



High School Daffs out on 10 Feb

ISSUE 39 until Fri 10 Mar '23



Not-for-profit Community Newsletter

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

80% Council Tax Rise by Wetherby Town Council: THE FACTS

	22/23	23/24	
Otley			
Personnel (Staff) Budget	£213K	£229K	+ 7.5%
% of Total Budget	39%	37%	- 2%
Wetherby			
Personnel (Staff) Budget	£161K	£305K	+ 90%
% of Total Budget	54%	56%	+ 2%
Total Budget	£300K	£540K	+80%

- ⇒ Otley to spend £76,000 less than Wetherby on staff
- ⇒ Otley does not need or want a 'Communications Manager'
- ⇒ Wetherby spends well over half their total budget on staff
- ⇒ Otley have always spent less than 40% of their total budget on staff
- ⇒ You won't find these % or comparison figures in the Council's 'Budget Bulletin' or the 'Wetherby' News
- ⇒ Otley is Lib-Dem Dominated, Wetherby is all-Conservative (a low tax party!?)

See page 5 for what Wetherby Town Council needs over half a million quid for.



TIME TO WAKE UP WETHERBY!
An 80% increase in these hard times?

Make your views known at next Council mtg - Tues 14 Mar at 7pm, Town Hall

Free Sticker for your Wheely Bin ..

Pick Up from our Displays

CLAIRE WIGGINS
 NOMINATED FOR
VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR 2023
Celebrating achievement in Yorkshire
www.yorkshirechoiceawards.co.uk/votehere
 YORKSHIRE CHOICE AWARDS

Claire Wiggins of Boston Spa has been nominated for "Volunteer of the Year" at the Yorkshire Choice Awards. She says she is honoured and wishes to thank everyone who took the trouble to put her forward for it. "It means such a lot to me", she says. This award is determined by a public vote. If you would like to vote for Claire, visit www.yorkshirechoiceawards.co.uk/

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Victor Hawkins

North Ward
E: victor.hawkins@wetherby.co.uk



As we constantly show, the Town Council don't give 2 hoots about the accuracy of their website. Cllr Hawkins resigned before Christmas. Or has he? See left, taken on 22 Feb.

Cllr Connor Mulhall (Conservative), right, has written to the Free Press only twice. The first time was before we started in Aug 2021; he said: "I wish you luck in the new venture". We sent him every one of the 38 editions so far and asked him for comment about issues he is directly involved with. No response until 14 Feb, one and a half years later. He says "I haven't read the attached edition and I will not make comment." So, he claims not to read the WFP. And gives no reason for not doing so, or for not making comment.



Make your views known at next Town Council meeting - Tues 14 March at 7pm in Town Hall

5 Weeks and Still No Mention of our Council Tax Increase in the so-called Wetherby News

Read At www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press



Place them in our Displays in Morrisons Café & Main Entrance.

To Online Readers with Printers:

Please Print a Copy (or 3) for our Many Fellow Residents who have No Access to the Internet.



thanks



Very Silly Jokes

What did the fish say when he swam into a wall? Dam Did you hear about the Italian chef who died? He pasta-way.

What do you call a can opener that doesn't work? A can't opener!

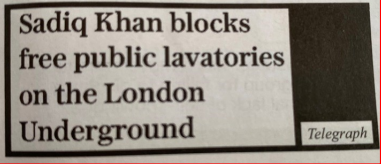
There are three types of people in the world: Those who can count and those who can't.

Top misuses of the word 'Happy'

- 1 Happy Valley 2 Happy Meal 3 Happy Christmas

Thanks to **PRIVATE EYE** for those in red

SEWAGE LATEST



The Royal Family @RoyalFamily · 12m
The new Coronation emblem has been unveiled!

The emblem will feature throughout the historic events in May, including street parties, community gatherings and on official merchandise.



The spelling mistake was faked but fooled many online

The Truth Will Always Win in the End 2 But It Needs Help Sometimes, Do Your Bit

TRANSPORT NEWS

Cost of Unleaded Correct on Fri 24 Feb to nearest penny

Shell £1.56 Morrisons £1.54

Sainsbury Harrogate £1.48

Diff b/w Shell & Sainsburys to fill av tank is £4.40



££ Single Bus Fare only £2 until 30 June 33



The gov't has extended this £2 fare for an extra 3 months so take a bargain trip to Whitby, Scarborough or the Dales

See the Spring Flowers in the Dales

Bus 874 Sundays
8.35 W'by Bus Station

£2 single fare
Free for Pass-holders

Leaflets from Library & Town Hall

Church Leader speaks up for Buses



The Bishop of Selby has spoken eloquently on local TV news about the importance of buses as a vital connection for people in rural areas who have no access to a car. *This is exactly what we need from the church - tackling real issues and speaking up for the often unheard and poorer in society.*

Rt Revd Dr John Thomson
 Bishop of Selby
 LOOK NORTH

We hope to hear more from our local Wetherby churches on important issues, like this one. These are very hard times for many. Speaking only to their congregation means they will remain irrelevant to the majority of people in our town and just be seen as part of the chumocracy and cliqueness to be found here. Plse write to us to get your message across.

Still No Meetings to Discuss Buses

with publicly-funded Transport Authority Metro / WYCA or the Mayor of West Yorkshire. They are the ones that Cllrs Richards, Lamb & Harrington can influence. Why haven't our councillors met these people yet when there are rumours of more cuts, like the 8 to K'boro?

Connexions Take on New Routes in Otley

..... but still cannot run a Saturday service on the 923 to Otley or the 412 to York. It has been over 4 months since Wetherby passengers were able to travel to the fine city of York at the weekend. We asked Craig Temple, MD of Connexions, about this. He said "simple logistics - Metro are paying us to operate them (Otley services) - they carry hundreds of customers who would otherwise have been left with no service!". No mention of bus driver shortages. Looks like Otley passengers benefit while Wetherby's suffer. Many of us who work in the week would love a day out in York on a Saturday. Especially when it's only £4 return at the moment.



Can run buses to racecourse and for new contract in Otley but not on 2 of their services on Saturdays from Wetherby

We asked for a comment about this from Cllrs Lamb & Harrington. Cllr Lamb said "I don't wish to make any comments for your publication". Cllr Harrington gave no response.

New Timetable for 923 to Otley

from 19 Feb. Same frequency, just different times.

923 Otley - Harewood - East Keswick- Wetherby

Monday to Friday

Otley Bus Station	1110	1635	1805
Garnett Wharfe	1113
Pool Main Street	1116	1640	1810
Arthington	1120	1644	1814
Harewood Arms	1127	1651	1821
East Keswick Main Street	1134	1658	...
Collingham Main Street	1141	1705	1827
Wetherby Bus Station	1147	1711	1833

Wetherby Bus Station	0705	0930	1150	1400
Collingham Main Street	0710	0936	1156	1406
East Keswick Main Street	...	0943	1203	1413
Harewood Arms	0716	0949	1209	1419
Arthington	0723	0956	1216	1426
Pool Main Street	0727	1000	1220	1430
Garnett Wharfe	1223	...
Otley Bus station	0732	1005	1225	1435

923 timetables are not available from the library. The 412 timetable that is in the library is incorrect - it says there is a Saturday service. 😞

Nothing improves without people making 3 their voice heard - just one email could help

Progress Report

Let's Get Things Moving



PROGRESS MADE. Following our suggestion that emails sent by the Town Council should not be titled 'Plse see attached' but include details of the subject matter to give us a clue what they are about, they are now doing so. Let's hope other basic improvements will follow eg No 3 below

Topic	People Responsible		Progress
<p>1 Sign on the A1(M) to Attract Customers to our Businesses</p> <p>Date first raised: Apr 2022</p>	<p>Town Councillors & Leeds City Councillors</p> <p>(Cllr Lamb called it a 'good idea, well worth pursuing')</p>		<p>NONE reported</p>
<p>2 Constant Blocking of Wetherby Bus Station Exit by Vehicles</p> <p>Date first raised: Nov 2021</p>	<p>Leeds City Council Highways Dept</p> <p>3 Wetherby Ward Leeds City Councillors</p>		<p>NONE</p>
<p>3 User-unfriendly, unattractive, incomplete, out-of-date website of Wetherby Town Council / Welcome to Wetherby www.wetherby.co.uk</p> <p>Date first raised: May 2022</p>	<p>Wetherby Town Clerk</p> <p>15 Conservative Wetherby Town Councillors</p>		<p>NONE</p> <p>Except one new group photo, which was low quality and excluded a quarter of the Town Council</p>
<p>4 Make Empty Shops Look Better (and occupied ones too!)</p> <p>Date first raised: July 2022</p>	<p>Shop Owners & Leasers</p> <p>Also Property Agents, Wetherby Town Council, Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd & Wetherby Business Association</p>		<p>NONE</p>



Wildlife of Wetherby



Thanks to Phill Andrews

The Glorious Goldcrest

A rare visitor to the Editor's garden, it's always a delight to see this feathered friend.

It's the smallest UK bird, along with the firecrest. Their thin beak is ideally suited for picking insects out from between pine needles. Seen all year round, it takes more than 2,000 goldcrests to weigh the same as the UK's heaviest wild bird, the mute swan.



A Wolf in Warrington

Real or Not? Answer in future issue



80% Total Increase in Our Wetherby Part of Council Tax



Or 78% rise if you're in Band D. We paid £60 in 2022/23 and will pay £106 in 2023/24, an increase of £47 (figures rounded)

We asked Leeds City Council if residents can do anything to stop this outrageous rise (mostly in staff costs) by our Conservative councillors. They basically said there isn't. A referendum can take place if there's an increase of 5% or more but this does not apply to town and parish councils 'although the Government has stated that it would review this situation on an annual basis'. No good for us currently then.

Comments on Social Media, like Wetherby Grumbler & Nextdoor, included:

"Is there an 'online' petition so we can voice our opposition to these budget proposals? I don't take lightly getting involved on social media, but I think these budget proposals are an absolute disgrace. Staffing costs I pickup up are for a 'Facility' manager - why??? The Town Council should be reflecting the extreme financial times, not behaving as though we are in a growth period."

"Wetherby Town Council are a disgrace." "It needs someone new and fresh to give it a boot up the backside."

We asked in the last issue if anyone was prepared to defend this increase and received no response.



So why does our Small Town need to spend £300,000 on Staff?

What do they do? According to their website (which has no 'updated on ...' so is probably well out-of-date), they say:

"The Town Council is consulted on many issues affecting the town including roads and planning applications. The Town Council provides several areas of recreational land and play areas in Wetherby. The main sites are at Scaur Bank, Sandringham Road, Mason Field, off Quarry Hill Lane and at Nidd Approach. The Town Council also operates the cemetery on Hallfield Lane.

The Town Council is also the Trustee of Wetherby Town Hall, a registered charity. The Town Hall is located in the Market Place and dates back to 1845. It houses the Town Council office and has rooms hired out for a variety of charity events, community use and craft and antique fairs.

The Town Council also operates an Open Market around the Town Hall every Thursday and a Farmer's Market on the second Sunday of every month. Both markets are run under licence from Leeds City Council."



So to summarise, they are responsible for a few properties and playing fields, a cemetery, the Town Hall and the market, plus planning applications and being consulted on highway issues. We will add that they administrate all committees and matters concerning our 15 Town Councillors (quite a large part of their job!). Another role not mentioned is to attract Wetherby people to live and set up business here.

This is not a large list of tasks

We believe it in no way justifies the large number of staff they want:

- ** In Post: Facilities Manager, Burials Manager, Town Clerk & Deputy Clerk ****
- + Admin Officer, Finance Officer, Markets Assistant & Maintenance Person**
- ** They want an Operations Manager & Communications Manager too ****

Much of the extra money is being spent on a Communications Manager. We think this person's remit will be to make the Council look good ie PR spin, which is not in the interests of taxpayers. The Council is quite happy to accept low standards. As we said in the last issue, they will no doubt produce a newsletter which will contain no hint of criticism of anybody, except perhaps their critics. The 20 odd councillors & staff should be able to manage all publicity matters themselves, like Otley does.

Sadly, the Council's Welcome to Wetherby committee has shown little imagination (£1000 on mugs that few bought) or competence to promote our great town. We do not think that our councillors (all the same party) are capable of thinking outside the box. Just look at the A1 sign that could bring £millions of business into town - no progress. Look at the website. Look at our leaflets. And compare them with another town, like Otley.

Points to Ponder



At the end of the day, it all comes down to trust. Do you trust the Town Council and Councillors to spend this large amount of money wisely and in everyone's interests? Take a look at past issues of this newsletter and make your own mind up. Ask yourselves why Council staff and Councillors (Conservative) choose to ignore simple questions and why little or no progress has been made on so many issues.

Whichever decision you come to, be sure to vote on Election Day in May

Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd Respond to 'Criticism on Social Media' In their latest newsletter, they continue to ignore us and our article in Issue 37 on page 6. But they did want to inform those on their mailing list about themselves in a heading: ABOUT BETTER WETHERBY (BW) – WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO "Just who are Better Wetherby?"

We were a little surprised to see no mention at all of their two (out of four) directors of the limited company, Councillors Lamb & Harrington. Why such an omission? No mention either of the organisations that support them currently, just a link to those who were involved at the inception of BWPL.

Independent Shop Owner Not Happy with Council's Coronation Plans

A local business owner has contacted the Free Press and expressed their dissatisfaction at the Town Council's plans for the King's Coronation on Saturday 6 May. The Council have invited a food vendor to sell a product in the market place that many of our local small businesses already sell. Our correspondent says that this mobile vendor is not in keeping with the true essence of an Artisan market and produces a much inferior product to Wetherby's.

The business owner also points out that:

- ◆ this product is sold by 3 shops close to the market place
- ◆ these mobile sellers can have poor hygiene practices and handwashing facilities
- ◆ don't help local jobs
- ◆ don't improve the general street scene of the town
- ◆ don't have extortionate rents to pay
- ◆ don't improve footfall in local shops

The owner asks a simple question: "Why does Wetherby Town Council, in particular the Market Committee members, go out of their way to create real conflicts of interest to local bricks and mortar businesses that not only employ people but bring value to the high street scene of this lovely town?"

The business person does not mince their words about the Town Council's Markets Committee. They say it is a committee who have little idea about what it takes to run a business. They are dismayed by the superior attitude of the Committee, who seem not to be accountable to anybody.

Wetherby Business Association (WBA) sent an email about the market in general to the Council recently. It said:

"From speaking to many of the businesses in Wetherby, the market can be seen as negative, as it takes business away from the local shops rather than bringing in extra revenue so I would really want to see how or if there was a way to integrate local businesses into the market or ensure there wasn't any conflict of interest with the shops in Wetherby.

We think the WBA should support the many local businesses the Council's actions affect. Putting out-of-town businesses with inferior products before our own seems absurd. After months of delay Jamie Hullah of the WBA is going to meet with the Town Council / Welcome to Wetherby / Markets Committee. Let's hope they put a strong case on this and many other business issues the WFP have highlighted.



Food & Drink that are already well catered for by local businesses

Elderly Caring & Domestic Help

15 years Experience



NVQ Level 2 Qualification

References

available

Call Kerry on 07876 525 589

The Wharfe - Local Group Part of a National Campaign

As sewage hits the headlines once again, community groups across the UK, like Boston Spa, Wetherby & Villages Community Green Group & Ilkley Clean River Group are demanding action.

Penny Stables says that the public is outraged by the lack of action by water companies, regulators and government to clean up our polluted rivers and seas. She says "They have turned our rivers into open sewers, and our seas into places unfit for wildlife and people. Despite public outcry, these agencies are watering down their action on pollution".

Water quality campaign groups - frustrated that the public who pay for both the water companies and



Straight Talk about the Wharfe

regulation continue to be ignored - have joined forces with a declaration.

Becky Maltby of Ilkley Clean River Group adds "Horrified at the sewage pollution of all of our rivers, and many of our coasts, we have organised into hundreds of local campaign groups, testing our waters, petitioning, lobbying, persuading and protesting. Meanwhile our representatives water down existing regulation and allow our rivers to be used as open sewers. It's time our representatives get behind public opinion and outrage."

We agree. All campaign groups should pressurise MPs and councillors into action. The time for pussy-footing around is over; direct, effective action is needed.

Public Declaration for Rivers and Seas

Our rivers and seas are open sewers.

We care deeply about our rivers and seas.

Water companies must comply with, and regulators must regulate according to the 1991 Water Industry Act and the 1994 Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations which require all sewage to be treated, and for storm overflows (which discharge raw sewage) to only operate in truly exceptional circumstances.

Our Declaration

Our rivers and seas should be protected for nature, for ourselves and for future generations.

This is our declaration:

- Stop pollution for profit.
- Make our waters healthy and safe again.
- Action now not targets sometime.
- Regulation that protects the victims, not the polluters.
- Now it's time for the polluters to pay

Wetherby Craft Market
at
Wetherby Town Hall
Saturday 25th February
10am-4pm
Over 20 Stalls
&
Pop-Up Café



Those who deceive to hide their **6** weaknesses will always be found out

Local Democracy Page - Our MP & Councillors

Alec Shelbrooke has been our Conservative MP for 13 years since May 2010.

In the last election in 2019 he won 58% of our vote beating Labour by over 17,000 votes. He was a Remainer. From Dec '19 to May '22 he has voted 467 times out of 560 (83%) and has rebelled once against the party whip (Mar '22). He refused to inform his constituents whether or not he supported Boris Johnson in the No-Confidence Vote. He was a strong supporter of Liz Truss in the Leadership Battle. She promoted him to an MoD Ministerial post in Sep '22, which he then quit / was sacked within 2 months.



Very Old Photo Alec still uses

Space for Alec

Unedited (max 400 words)

Nothing received

After a £2,000 increase last year, MPs are getting a £2,500 increase this year
Their basic salary from 1 April will be £86,500

alec.shelbrooke.mp@parliament.uk



We are non-political, unlike the Editor of the Yorkshire Post, James Mitchinson



Alec Shelbrooke voted with the government, left. We would appreciate an explanation from him or any of our 16 local councillors in his party, particularly with regard to the River Wharfe.

Interesting to note that Alec puts 'former Defence Minister' on his Twitter profile - a post he held for just a few weeks.

Alec's recent Twitter feed is dominated by visits to London & Scotland on NATO business. Nothing about Wetherby for at least a month (26 Jan to 24 Feb).



Cllr Linda Richards

Cllr Alan Lamb

Cllr Norma Harrington

Space for Cllrs Richards, Lamb & Harrington & other Wetherby Town Cllrs (Conservatives)

Unedited (max 400 words)

Nothing received

Email them at linda.richards alan.lamb norma.harrington @leeds.gov.uk

Elections This May - Consider Becoming a City (paid) or Town (unpaid) Councillor

These elections take place on Thurs 4 May

Cllr Linda Richards (Conservative) 4-year term of office as a Leeds City Councillor ends. This responsible post comes with an allowance of around £17,000. Expenses are paid, as well as extra payments for extra committee responsibilities. For the Town council it is an 'all-out election' where anybody can stand. If you want to stand as a councillor, contact your preferred party, ask the Town / City Council staff for information or visit

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/candidate-or-agent/local-elections-england

Potential candidates can learn more about the process in a briefing session looking specifically at the candidate nomination process. It will take place on

Wed 1 March, 5.30pm – 6.30pm on Microsoft Teams

You do not need to book a space on the briefing, and can access it by clicking on a link, which Susanna Benton of Leeds City Council can send you. She can be contacted at 0113 378 4771 or susanna.benton@leeds.gov.uk



Thousands of Readers, Some From 7 Abroad (ex-pats) - Thank You



After the 2 - 0 defeat to Manchester United at Elland Road, Leeds needed a decent performance against fellow-strugglers Everton. But the manager-less team came away pointless from Goodison Park and dropped into the relegation zone. The appointment of



new manager Javi Gracia, right, came out of the blue. He is a Spaniard who got Watford to the FA Cup Final in 2019 but was sacked after a poor start to the following season. He needs to make his mark very quickly; next comes a dog-fight with bottom-of-the-table Southampton.

Utd v Southampton on Sat 25 Feb at 15.00

Fulham v Utd on Tues 28 Feb at 19.45 FA Cup **BIG ONE**

Chelsea v Utd on Sat 4 Mar at 15.00



The Rhinos kicked off the new Super League season with a dreadful display at Warrington. In front of Sky Sport's cameras they were completely out-played by a strong pack of Wolves. The Editor paid his £26 on the gate and watched a dispiriting spectacle. Thankfully, Leeds managed to

score 2 tries and salvage a modicum of dignity before the end.

Considering it was the first game of the season and we are well into the 21st century, the stadium facilities were not very impressive. And to charge double the 'Spoons price for a pint seems counter-



productive (fans will take their own cans in). The Jimmy Savile chants from the Wire fans were unnecessary, possibly arising from occasions, like the Wembley final in Aug 2012 against Warrington, image left. Rugby League fans have long memories!



On Friday night (24 Feb) the Rhinos played Hull FC at

Headingley, again live on Sky. A much better performance and a close match but too many schoolboy errors. Leeds lost a 2 point lead with 10 minutes to go and lost 22 - 18.

Adverts **50%** of *On Your Doorstep* rates:

1/8 page (size A) - £25 or £80 for 4 issues

1/4 page (size B/C) - £40 or £130 for 4 issues

1/2 page (size D) - £60 or £200 for 4

Sponsorship on front page - £25

We can design your ad FOR FREE
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Next Issue 40 - Fri 10 Mar



News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

Editor: **Paul Kirby**

Email: WetherbyFreePress@PM.me

Twitter: [@wbyfreepress](https://twitter.com/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 quote directly to avoid any misunderstandings. We don't do interviews.

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. You, nor ourselves, can be sued for libel as long as what is published is:

True or Honest Opinion or in the Public Interest

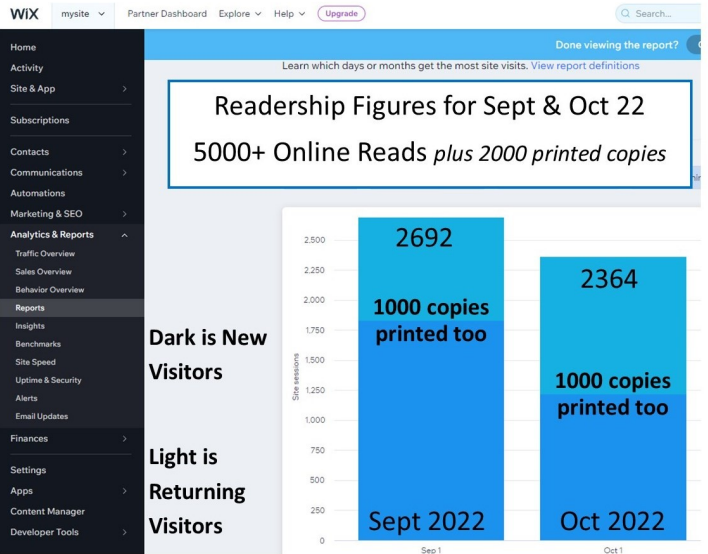
Unjustifiable threats of legal action is bullying behaviour and will not be tolerated.

Please donate

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Thank You

The British Library at Boston Spa keep copies in their catalogue. The WFP lives forever!



They are surprisingly good figures. The main reason was our exclusive on Wetherspoons buying Sant Angelo. If you don't believe the figures, we can send you a printscreen image.

In 2022 we Supported

25

Local Organisations & Charities

Send us your

to WetherbyFreePress@PM.me



Let's Make Wetherby Better Together in 2023