall
Agenda at www.wetherby.co.uk



Lucky Ducky Duck Food

from CANCER RESEARCH UK & TREASURES Toys



Bands Play By River - Sun 22 & 29 Sep at 2.30

Elderly Caring & Domestic Help

15 years Experience



NVQ Level 2 Qualification

References available

Call Kerry on 07876 525 589

Don't Forget the many 1000s of people who have no internet access or a smartphone.



Please include a phone no. and put info on paper (leaflets etc)

Suggestions from Regular Passenger

Wetherby Bus Station Exit

This obviously requires a more effective parking deterrent than at present. Why cannot this area be subject to concentrated short bursts of attention until the area becomes well known as a parking "no-go" area, possibly including vehicles being towed away?

This is similar to the current police use of mobile speed camera vans in short bursts at various locations. It obviously does require the various agencies to co-ordinate efforts and deal effectively with the results. Just using parking tickets is clearly insufficient.

Bus Timetables on the Ainsty/Aire Road Circuit

Good news - The confusing timetables showing separate and different times for buses to Deighton Bar and Leeds (which is the same bus), have at last been replaced today (3 Sept).

The initial erroneous information was reported to Metro in March 2024. It has only taken ongoing reminders over five months to resolve it. This makes me personally question the credibility of Metro.

We are grateful to Chris for his comments and efforts to improve our bus services. The more passengers who speak out, the more chance of improvements.

We have no faith in the Metro/WYCA bureaucracy to complete simple tasks or be accountable to the bus passenger / tax payer. Our Leeds City Councillors have yet to show us any evidence of an improvement in Metro's performance.



Leeds now has a Night Bus Network of two routes! One to Headingley and a new one between Leeds & Bradford. Unless you're lucky enough to live on the route, it's useless.

Leeds used to have a proper Nightrider network and credit to First Bus who tried a route to Wetherby in the early hours (following pressure from the Editor). But Metro slowly withdrew the subsidy killing all routes off in the end.

Taxis are your only option if you arrive late from London or wherever on the train, or want a longer night out in Leeds.

Strange how Brighton, Nottingham and many other places smaller than Leeds have a comprehensive night bus network.

Alec Shelbooke, MP is Shadow Transport Minister

We have monitored our Conservative MP's social media accounts for posts about public transport since 8 July when he started this role. Just the one up to 19 Sep:

Yes, it's about bus blocking at last! But wait. He asked the Transport Minister this question: "What assessment has she made of the potential impact of parked cars outside bus stations on levels of delays on regional bus networks?"

We can't quite believe it. It is a supremely pointless question. How does that question resolve Wetherby's problem? It doesn't. Is he implying this is a national problem and Wetherby is just one of many victims? As a bus enthusiast, the Editor can assure readers this is not a national problem. We are just one small generally wealthy conservative town that has failed to sort this problem out with other agencies. We are amazed that Alec doesn't use his power more effectively.

Bus Blocking - Obvious Suggestions



A Large Warning Sign on Window

Repaint (in Red if poss) with 'No Parking ...'

Pole with Sign on Top

Nothing after 3 years!

We can but hope one of our Leeds City Councillors or Town Councillors will at least put a couple of large A3 signs in the window of the empty premises & Mojis. The fact that they have not carried out this simple, cheap temporary action after 3 years shows there is no imagination and little motivation to resolve this.

We are particularly surprised there has been no progress at all when two of the Leeds City Cllrs with an interest in buses have been in post for well over 3 years. If any Councillor contacts the Editor, he will make the A3 signs for the empty shop and Mojis and put them up with permission, providing a clear letter of support is written by the Councillor.

PLEASE, let's get this sorted!

Ticketing vehicles does not stop it happening.



Late Bus from Wetherby is Back Thanks to Cllr Andrew Batty



Cllr Batty has just told us the fantastic news. He has been lobbying Transdev for a re-introduction of a late X99 bus to East Keswick and other villages from Wetherby since the bus company stopped running it.

East Keswick Parish Council has had concerns about the X99 bus service reliability and timetable ever since Transdev took over the route. They have argued for months that timetabling the last bus from Wetherby at 22.10 was too early and prevented villagers from enjoying a night at the cinema or with friends in Wetherby pubs and restaurants. They also argued this must be having an effect on Wetherby's night time economy and on the ability of young people to take hospitality jobs in the town.

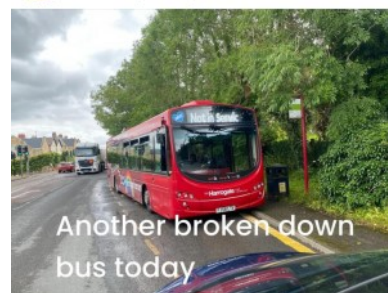
Their proposal of a compromise was agreed: a 23.10 X99 journey from Wetherby through East Keswick as far as Bardsey Bank Top only.

Funding was found thanks to Cllr Alan Lamb amongst others, and the bus starts on Mon 28 Oct for an experimental six-month period.

Andrew sends out a clear message to the communities on the route - "use it or lose it".

East Keswick Parish Council will continue to lobby Transdev and Metro/WYCA regarding the poor reliability of this service.

We congratulate Cllr Batty on this achievement. We wish we had more Councillors like him who calls a spade a spade and gets results by lobbying. Let's hope villagers use the late bus and Wetherby's food and drink businesses benefit from it too.



A Tweet on X from Cllr Batty



No Apology & Town Council Change their Story - Why?

Town Council Statement: Important parts in larger type

“Thank you for your interest in this matter which has prompted a review of the attendance figures with members of the council’s Budgets & Governance Cttee. Please find below a statement which can also be included, in full, in the Wetherby Free Press: Each year Wetherby Town Council publishes the attendance figures for councillors who have a duty to attend meetings of the council and its committees. This is done in the interests of transparency so that the public can see how, and when, their elected representatives are fulfilling the role they have been appointed to. This year the figures were presented to the Annual Town Council meeting and a headline figure of attendance at the monthly full council meetings was included in the council’s annual report. The 75% attendance rate, included in the annual report, was calculated by adding up individual attendance rates and then dividing by the number of councillors who had been in office during the year, resulting in a mean average figure.

Not True. On 9 August the Town Clerk wrote: “The figure of 75% for councillors’ attendance at Full Council meetings, as given in the annual report, was calculated by adding up the percentages of full council meetings attended (79+93+93+88+64+100+86+100+71+83+60+60+0+57+60+86+100+86+71) and dividing it by the number of councillors during the year (19).” Why the 2 versions? Are they trying to deliberately mislead? This is serious.

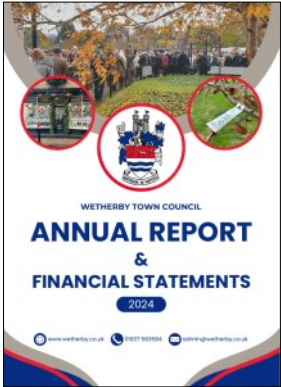


Figure Still Wrong in pdf Report Online

The council has now been prompted to review this figure. As it is keen to ensure that accurate and clear data is given to the public, it has, after further research, used the government’s methodology which is usually used to calculate absence/attendance rates in schools. Using this method we took the number of councillors who had not attended meetings during the year and compared it with the total number who could have attended overall. This revised method gives an increased attendance figure of 79% of councillors at Full Council meetings. We hope this clarifies the Town Council’s position and gives an update to the information included in the annual report.”

‘Prompted’ by us. Nobody else noticed it was wrong. Why do you need ‘government methodology’ to calculate a straight-forward number? Note there is no reference or link given so we cannot check whether this method is valid or appropriate.

We do not understand how this is different from our figure which is 83% (140 / 168). It is bizarre that they would prefer to use a lower figure than we calculated. Our figure of 83% would look better for the Council and is perfectly valid. We guess using ours would make it obvious we were right and they were wrong. Sigh! Why haven’t they corrected the figure in the online Annual Report?

Why does this Council act in this way? Instead of a full admission and apology, it digs itself into a hole making things worse. It is strange behaviour.

If you make a mistake just admit it, assure us it won’t happen again, say you’re sorry like reasonable adults and we can all move on. Trying to minimise mistakes is exactly what politicians do and yet this Council claims to be non-political.

Of course, nobody will take individual accountability for this. Is it the Chair of the Budgets & Governance Cttee, Cllr Newcombe? Will all future similar Council figures be checked? Their statement does not say, so it may happen again.

As we have said joint responsibility means no responsibility, and that means people are not accountable for their mistakes. This is an example of why we have little respect for this Council and are concerned that they are responsible for spending over £500,000 of our money every year.





**Wetherby St.
James Scout &
Guide Group**






Jigsaw Fair





Saturday 21st September

10am to 4pm in Wetherby Town Hall

Join us for the sale of new and pre-owned jigsaw puzzles for all ages and interests.

See one you want to buy - we’ll break it up for you, re box it for you to take away.


Also available for sale pre-owned children’s toys and books.



Visit the café for coffee or tea and refreshments

WFP Attracting Visitors to Wetherby

As mentioned on the front page, the Editor posted this promotion of our town (and DalesBus) on a Roundhay / Oakwood Facebook group page with 1000s of members.



Paul Kirby
Top contributor · a few seconds ago · 🌐

Couple of Ideas for Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday

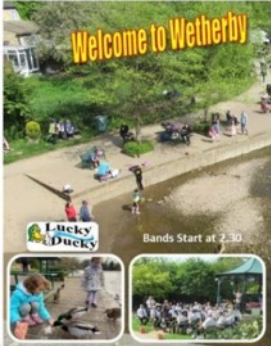
Buses from Oakwood Clock to Wetherby are at 9.20 and then hourly on both days. Service X98/X99. Duck food for £1.25 per bag available from Treasure Toys & Cancer Research shops.

DalesBus from Oakwood Clock towards Leeds is at 8.57 on both days . Service 874 runs directly to Ilkley, Bolton Abbey, Burnsall, Grassington, Kettlewell & Buckden. See www.DalesBus.org for details of whole network.

£2 single fares are a bargain.


Whatever You Do, Enjoy! 😊

Two Ideas for Sunday & Bank Hol Mon



Welcome to Wetherby

Lucky Ducks
Bands Start at 2.30



Trip to the Dales Dales Bus

www.dalesbus.org



Boston Spa, Wetherby & Villages Community Green Group

WILDING - A great movie

They say they have something exciting planned for the evening of Wed 23 October (from 19.30).

Join them at Wetherby Cinema for an exclusive showing of the film 'Wilding'.

Tickets cost £15 each. Limited amount.

Don't miss out. Book from the website.

Cleaning up our Rivers, Lakes & Seas – The Answers

This is a free event hosted by the Ilkley Clean River Group on Sunday 22nd September.

All details and September's newsletter are at

www.bostongreengroup.co.uk

Contact Adrian, Chair at : adrian.balcombe@bostongreengroup.co.uk

Boston Spa, Wetherby and Villages Community Green Group is non-politically affiliated and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Registered Charity Number 1204438).



Proposals For Two of Our Critics

cont'd from front page

Lion Steve Cooper and Ian Giddings are persistent critics of the Editor and *WFP* since we started. Their online comments have shown a good deal of animosity towards us since we started.

It's disappointing that they are willing to post unpleasant comments or reactions about a person they have never met. There have been 4 chances to attend a 'Meet the Editor' they have not taken up. Nor have they written to us with their views, which we would gladly publish. We would like to offer an olive branch to both these men to try and achieve some sort of sensible dialogue.

So here's what we propose to improve matters.

1 Write a regular column for the Free Press. Of course, it will be unedited and can include any criticism of the Free Press. Get things off your chest. It may be cathartic.



Freedom of speech is why the newsletter exists. We want to publish all views from the left, right or middle-ground if we're talking local politics.

The column could be called 'Cooper's Column' or 'Giddings Groans'; it's up to you, it's your space. You have strong opinions and they deserve to be on a longer-lasting medium than social media.

2 Please come and meet the Editor face-to-face. Let's have a civilised discussion. I'm sure you have lots of questions for me and I would like to know what your derogatory comments are based on. Perhaps you will discover your views are based on misinformation. You may find me to be a pretty decent bloke, who knows?

A local religious leader has agreed to mediate, if you feel uncomfortable for any reason.

You may feel better following such a meeting, as bearing so much animosity for a long time towards a community newsletter or a person cannot be good for you.

So come on guys, let's be mature about this. Let's meet up and talk directly, not on social media where it's too easy to go down the argumentative and uncompromising route.

Incidentally, the Editor is willing to meet anybody, especially those who believe they receive unfair criticism in *WFP*.



Wetherby Twinning Association - Delegation to Privas. In the last issue of *WFP* we noted that Cllr Norma Harrington travelled to the French town but there were no details about it minuted. It is quite natural for us to question whether any public funds were spent on this trip. There is no information on funding of the Association on the WTC website and the link to the Association's website does not work. *No surprise there's a duff link on WTC's poor website. When will the much-needed new one be in operation? It's been needed urgently for many years.*

In a post on social media Cllr Harrington said there was 'no cost to the Town Council' regarding her trip to Privas. *If Cllrs want to clarify matters like this, plse write to us - we don't follow everyone's social media.*



Privas Market

Labour Town Cllr Alex Riddell Answers Some Questions



WTC website says Cllr Riddell is a proud husband, lawyer and campaigner for environment and social justice. He plays football and cricket. He's a member of East Keswick Wildlife Trust. He grows his own veg and walks his dog.
He is a member of 2 committees - CIL & Markets. His attendance rate in 2023 was 60%, one of the lowest.

Cllr Riddell is one of our 4 newer, non-Conservative councillors, on **Wetherby Town Council (WTC)** who have now been in post over a year. That is enough time to settle in and make some difference in a council which clearly needs improvements in some areas.

We thanked Cllr Riddell for doing this vital work for the community and asked him 12 straight-forward, reasonable questions. Cllr Riddell did not answer the questions in the format we asked them.

This was a discourtesy we do not appreciate. We expect national politicians to avoid answering simple questions in the format they were asked, but a Town Councillor! Why? especially when the other two 'new' Councillors managed to answer the questions directly (whilst Cllr Billie Ager-Mills, committed a worse act of discourtesy by ignoring us completely).

Instead Cllr Riddell provided a long statement - please see *Wetherby Free Press* Facebook page of 19/20 Sept to read it. It's too long to include here.

His statement does not answer many of our questions.

1 Please tell us which party you are aligned to?

Cllr Riddell is Chair of the local Labour Party and says he is proud of it.

2 Why is this information not on the WTC website? NO ANSWER.

We pointed out in the last issue that Town Councils in Ilkley, Otley & Knaresborough do have the party affiliation clearly stated, so why does the Council of which he is a member, not have it?

3 Approx how many phone calls or emails from constituents do you receive or send every month on average? NO ANSWER

4 Please tell us roughly how many visits to constituents you make or receive every month? NO ANSWER

5 Approx how many hours do you spend on council duties per month on average? NO ANSWER

Questions 3 - 5 would be very useful for potential councillors to know the workload involved. *Cllr Lavocah admitted that she has little direct contact from residents and a light workload. In his statement he says fitting in his council work is sometimes a challenge. He is clearly very busy with home, work and other commitments and we wonder why he tells us this. Is he hinting that the council work is a low priority in a busy lifestyle? We are entitled to ask if he is totally committed to his duties in a Council that spends over £500K of our money every year, and when his attendance rate was so poor compared to others in 2023.*

6 Please tell us your areas of specific interest eg housing, transport and roads, planning, SME's, education, health, play areas, crime etc
He is interested in the Market, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding eg spending money off housing developers for community, Wetherby Foodbank, Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging.

7 Do you feel you have managed to achieve anything yet? If so, please provide details.

"I pushed for and helped produce the public consultation about the markets"

"arranged a sit-down between representatives of WTC & Wetherby Foodbank"

"I proposed that WTC submit applications to LCC and WYCA regarding EV charging"

8 What are the frustrations and joys of being a town councillor? *"Enjoy my stints in Cllr surgery". NO FRUSTRATIONS. It is disappointing that Cllr Riddell does not even hint at any frustrations he may have - there are bound to be some in any organisation with 20+ people, especially in a political council where he is in a minority of one. Wetherby Town Council is far from perfect as we have highlighted many times.*

9 Please tell us if you have any specific plans or objectives for improving Wetherby before you decide to leave the Council? *From his statement we cannot see any specific plans or objectives that Cllr Riddell has made for himself ie something that can be measured on a personal basis. Judge for yourselves, but he often uses the general term 'Council' instead of 'I'. It needn't be anything big, small tasks are often more important eg getting the TIC sign outside the town hall removed or replaced, see image. Cllr Lavocah described her plans clearly in Issue 65 (bike storage, launch new events, 'develop Wetherby Town' on social media other than Facebook).*



Misleading poor signage outside Town Hall for years

10 Do you feel there are any problems in the running of this council that the tax-paying voting residents should know about? **NO ANSWER**

11 Were you made to feel welcome from the Conservative councillors who have been on the council a long time? *"In general, ... Cllrs are generally welcoming". We note the word 'general' twice in one sentence. So we can safely assume there are at least one or two Councillors who aren't 'welcoming'. The public should know if this 'unwelcoming' attitude affects the business of the Council or if he has witnessed this attitude aimed at residents too.*

12 Please tell us anything else you would like to say about your role.

Like other Town Councillors, Cllr Riddell is keen to tell us that most public services are not within the remit of the Town Council. This is true but WTC spends over £500,000 of our money every year on public services and themselves.

Cllr Riddell is the only Labour councillor on the Council so is in a unique position to make his (and our) views known to the Labour-run Leeds City Council and Mayor. He mentions buses in his statement but we have seen no evidence of his raising local bus issues to Metro / WYCA eg no emails about bus blocking for example, or raising local bus issues at a WTC meeting. It was particularly disappointing that Cllr Riddell put forward a motion on the general issue of franchising (which was pointless anyway since being a political town council it was voted down) and not one about local bus issues eg no Saturday services to Otley and York. See previous WFPs for many further examples he could take up.

We thank Cllr Riddell for his time. If he wants to respond to our comments, we will publish them unedited in the next issue (please make them brief and to the point).

The Editor is always willing to meet with Cllr Riddell if he wishes to do so. We hope he will read our newsletter and in the near future take up one of the many issues we raise.

Wetherby Town Council - Who is on it & What they do



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

We thank the 15 Wetherby Town Councillors for being unpaid volunteers. Unlike most volunteers they have power and are responsible for spending over half a million pounds 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.

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 elected in Feb 24.

In July 2024 Councillors agreed to hide a basic 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 this decision? It proves they do not wish to be open or accountable, if they want to hide such a basic piece of information.

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

We note 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 (currently being appointed), a Communications & Events Officer (Helena Briden since 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, see page 9. Employment costs are over £150,000 a year. Work is also contracted out.

There are no images of Town Hall staff on their website wetherby.co.uk, unlike Otley Town Council's, and no easy-to-find diagram showing the line management structure. We find it strange that there are no official photos of the Town Clerk that we can find. She has been a senior and influential public figure in this town for many years, yet most residents will not know what she looks like. This does not fit well with being an open and accountable council.

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 in its current set-up.

Are we getting high standards and value from 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. Meetings should have clear actions and deadlines. Few do.

Where everyone is responsible, no one is really responsible.

Albert Bandura, Psychologist

Opportunity for any of our Town Cllrs to Say Anything to Residents

Unedited, max 400 words

Nothing Sent Yet

Minutes from Wetherby Town Council Meeting in August 2024

12 out of 15 Councillors attended. Cllrs Frame, Lavocah & Mulhall sent apologies. No residents were present. The Leeds City Cllr present was named (unlike in July meeting minutes). It was Cllr Penny Stables.

It was not stated who chaired this meeting. Was it the Mayor or the Town Clerk? *Why isn't the Chair clearly stated?*

The meeting lasted 1 hour 40 mins, about 40 minutes longer than the one in July.

U-Turn on Ban of Religious Banners

It is interesting to note that the names of those voting for and against were stated. This is unusual. There was a vote later in the same meeting on Electric Vehicle Charging, see below and how individual councillors voted was not stated.

Why the inconsistency? We think it is another example of not wanting to be fully open with the public or sub-standard minute-taking.

Communications Committee - Cllr Ager-Mills has resigned from this committee. No reason given. Conservative Cllr Dawn Payne replaces her. *Earlier this year in May we were informed that Cllr Ager-Mills resigned from the Markets Ctte & the Welcome to Wetherby Ctte.*



Electric Vehicle Charging - Cllr Riddell proposed that WTC should respond to a WYCA consultation and express an interest in the town being a leader of EV charging developments in the wider West Yorkshire region. It was agreed with 7 in favour, 4 against & 1 abstention with no names mentioned, unlike the banner proposal above.

More Council Business on next page

In June the Property Ctte outvoted Cllr O Byrne in banning religious banners on council property after they were put up without permission. In this full council meeting Cllr O Byrne proposed that they be allowed for 2 weeks a year, if they were for a collective religious organisation, like Churches Together. It was passed by 8 votes to 4. Cllrs Ager-Mills, Chapman, Riddell & Smith voted against.



Councillors Allow Banners like this one for 2 Weeks a Year on their Property

MP Alec Shelbrooke Supports Priti Patel for Leader then

Alec Shelbrooke has been our Conservative MP for over 14 years since May 2010.

In 2019 he won 58% of our vote beating Labour by over 17,000 votes. He was a Remainer.

In 2024 he won 39% of the vote in our new constituency of Wetherby & Easingwold by just under 5,000 votes

From Dec '19 to 21 June 2023 he has voted 640 times out of 817 (78%) In that time he has rebelled twice against the party whip. Source - www.publicwhip.org.uk/

Alec was a strong supporter of Liz Truss in the Leadership Battle. Prime Minister Truss promoted him to a ministerial MoD post in Sep '22, which he then quit / was sacked after 49 days, the same length of time his boss lasted in post.

Early 2024 Alec was awarded the one of the highest knighthood honours by Liz Truss. The Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) entitles him to be addressed as "Sir". He did not mention his honour on his social media but changed official images to say 'Sir Alec ...'

We do not call him "Sir" as he has shown no respect to a resident by ignoring him for 3 years.



Alec is Shadow Transport Minister and still does his NATO work

Space for Alec to Say Anything to Constituents

(Unedited, max 400 words)

Nothing received since we began 3 years ago

alec.shelbrooke.mp@parliament.uk



After losing the election to Keir Starmer's Labour, Alec supported Priti Patel in the leadership race to replace Rishi Sunak. In the first ballot she came last with 14 votes out of 118 cast (12%).

Alec is one of 121 Conservative MPs now in parliament to choose their new leader. He then switched his support to James Cleverly. This was 'exclusively' revealed by the Yorkshire Post in a Tweet just hours before the next ballot on 10 Sept. (Wow! What an exclusive! Seriously, to use that term on a matter of little importance shows the paper's decline).

Alec's favourite James Cleverly came third out of five candidates. Cleverly's number of votes stayed the same as the first round.

We will know the next Conservative Leader in early November.



James Cleverly

Has Alec backed a winner this time?

Welcome to September's Newsletter



The 46th Festival starts on

Friday 4 October and runs until

Saturday 12 October.

IT'S NEXT MONTH! - YIPPEE

Where did summer go and... where have all the tickets gone?



Well, not all BUT the summer has seen great ticket sales for the Festival which is now just weeks away!

Get them online or, if you'd prefer, there will be limited sales of physical tickets outside of Morrisons.

Big thank yous to all

of our volunteers for organising this and, of course, our local Sponsors who make all of this possible.

If you like wine, chat, reading, laughing, mountain climbing, dancing, local history, crafts, singing or just plain art then the Festival has something for you!

Don't forget, the Festival is run totally by volunteers, so if you'd like to help, please get in touch.

wetherbyfestival.co.uk/

Minutes of August Wetherby Town Council Mtg cont'd

Correspondence - "Vexatious Individuals". "It was AGREED that where a significant number of items are received from the same individual / organisation they will be reported to the council at each Full Council meeting. It was further AGREED that a generic e-mail account be set up so that responses to correspondence can be sent to vexatious individuals from the council as a corporate body and not from individuals."

The lack of reasoning clearly explaining why this action is necessary is frustrating. We think they want to take away individual Councillor responsibility for responding to issues. Why? They want to respond as a 'corporate body'. Seriously?! No one person wants to take responsibility for things in this Council. They can hide in the group.

They need to be very sure of their facts before referring to anybody as a 'vexatious individual'. To use a term like that is insulting and defamatory, if untrue. In a court of law, they would have to provide many examples of such behaviour. They should use 'exhibited vexatious behaviour, we believe'.

Why was there no vote on this action? Are all Councillors behind this action? This truly is a Council that allows full Council votes on certain things and not others. It seems to have total freedom to do whatever it wants, even if their actions are against the public interest. Surely there is just one or two Councillors who instigate such actions and those who disagree with them? We will probably never know.

In the list of payments for July / Aug we note £2400 of our money was spent on legal advice and representation for a member of staff. The public are not allowed to know whether this expense was justifiable and have no facts to judge whether we got value for money. Nor will we be told the outcome of this advice.

£150 was spent on printing the Annual Report. *Out of a budget of £500K this is a pathetic amount. There were NO reports printed for residents to take away and read. The council clearly do not want to make it easy for the many 1000s who are not online and excluded.*

Red Lion Red Paint Complaints! The Planning Committee received an anecdotal report that some members of the public have raised complaints about the use of red paint on the Red Lion Pub. *What could possibly be the reason for this? Surely not because many in this town are Conservative Blue!* 😊



Calling Artists in Wetherby - Showcase Your Talent & Express Yourselfes

The Editor is fortunate to be able to travel often in the UK and abroad, and is often amazed at the creativity and imagination he comes across. He see communities that encourage artists to brighten up their village, town or city.

How? By turning boring street furniture and any other available free space on walls, garages etc into something worth looking at. It makes an amazing difference and gives the place some character and a friendly welcoming feel.

You can see it in the UK here and there but rarely in Wetherby. The last piece of street art the Editor can remember in our town was the fantastic blue tit painted under the A1(M) bridge by the river, see image.

People want to express themselves so we ask artists of all types in Wetherby to please brighten up our town and make us smile.



Under the A1(M) by the river in 2022

Let's Cheer the Place Up



3 Dull Telecoms Boxes on York Road



Small Village near Berlin



Leeds

Goosemoor Nature Reserve, Cowthorpe

This is the Barn Owl chick, named *Lucky*, we featured on the front page of Issue 65. It has grown into this beautiful bird. Thanks to Robert E Fuller for this image - more at www.robertefuller.com. Check out the reserve's Facebook page too, they need volunteers!



Hartlepool Banner Disliked by Somebody

In the last WFP we showed this banner on the Services roundabout promoting



Before Issue 67 of WFP



After Issue 67 of WFP

hide the banner as much as they can.

HARTLEPOOL!
Quite bizarre it was allowed to be put up there and nobody noticing or caring for over a year. We asked why Wetherby doesn't have one - to tempt the 1000s of motorists who pass it every day to pop into town and spend some money. No response yet from those who could make it happen. As can be seen, a reader has taken it upon themselves to

Wetherby & Boston Spa Men's Forum 2024

18-Sep	John Gilleghan	Simply Slovenia
25-Sep	Peter Palmer	The Battle of Gettysburg
02-Oct	Roger Owen	Better Wetherby
09-Oct	Maggie Poppa	Famous Interviewees
16-Oct	Leslie Newnham	Women in Warfare
23-Oct	Malcolm Johnson	Childrens Favourites Part 2
30-Oct	Graham Read	Formula One Greatest Champions
06-Nov	Glennis Whyte	Goddards, York
13-Nov	Linda Richards	EDSA—Working in an SA Township
20-Nov	Brian Taylor	An Ongoing Migrant Crisis
27-Nov	Jane McKeown	Thanksgiving
04-Dec	The Chorus Crew	Sea Shanties Plus
11-Dec	John Clithero	The Story of Pantomime
18-Dec	Engine Shed	Christmas Lunch

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

NEWSWATCH

We are recording the number of **general** news items about Wetherby / Boston Spa & villages. And the no. of letters/ emails from residents about the area in the published paper, costing £2.10.

We do this in the hope they will wake up and take up some of our stories. Not so far - they are ignoring many 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 29 Aug

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

Amateur artist raises money for children abroad

Issue of 5 Sep

News Items - 3 Letters - 0

Para-olympics medal winner, new sports facilities, manhunt after crash

Issue of 12 Sep

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

Solar Panels at Services

The Wetherby News is not available in the library or on Leeds Libraries PressReader

Issue of 19 Sep

News Items - 0 Letters - 0

Sherburn is not Wetherby!

Town Hall Staff now write for it. Where are the real "journalists"?

Wetherby & Area Deserves Better

Wetherby Foodbank

September 2024 Foodbank Wish List

- ReadyBrek/Instant porridge
- Long-life puddings
- Tinned custard
- Hot chocolate
- Tinned soup
- Tinned spaghetti
- Tinned potatoes/instant mash
- Tinned sweetcorn
- Savoury spreads (meat & fish pastes)
- Peanut butter/jam
- Tea bags (small boxes please)
- Cooking oil (small bottles please)
- Sugar (small bags please)
- Savoury snacks (crisps, nuts etc)
- Chocolate bars/cake bars
- Washing up liquid/surface cleaner

Thank you!



United needed a boost after captain Liam Cooper's departure to Bulgaria. A home game against recent Premiership team Burnley was always going to be a tough game.

Joseph had an excellent opportunity to put Leeds ahead but he missed the target with a one-on-one with the goalie. There were other chances but Burnley put away one of theirs after a Leeds mistake gave them the ball. Leeds record so far is 2 draws, 2 defeats and just one win.



Utd should come with an Elf warning!

were no Liverpool or Man City shirts on display, just Man Utd, Leeds & Arsenal. It's possible they sold out of the more successful teams' shirts. Either way, it's interesting that a Championship side merits a display in a German shop.

Hollywood superstar Will Ferrell was at the game. He is a minority shareholder at the club having invested in May.

The Editor on holiday recently saw Leeds Utd shirts for sale in a sports store near Berlin. It was strange that there



More Popular than Man City?



To stand much chance of a play-off place, the Rhinos had to pull off a win against Wigan, like the one they managed a few weeks ago.

But a repeat of that magnificent 30 - 4 victory was never on the cards. A brilliant try got Wigan off to a great start and within minutes they scored a second. A third before half-time meant Leeds would need a colossal effort to get back into the game. Constant Wigan pressure gave them little chance and they came away without scoring a point. It ended 38 - 0.

Head Coach Brad Arthur

admitted that Wigan dominated his side and that the Rhinos have much to do in the pre-season.

Leeds still have a chance of sixth place and the play-offs if they beat Hull KR and Leigh lose to St Helens and Catalans lose to Hull.



Coach Brad Arthur, right, has much to do

Cardiff v **Utd** on Sat 21 Sep at 15.00
Utd v Coventry on Sat 28 Sep at 15.00
 Norwich v **Utd** on Tues 1 Oct at 19.45
 Sunderland v **Utd** on Fri 4 Oct at 20.00

All games on



Final Round of Super League

Hull KR (2nd) v Rhinos (7th) on Fri 20 Sep at 20.00



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"You're not a journalist" Correct, there are no journalists in Wetherby. We strive for the highest standards and the Editor has the enquiring mind of an investigative journalist. The question is why critics would prefer no news publication in Wetherby, except the two items a week max in Wetherby News.

"You're always criticising people but what do you do for the community?" Yes, we criticise people in authority and who spend our money or represent the town, and we clearly state the facts our views are based upon. The fact there is much to criticise is not our fault. The question is why our critics think that such criticism should not be published (when they have the opportunity to write in and put a different view, but don't take it). WFP is full of other non-critical news and information but that is ignored by critics.

As for what the Editor does for the community, he:

- * volunteers * campaigns for better buses * has raised £2500 for local charity so far * edits this newsletter * promotes the town to outsiders on Social Media * picks litter up *



In 2023 we Supported 25 Local Charities & Organisations

Send us your to WetherbyFreePress@PM.me

Your Community Newsletter Editor: *Paul Kirby*



Email: WetherbyFreePress@PM.me
 Tel: 07840 862861 Twitter/X: @wbyfreepress

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. People have died for our Freedom of Expression so never 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 4 'Meet the Editor' events so far. None of our harshest online critics have turned up yet to have a civilised face-to-face debate.

Please donate online at

www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press

to cover printing costs **Thank You**



There are people in this town who want to restrict free speech

- ◆ They do not want this community newsletter to exist
- ◆ We call them the *Wetherby Mafia*
- ◆ They contact our supporters and 'persuade' them to stop supporting us
- ◆ There has been a conspiracy of silence between the 2 parties so far
- ◆ The *Mafia* seem to have some influence in the town and use bribery, misinformation or fear on their victims
- ◆ They refuse to write to us and debate the issues they are upset about
- ◆ They refuse to meet the Editor face-to-face
- ◆ They are anonymous cowards and bring Wetherby into disrepute
- ◆ This is a small cliquy town and many must know who the *Mafia* are
- ◆ Inevitably the *Mafia* will be found out and legal action will be taken
- ◆ These sad individuals have failed - *Wetherby Free Press* gets stronger

If you know who they are, please do the right thing