



Lamborghini



We Are
So Cool



WETHERBY

ISSUE 80 until 9 July 2025

Free Press

Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

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



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& 350+ promo copies at *Morrisons, Pubs, Cafés, Dentists, Care Homes, Churches, Hairdressers, Shops*

Free! New Stickers



Pick up these free stickers at our displays in *Morrisons*.

They are for your own property only eg wheely bins, windows, cars etc. Please do not stick them on any public or private property.

But we think it is perfectly acceptable to put them on fly-posters advertising out-of-town events, like circuses etc. The Town Council seem to have no problem with fly-posting (nothing in meeting minutes about it) but we think it does not give a good impression of the town.

Putting our stickers on them may deter fly-posters.



This Newsletter is FREE but one person thinks it is poor value!

We offer him a full refund, if he would like to meet up for coffee & explain how we can improve.



see page10

Fly-posting is now a common sight



Wetherby News Use Editor's Photo - Cheeky Beggars!

Better late than never, the *Wetherby News* covered the change in X98/99 operator to take place on 31 Aug. We believe the headline was irresponsible, putting fear into passengers for no reason. For a route to be cut completely with no replacement has not happened before in West Yorkshire. *First Bus* quit the contract 2.5 years ago and there was no such hysteria.

There was no new information in the *Wetherby News* report. We provide much more



- Irresponsible Headline
 - Old News - 4 weeks late
 - The Only Story about W'by, Boston Spa & Villages
 - Used Editor's photo without permission or acknowledgement
- Can this 'newspaper' get any worse?*

in the *Wetherby Free Press*, see page 3.

And the cheeky blighters used one of our photos.

This is why we need citizen journalists.

One person has written a defence of the paper, though not of this edition we note. See page 10 for more details.

Our post on social media

LATEST NEWS

Labour Town Councillor, Alex Riddell, has started posting about specific bus issues relating to the X98/99 service for the first time. Metro / WYCA and the Labour Mayor have had a 'good response to their replacement service tender from a number of tenderers.' He says this is 'tentatively good news'.

Thus proving there was no need for the Wetherby News fear-inducing headline.

New Walk Leaflet

Wetherby in Bloom have produced an update of their wonderful walk leaflet.

You can find copies in the library, cafes, pubs and several shops. It is perfect for visitors (and their map includes the bus station, unlike the Council's. More about *Wetherby in Bloom* on page 4. Page 11 shows the *Free Press* also doing good things to promote the town.

Wetherby In Bloom

A Floral Walk
Around Wetherby
2025



This walk should
take around an hour

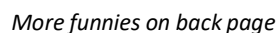
Wetherby In Bloom
Winners of:


Britain In Bloom, Entente Florale
& International Communities
in Bloom

Registered Charity No 1094260

Join our Large Mailing List for New Issue Reminder

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



As well as the *Wetherby Free Press* page on  there's the *Wetherby Deserves Better* page too.
Both are independently run from the newsletter.



If you go, why not tell us your views on it?



It was posted on social media to celebrate 15,000 bags of duck food sold in 5 years.

Full story on page 11



There will be two of the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team present:
Maria Wheeler & Vicky Johnson

 **Some examples of anti-social behaviour:**



Thank You for Your Support - The Many Good People in the Wetherby Area Keep Us Going

The Decline of a Luxury Bus Service

After 2 and a half years *Transdev (Harrogate Bus Company)* are giving up the X98/99 Wetherby to Leeds route.

Transdev have attracted many car owners onto their luxury buses with their prestigious, ground-breaking 36 Ripon - Harrogate - Leeds service. They tried it here and it has failed. We think if it can't work in Wetherby, it can't work anywhere. The town is in a particularly wealthy area of Yorkshire, the 'Golden Triangle' of Harrogate, York & Leeds. The X98/99 route goes through many villages on its way into Leeds. There are many similarities to the 36 route and both buses run through a wealthy part and then a deprived area in Leeds itself. But once old, unreliable single-deckers were introduced by *Transdev*, the route was doomed to failure. The new passengers attracted by the high-quality buses would be lost.

The Decline of X98/99 Wetherby to Leeds Bus Service

Up to Oct 22 - *First Bus Company* (formerly *Yorkshire Rider*) ran the service with double-deckers, half hourly daytime, hourly evenings and Sundays. Oct 22 - *Transdev (Harrogate Bus Company)* took it over with high-spec, luxury Sky Class double-deckers. *Transdev* said route is 'ripe for further improvement' - Issue 29 *Wetherby Free Press (WFP)*.

Improvements: Printed Literature with route map * Better buses * Friendlier drivers

Disadvantages: No Metro newspaper * Withdrew 23.10 from Wetherby to Leeds * Ended Limited Stop in Leeds, lengthening journey times (they did not remove the misleading 'X') * No longer benefit from *First*'s cheaper tickets eg group tickets at weekends.



Transdev's 36
Harrogate to Leeds

Every 10
minutes

Mar 24 - We are told Sky Class double-deckers will be phased out due to vandalism. Hard to believe on such a rural route. Bad behaviour rarely witnessed by us. If it was school children, why not say so? Sky Class buses moving to Burnley! - Issue 59 *WFP*.

Told we can expect refurbished double-deckers from the 36 route, which later changed to new electric buses. Neither materialise. Within months there is a mix of old single and double-deckers, and the final Sky Class bus disappears.

Jun 24 - Reports of growing dissatisfaction with breakdowns and no-shows. Issue 62 *WFP*.

Aug 24 - Buses will be renewed 'towards the end of the year' (they weren't). Issue 66 *WFP*.

Rest of 2024 to May 25 - No information at all released by *Transdev* about replacement of old buses.

May 25 - *Transdev* announce end of their running X98/99 on 30 Aug 25 in letter to Councillors - Issue 79 *WFP*.

Notes: *Transdev*'s customer service declined after the departure of Alex Hornby. They did not respond to our articles or the majority of our questions. Their drivers were often the only source of info.

X98/99 evening and Sunday services have always been subsidised by *Metro / WYCA (Mayor of West Yorkshire)*.

The 36 is every 10 minutes and *Transdev* could not make the X98/99 pay when it is every 30 minutes.

We heard that the problem was that nobody (*WYCA/Metro* or the government) would pay for the electrical infrastructure needed to run electric buses on this route.

Who Knew ? Only £2 to K'boro

Why are most bus companies so poor at marketing their services? Most people would expect this journey to be £3, the maximum single fare. No, it's a reasonable £2. Nothing on the timetable, on the bus or anywhere to promote this. This is an 'at risk' rural service so needs all the help it can get. Please use it. The drivers are very friendly. Yes, this bus company is based in Goole.

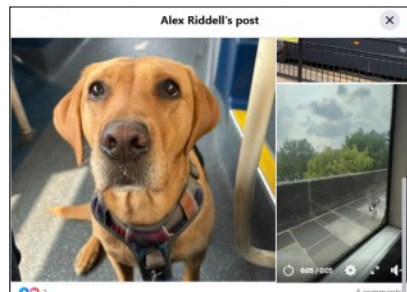


Luxury on the 36 we are unlikely to
see again on the X98/99 route

TRANSPORT NEWS

Labour Town Councillor, Alex Riddell has taken a large interest in the X98/99 service. He has produced a survey to find out what people think. Unfortunately, the large number of people who are not online (or members of social media groups) ie probably most passengers, cannot take part. We asked him to put paper copies in the library and town hall and got no response.

The survey results will therefore be invalid and can be ignored by decision-makers. However, one benefit is that he can use people's experiences from his final survey question as evidence of how important the service is.



We hope Alex will send us the results and the outcome of this survey. If he wants help with any future (bus) surveys, the Editor has 30 year's experience of them (including a national bus survey that received national publicity) and will willingly provide advice.

We note Alex has not posted anything about the serious decline of the service previously, particularly surprising since he lives in the village where most of the frustration and dissatisfaction has been - East Keswick (see reader's view on page 6). We have never seen him on the X98/99 so doubt if he is a regular passenger (nor we suspect is any Town Councillor). We therefore wonder if there are political reasons (with a Labour Mayor now involved) behind his sudden interest. To remove any doubt, we hope he will take up a couple of the specific bus issues that we raise, like bus blocking no Saturday services to Otley or York No Wharfedale network map on display at the bus station no printed timetables for the 174 to Garforth & Wakefield at library or Leeds Bus Station, or the 8 to Knaresborough ... Perhaps he will comment too on WYCA/Metro being the UK's worst LTA.

Who Knew II? Only £2.50 to Harrogate

A couple of weeks after discovering the reasonable fare to Knaresborough (see previous page), the Editor caught the Connexions X70 to Harrogate.

He expected to pay the £3 fare, which is charged by Transdev. No, it is £2.50. A nice surprise but why does the company not promote it?

They are competing with Transdev's 7 which are new electric buses with USB ports etc. Connexions main selling point is a cheaper fare. Again, nothing on the timetable or on the bus itself to promote this. We will have little sympathy if the service declines or is withdrawn altogether and the company blames lack of passengers.



Council Withdraw from Yorkshire in Bloom 'Golden Rose' Awards

The 'Golden Rose' competition organised by *Yorkshire in Bloom* only began in 2024. Their website is not formatted very well and it's not clear who exactly is behind this charity. The address is yorkshireinbloom.co.uk. See 2024 results, right. The judges give feedback on areas for possible improvement.

The 13 May minutes of Wetherby Town Council's Welcome to Wetherby committee state:

"A representative of *Wetherby in Bloom* commented on improvements to Wetherby they would like to see implemented, such as more regular bin collection, riverside clean-up, and the cleaning of store fronts, prior to participation in the *Yorkshire in Bloom Golden Rose Awards*.

It was NOTED that bin collections are the responsibility of *Leeds City Council*, and that other works were underway but may not be implemented before the attendance of the 2025 *Golden Rose Award's* mystery visitor.

Following a discussion, the committee requested to withdraw the application to the 2025 *Golden Rose Awards*, with the intention to apply in following years".

Wetherby in Bloom (WinB) have commented:

"The competition instigated by *Yorkshire in Bloom* rates towns on their attraction to visitors and an entry was sent by *Wetherby Town Council (Welcome to Wetherby)*. Various criteria are given including floral attraction, condition of street furniture, public buildings and car parks, absence of weeds and general cleanliness, parks and playgrounds. All these things are assessed by a mystery visitor. As *Wetherby in Bloom* would be doing all their normal work together with the *Council's* contractor, one aspect could be taken care of.

Yorkshire Rose award for Town/Parish Councils		2024
Darley	5 Roses	
Easingwold	5 Roses	North Yorks Winner
Flaxby	4 Roses	
Goldsborough	5 Roses	
Malton	5 Roses	
Driffield	5 Roses	East Yorks Winner
Muston Parish Council with Muston in Bloom	5 Roses	
Harthill & Woodhall	5 Roses	South Yorks Winner
Micklethwaite	5 Roses	West Yorks Winner

A representative of *Wetherby in Bloom* attended a *Welcome to Wetherby* meeting to enquire what efforts had been undertaken to address all the other areas of scrutiny. It became clear that they had not understood the full implication of the entry. The *Council* decided it was not feasible to enter this year but all criteria should be looked at with the possibility of entering next year."

It is a great shame that Welcome to Wetherby and its Chair Cllr Dean Buckle could not have organised the necessary work to enter the competition this year. We have been showing for over 3 years how this committee has not just let the town down, but organisations like Wetherby in Bloom who put in a great deal of time and effort to make the town so attractive to residents and visitors.

We write to Cllr Dean Buckle after every issue but he has never responded. He clearly doesn't feel he has to answer to us for anything he or his committee do. We're not sure if he reads his emails, or even uses email!





Don't Knock Our Favourites

In the last issue we criticised the woke *BBC* for turning Radio 2 into a dull station, and *Boom Radio* has boomed as a result.



Still has its fans

A fan of the presenters we called banal has written and spoken up for them. She says Zoe Ball is "enthusiastic, cheerful and humorous, as is Sarah Cox." She thinks that radio stations cater for certain groups in society and that it depends what you like on what stations you listen to. However, she adds her partner reckons R2 has 'lost its sparkle'.



Effective Campaigning for the Wharfe - Ilkley Clean River Group

Congratulations to Prof Becky Malby who has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the recent honours list. She is the founder of, and main spokesperson for, the *Ilkley Clean River Group*. It is for her services to National River Cleanliness and to the community in Ilkley.

As the beneficiaries of her tireless and effective work on getting Yorkshire Water to clean up the Wharfe, we in Wetherby should be very grateful to this lady.

By coincidence, her Group featured in a recent *Private Eye* (Issue 1650), see below. Ilkley CRG produced a 68-page report to show that for every £100 Yorkshire Water has spent on doing their job, another £85 has gone to pay interest on debt and dividends. Compare this with publicly-owned *Scottish Water* where the financial overhead is only £12 per £100.

Prof Malby says that this has to stop and that customers have been exploited, whilst companies are under investigation for illegal pollution. *Yorkshire Water* dispute the contents of the report.



We have the utmost respect for real community champions like Prof Malby. Her no-nonsense approach makes people like Chief Executive of *Yorkshire Water*, Nicola Shaw accountable for her performance and actions. Prof Malby has also achieved £millions of investment for the Wharfe in Ilkley. She has responded to all our emails for information over the years and is often seen on TV promoting the cause.

We have criticised the Wetherby & Villages Clean River Group (WVCRG) in many past issues for following a very different path to the Ilkley Group. Their sole focus has been to achieve Bathing Water Status and nothing else, as far as we can see. There are over 600 sites in the UK so that is not a unique achievement. All it means is that water quality will be monitored.

Former Leeds City Councillor Linda Richards of Bramham set up the *Wetherby Clean River Group*. We asked her to:

- * comment on the report by *Ilkley CRG*
- * confirm whether she will be promoting this specific piece of work on social media and website

Mrs Richards replied that we have "mistaken the situation regarding the involvement of the *WVCRG* in the issue of improving the water quality of the Wharfe" and offered to meet up to explain.



Article featuring Ilkley CRG in Issue 1650 of *Private Eye*

Knaresborough doesn't have a Clean River Group - it has a Nidd Action Group. And gets on local TV.



We declined to meet for reasons explained on the back page of every single edition of the *Free Press*. The Editor met her colleagues Cllr Lamb & Cllr Harrington recently and it was not possible to write anything down if you want a normal conversation, as described in Issue 78. We are a publication of the written word. We cannot understand why most local politicians are unwilling to put anything in writing (or perhaps the reason is obvious).

The Editor offered to meet Mrs Richards for a 15-minute get-to-know-you chat, if she wanted that. She has not responded.

We wondered if Mrs Richards was a member of the only other nature/ wildlife group in the area - the *Boston Spa, Wetherby & Villages Community Green Group*. We were told she attended one of the first meetings 5 years ago when it was set up but has had no involvement since.

In the next Issue, we will print anything Mrs Richards sends us unedited

Let's Brighten Up Wetherby for Residents & Visitors

Our campaign to brighten up Wetherby continues. We would love our town representatives, organisation leaders and resident artists to express their creativity and imagination. None have emerged yet but we live in hope.

We encourage them to come forward and make our environment more attractive and interesting. We haven't seen any street art on our dull street furniture, like traffic light boxes, cable boxes or any walls.

Nor have we seen anything to make our many unattractive empty shop fronts look better.



York

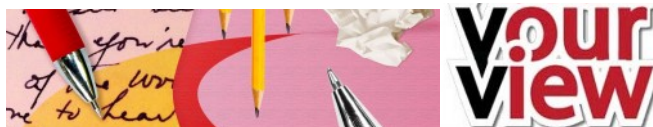


Goldthorpe nr Barnsley on local TV news

You don't have to go far to find more examples of other places doing great things. From our front room on local TV we saw the children from a South Yorkshire school enjoying a community mural they helped to create. Inspiring.

Down the road in York you can find vibrant empty shop fronts and colourful cabinets.

Our town could be so much more interesting and attractive to visitors and residents. Flowers are fantastic but surely we can expect more. It appears we love our home town but don't want to tell everybody how proud we are to live here. The first point of contact for anybody with creativity and imagination would be the Town Council. Good Luck.



A Reader Writes:

after Oakwood Clock, the person boards and then has to be told that their weekly or day First Bus ticket is not valid.

2. WORSE SERVICE FOR EAST KESWICK The X98 only used to run until around 18.00 hrs weekdays and Saturdays and not at all on Sundays. Now it runs every day of the week meaning that in the evening East Keswick and Linton get a two hourly service instead of hourly. If an X98 doesn't run, the only people who miss out are those on the Congreve Estate who mainly moved there when the X98 had no evening or weekend service, those near Piccolino (though it is flat walk from the Lady Hastings stop) and those on the new development at Bridgewood Green (though it is rumoured there will be a footpath to Harewood Road). By contrast, if the X99 does not run everyone from Raby Park, Linton, then the higher parts of Harewood Road, and East Keswick all miss out.

3. CHANGE OF ROUTE The route was changed from the Headrow/ Park Row to Vicar Lane/New Market Street/Duncan Street/Boar Lane. If going to the station it is usually quicker to get off at the stop outside Nandos, as it takes an eternity for the bus to get through the Briggate lights, go down Mill Hill then go up Bishopgate St, then make an awkward turn back in to Boar Lane. It makes getting into the Merrion Centre and the LGI a long walk. At one stage Transdev wanted to run into the bus station which would have made it a long trek to the Railway Station but fortunately that did not happen, not least as the two buses are supposed to be rail replacement buses following the madness of Beechham (who should have at least banned any building over the lines).

PS It is not much fun just missing the 20.05 from Leeds and being stuck there until 22.05. And similarly missing the 20.08 from Wetherby with the next bus at 22.08.

An East Keswick resident writes:

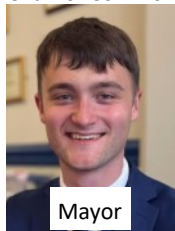
In the musings about the X98/X99 route being given up by Transdev, three things are missing

1. SLOWER JOURNEYS Transdev stopped the X nature by picking up at stops after Oakwood Clock into Leeds and setting down before Oakwood Clock from Leeds. This has slowed the journeys down especially going into Leeds as there is barely a journey when the bus gets flagged down



Wetherby Town Council - Dominated by One Party

Chair of Property
Chair of Planning
Chair of Comms



Mayor
Connor Mulhall
Conservative

Chair of Markets



Paul Bradley
Conservative

Chair of Welcome
to Wetherby



Dean Buckle
Conservative



Harry Chapman
Conservative



David Frame
Conservative

Leeds City Cllr too
Chair of Staffing



Norma Harrington
Conservative



Kazia Knight
None / Independent

Chair of Town Hall



Jane Lavocah
Independent



Galan Moss
Conservative



Elaine Smith
Conservative

Chair of Budgets



Stuart Newcombe
Conservative

Chair of CIL



Neil O'Byrne
Conservative



Dawn Carr (Payne)
Conservative



Alex Riddell
Labour

Space for any of our 14 Town Cllrs to Say Anything to Residents

Unedited, max 400 words

Nothing Sent Yet

After every issue we ask them to respond to our legitimate questions and issues raised. Oddly, a staff member acknowledges receipt of the email but then we hear nothing. The Editor resides in Wetherby East and in particular asks **Cllrs Bradley, Lavocah, Knight, Newcombe & Payne** to respond. It is frustrating, especially when Councillor Lavocah admits that she has little direct contact from constituents.

Open & Accountable Council?



They spent £2,000 of our money in 24/25 on legal fees because they received 'vexatious' correspondence. That is a lot of money. We think they are referring to emails we sent to them, which were perfectly legitimate and in the public interest.

The public will never know whether that expenditure on solicitors was justified or not. One person decides (Cllr Harrington, Chair of Staffing Cttee) backed by her 3 Conservative colleagues. Coincidentally, this Council introduced a revised policy on complaints and vexatious correspondence not long before our emails. They refused to tell us why it was introduced. We think it was to avoid answering difficult questions.

This council will continue to act as it wants unless the public take more interest. They spend / waste £1000s of our money on things like this with no independent monitoring.

Minutes of May Mtg Not Published Yet - Why?

Minutes of the Full Town Council Mtg are usually available in the agenda of the following meeting. May's were not included in 10 June's agenda. This behaviour makes us suspicious. 6 weeks is unacceptable. If they were open & accountable, they would put reasons for delays on the website.



Low Turnout Again - This time the Communications Cttee (Chair Cllr Mulhall) 28 Apr. Only Cllr Knight attended. Cllrs Frame, Mulhall & Payne were absent, making the meeting inquorate ie a waste of time. The Communications Officer was not there either.

"Unacceptable Behaviour" in Town Hall Staffing Cttee (Chair Cllr Harrington) 17 Apr. "It was noted that Cllr Mulhall had a presence within the office when Town Clerk was not in the office to help with security due to staff being subject to unacceptable behaviour from some members of the public." *Wow! On top of all his Chairmanship (4) and Mayoral responsibilities he's also a security guard. What is the trouble caused and the reasons*

for it? We should be told. The minutes incorrectly state 'Facilities Manager' instead of 'Facilities Officer'. *It is ironic as they downgraded this post which has even more duties now the Caretaker is off sick.*

Poor minuting - wrong word used. **Town Hall Cttee (Chair Cllr Moss) of 28 Apr** "has been delayed due to the Town Hall CIO's illegibility to use Contracts Finder." Illegible means "not plain or clear enough to be read". *Why did nobody notice this obvious error?*



Useless Sign Outside Town Hall for Years

On top of being Mayor, Chairs for 4 mtgs, Cllr Mulhall is also security in the Town Hall!



Summer Newsletter Out Now



It is full of interesting information and well worth a read. You can find a copy in Wetherby library.

Here is a summary:

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: It was held in March and was well-attended. Members heard that a financial surplus was again achieved, but unfortunately membership had fallen slightly.

VISITS AND TALKS: After the AGM, Malcolm Gardner gave a talk entitled "Spofforth Park: Community Power and the Estate's Evolution" which detailed the trials and tribulations in dealing with the builders, Bellway, in the transfer of the estate management to a residents' committee. Unbeknownst to most of us, there are a host of facilities which in former times were run by the Council, but which are now the responsibility of a management company. The general feeling was "Watch out Racecourse Approach!", where there'll also be a central heating hub!

A visit to Thirsk Hall took place in April. The tour led by Mr. John Bell, the previous owner, provided a fascinating insight into the architecture of the period. Behind the house is the large sculpture park, which was originally used for keeping and breeding horses, which was the family's passion.



Newburgh Priory

The visit to Newburgh Priory was on a beautiful sunny day in May, pictured. Again we were shown around by the owner of the house. Originally an Augustinian priory, after the dissolution, the church was demolished and the remainder converted into a house and has remained in the same family ever since..

FUTURE EVENTS: Wed 16 July - Leeds Material Recycling Facility.

Thurs 14 Aug - Our Summer Talk, "Discoveries in Boston Spa: Geology and Archaeology" will given by Malcolm Barnes

TOWN HALL: Following our representations, Wetherby Town Council has agreed rename the three main rooms in the Town Hall to reflect their original uses, namely Ballroom, Court Room and School Room. We have agreed to pay for the new brass name plaques.

BALSAM BASHING: It's Balsam Bashing season again. We plan to have an evening bash mid-July.

RACECOURSE APPROACH: As you will have seen, work is now underway for Taylor

Wimpey to build the 762 houses for which they now have full planning permission. Surprisingly, they appear to have already started upon building a showhouse, even though the sewers have not yet been installed.

LEEDS SITE ALLOCATION PLAN

Leeds City Council are progressing their update to the Site Allocation Plan to run until 2042 and will be commencing on a public consultation in June. This will consist of inviting comment on ALL the potential sites which have been put forward. We have found from bitter experience that appealing against sites after they are in the Plan is very difficult and the time to ensure that Wetherby is not inundated is during the site selection, so participation in the consultation is important. We will provide you with the details of how to participate when we receive them.

WALKS

In June you will be seeing us leading a guided tour of Wetherby for Cleveland Association of National Trust Members. We are delighted to have this opportunity to spread news of Wetherby's charms wider.

You may also see us leading schoolchildren from Crossley Street School around the town soon.

WETHERSPOONS

Wetherspoons have responded to our email to confirm that the blue plaque on the building will remain when they have completed their refurbishment. We are delighted that they are taking over the Angel and we have previously supported their planning application, but with some minor comments on wall colour and name.

MEMBERSHIP

We are striving to maintain Wetherby as a pleasant place to visit and live. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who wishes to play a more active part in our work and anyone who wishes to join the Society. You can contact our secretary by email at jean.chapman930@gmail.com and can find out more at our website at www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk.

Note that as an introductory offer, new members joining now will receive their 2026 membership included in this year's fee.



Chairman Peter Catton

Local Green Councillor at 'Valuable' Dementia Support Event



Penny Stables is one of three Leeds City Councillors for our area.

She tells us that since last June, she has been part of a team co-ordinated by the Local Care Partnership, who have organised a second Wetherby Dementia Event. Held in the middle of June, it offered support for those with dementia and for their carers, as well as providing entertainment and refreshments.

Penny said "I am proud to be part of the organising team for this very valuable and much appreciated event. Most people know someone with dementia and for those caring

for loved ones with this cruel disease it can be very overwhelming. So this event provides support and guidance on where to turn for help at any stage along the journey."

If our other two Leeds City Councillors, Cllrs Lamb & Harrington would like to send us anything similar, we will gladly publish it.



Progress on Petition: Linking Personal Tax Free Allowance to a Cost of Living Index



Patrick Wright tells us:

“ Since the *Free Press* highlighted this petition in the last edition I have received a response to my concerns about why this petition is necessary from the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray MP forwarded by our MP Sir Alec Shelbrooke.

And there is further evidence from the Bank of England (BoE) on just how much further the value of the personal tax free allowance has been eroded. (Since learning of the availability of the BoE's inflation calculator, it's been reassuring you can go somewhere for the truth, as well as the *Wetherby Free Press & Yorkshire Bylines*, of course!)

Yorkshire Bylines has published a full article on the responses Patrick has received at yorkshirebylines.co.uk

They are a not-for-profit citizen journalism publication. Their aim is to publish well-written, fact-based articles and opinion pieces on subjects that are of interest to people in Yorkshire and beyond.



The petition is still open at

[https://
petition.parliament.uk/
petitions/710008](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/710008)

Or scan QR code



I understand the concerns that your constituent raises on the PA. The previous Government made the decision to freeze the income tax PA at its current level of £12,570 until April 2028. The current Government is committed to keeping people's taxes as low as possible while ensuring fiscal responsibility and so, at our first Budget, we decided not to extend the freeze on personal tax thresholds.

The Chancellor will announce any changes to the tax system at fiscal events in the usual way.

I hope this response is helpful. Please pass on my thanks to Mr Wright for taking the time to make me aware of his concerns.

Yours sincerely

JAMES MURRAY MP
EXCHEQUER SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY

Government Response to Patrick

Why Issues Like This Matter

We asked 170 Samaritans volunteers about the calls for help they had responded to where financial hardship was discussed.



97%

of the volunteers who responded to our survey had supported callers worried about paying their essential bills



74%

of volunteers told us about people calling for help who had cut back on things which are really important for their wellbeing



69%

of volunteers had spoken to callers who had contacted Samaritans because they couldn't afford to access other support

<https://www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/research-policy/inequality-suicide/>

Why Haven't Spoons Started Work Yet?

JD WETHERSPOON
Free House

Our Boozy Correspondent, Phil Myglasssup reports:

A lot of people are asking why Spoons have not started construction given they have received planning permission and had their license approved. The answer is that the planning permission came with conditions that need to be satisfied before construction can start. Applications to satisfy the planning and listing conditions were only partially successful, so fresh applications have been made. The cycle parking requirements come from the Leeds City Council Transport SPD <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/transport%20spd.pdf>, a consequence of Leeds City Council declaring a Climate Emergency in March 2019.

* 25/2976/COND has under important dates that comments are to be submitted by 27/06/25 with a determination deadline of 11 July.

* 25/02977/COND has under important dates that comments are to be submitted by 27 July with a determination deadline of 25 July.



So at first sight nothing can happen until 27 June.

However under the "Have your say" in both cases it is stated "Sorry, we do not accept comments on this type of application. In respect of CLE and CLP type applications ONLY, the planning merits of the use, operation or activity are not relevant to the application. The issue or refusal of a certificate depends entirely on factual evidence about the history and planning status (proposed use) of the building or other land. The responsibility is on the applicant to provide sufficient evidence to support the application for the authority to consider and this is not subject to consultation."

Various council bodies have now commented and they have said that they are happy with everything EXCEPT they still need more detail on the depth of coping for the parapet wall.

So let's hope Spoons respond quickly and formal approval is granted.

Meanwhile the Red Lion has a 'run your own pub' sign up. The Royal Oak, left, is still closed but workmen have been seen inside. And the New Inn is back open after a refurb, right.



One of 2 Fine Oxford Wetherspoons the Editor Visited in June

New Inn looking new



Wetherby News

NEWSWATCH

Issue of 12 Jun

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

Transdev Quits X98/99 bus route, see front page

Issue of 19 Jun

News Items - 2 Letters - 0

Bramham Biggin to be converted into flats

Charity press release - article written by charity!

Issue of 26 June

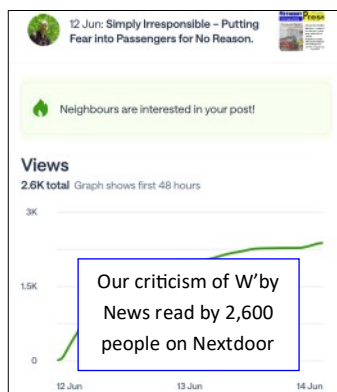
News Items - 1 Letters - 0

Stockeld Park wins award for play centre

The 'news' items are usually press releases. Many are from charities which you may as well read on the charity's website. There is no coverage of the many Town Council issues that we raise. Very important topics are ignored. You will not find:

- any local opinions about important local issues
- any questioning of those in authority spending our money

Most Wetherby organisations have clearly given up on it and don't send their news to it any more.



1.15 news items per issue in '24 costing £1.91 each

WE DESERVE BETTER

Resident Thinks It's Worth £2.20

A resident has spoken up in defence of the *Wetherby News* on social media. He says it has "a number of benefits which justify its price to me".

He provides only one reason relating to the paper itself - that it "covers local news for other areas, especially Harrogate, which is of interest to me".

All the other reasons he gives relate to the *Wetherby Free Press*, which has nothing to do with the quality of the *Wetherby News*.

He ends with "at £2.20 it can still be better value than something which is free".

It's not much of a defence, is it. Just the one reason really - he's interested in Harrogate. The resident doesn't mind the disgraceful lack of coverage of our area.

This poor defence is, of course, from Steve Cooper of Bramham, our long-term critic. Oh dear, we had to laugh when we saw it, especially the last line.

7 out of the 8 reasons were nothing to do with the Wetherby News - they were the same old attacks on the Editor he's used before. And all answered by the Editor in previous issues. They contained the usual nonsense, like the Editor is a liar based on calling him a member of Wetherby Lions instead of Garforth Lions. And Mr Cooper again claims he has been defamed by the Editor, who strangely has yet to receive anything from his libel lawyers. Is he defaming me by saying he's been defamed when he hasn't? At least one of his 8 reasons makes no sense. He really is desperate to do me down.

We continue to feel sorry for him. It can't be easy living with these strong feelings for a stranger. He hides behind his keyboard refusing to come out into the real world and meet the person he makes constant derogatory remarks about. Some would call that cowardly.

I ask again, Mr Cooper, let's have a coffee and a mature conversation about all this. Your behaviour towards me is disturbing and I fear for your mental health. You keep repeating the same old stuff, displaying an inexplicable level of loathing for me.

I don't know your motivation. We can only speculate that you have a close connection to the Wetherby News or that you're very sensitive of criticism or you're doing all this for a friend of yours, or some other reason.

We find it strange that you do not find anything to praise in the Free Press - the jokes, the sport, the nature etc. We welcome all criticism and will publish it, especially the more extreme comments because it's so ridiculous that our intelligent readers will know it's unwarranted.

The more you criticise us Mr Cooper, the more readers we get. They must be curious to know what it's all about.

So thanks for that but perhaps, you should think about stopping now. It's gone a little too far, hasn't it?

Goosemoor Nature Reserve in Cowthorpe



Great Spotted Woodpecker

It's about the size of a Blackbird with a striking black and white plumage. It has a very distinctive bouncing flight and spends most of its time clinging to tree trunks and branches, often trying to hide on the side away from the observer. Its presence is often announced by its loud call or by its distinctive spring drumming display. The male has a bright red patch on the back of the head and young birds have a red crown.

Springwatch is over for another year. 20 years it's been going with excellent presenters like Packham & Strachan. We miss the others like Megan, Chris's step-daughter & Martin Hughes-Games. And we miss the extra half-hour in the studio answering questions etc. It's still good but not what it was.

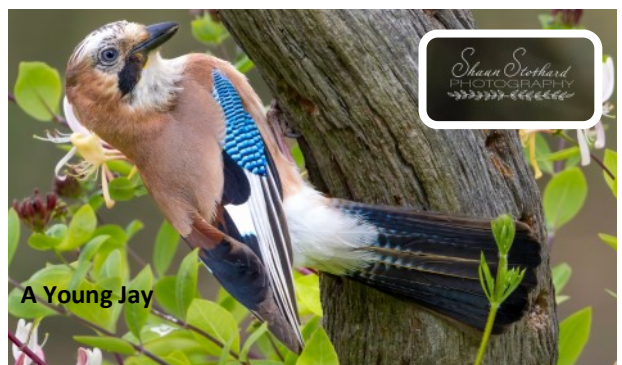
Anyway, we hope it inspired you to get out n about to places like the wonderful Goosemoor. It is down War Field Lane in Cowthorpe. It has 2 Facebook groups - Nature Reserve and Nature Reserve Group. The latter has more wonderful images like these.

It is a peaceful place to sit and watch some amazing wildlife. Not just a fantastic variety of birds

but also bats, bugs, newts, moths, butterflies and small mammals.

If you would like to help out, they always welcome new volunteers.

Details online or contact us if you aren't online.



A Young Jay

Plse Donate if you can - Just £5 would help us keep those OFFLINE informed



Wetherby Foodbank

**June 2025
Foodbank Wish List**

- Tinned custard
- Microwave rice
- Tinned spaghetti
- Tinned sweetcorn
- Tinned carrots
- Tinned potatoes
- Instant mashed potato
- Pasta'n'sauce packets
- Tinned rice pudding
- Instant coffee (small jars please)
- Sugar (small bags please)
- Hot chocolate
- Shampoo
- Washing-up liquid
- Carrier bags

Thank you!

Did you know...?

You can access financial advice & support at our sessions.

Wetherby: Fridays 10am - noon

WETHERBY FESTIVAL
Since 1977

Save the Date

3rd - 11th October 2025

After a great 2024 when we had some of the best events we have seen since we started in 1977, we are roaring back with something for everyone (almost) in October! There are some favourite events returning but as we want to make this year more interactive, we also have events YOU can join in on... there is the FIRST "Wetherby Festival Landscape Artist of 2025" for budding (and non-budding!) artists (tickets still available). Plus if you fancy yourself as a poet you can also enter our Comedy Poetry competition (a cracking success in 2024) for all ages. Details at www.WetherbyArtFestival.co.uk

<p>Fri 3 Fri 3 Sat 4 & Sun 5 Sat 4 Sun 5 Sun 5 Tues 7 Tues 7 Wed 8 Wed 8 Wed 8 Thurs 9 Thurs 9 Thurs 9 Fri 10 Fri 10 Fri 10 Sat 11 Sat 11</p>	<p>Call my Wine Bluff Blues Night Landscape Artist Exhibition and Workshops Wetherby Silver Band Wetherby Civic Society Walk Comedy Night with Alun Cochrane & John Meagher Gentlemen Prefer Blondes Wildlife Photographer - Simon Roy Singing in the Rain Fake Thackray The Climbing Film Tour 2025 Young Frankenstein Comedy Poetry Competition Results Weetwood Mac Literary Lunch Crumbs - Bad Apple Theatre Folk Club Paul Whittaker Signing and Concert Leeds Symphony Orchestra</p>
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The next Clifford Champion Beer Festival will be on:
Saturday 28th June 2025
 Clifford Village Hall, LS23 6HY
 12noon - 11pm

Contact us via our website if you would like to be part of it
 Cheers!
<https://www.cliffordbeerfestival.co.uk/>

WFP Promotes Wetherby & 15,000 Bags of Duck Food Sold!

To celebrate the 15,000th bag of duck food sold in 5 years, Paul Kirby (Editor & Duck Food Man) gave away free bags on a Sunday afternoon.

"It's a way of saying thank you and to bring more visitors to our great town, to enjoy our greatest asset - the River Wharfe, and spend money at our businesses.", he explained.

"We have the Best Fed Ducks in the World" (well, Yorkshire anyway) and we should shout this fact from the rooftops."

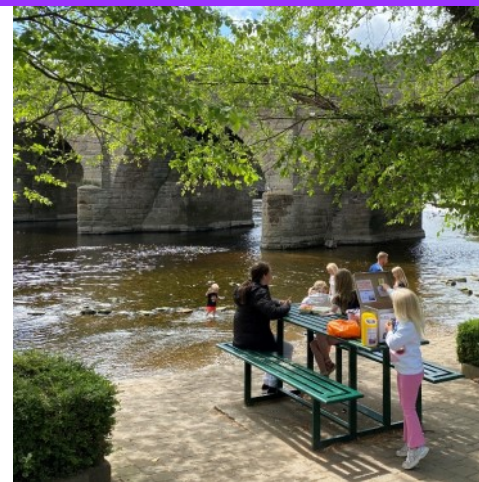
Paul promoted this on Facebook groups in Leeds, Harrogate, Otley, Boroughbridge, York & others hoping to tempt families to visit. The post on social media said: "The weather is going to be fantastic so come along and enjoy the river. There's an ice cream van and a brass band starting at 2.30."

For residents, it was a chance to meet him and say hello. And many did.

"It was great to chat to you all. Thank you for your kind words and support", he said.

The highlight of the afternoon was seeing the delight on the children's faces, taking the bags and putting the Lucky Ducky stickers on their tops. It was also a chance to educate people that bread is not good for the ducks.

Donations for Cancer Research were also collected.



A child takes a bag and sticker from the box



Rhinos Run halted by Sts

Before the trip to St Helens, the Rhinos had an amazing run of 7 wins.

Some cracking form to take them to third place. Superb performances against Warrington and St Helens have entertained the fans. But the second

game against Saints on Merseyside had a different outcome. In a hard-fought battle they lost 18 - 4, though it was closer than the score suggests. There was nothing between the 2 sides in the first half, except 2 penalty scores and a very late Saints try in the last minute. Rhinos put together some good moves but poor passing let them down. After an interception Ryan Hall



ran the length of the pitch but Saints players just managed to push him into touch in the corner.

The Rhinos scored a try 6 minutes into the second half, making it 8 - 4. Silly mistakes proved costly and the Home Bargains-sponsored Lancashire team sealed the win with a try in the last minute.

Leeds possess the

strength, skill and spirit to make it to the play-offs and hopefully a place in the Grand Final in October.

Meanwhile the surprise team of Super League, Wakefield, pulled off a shock win against second place Wigan.

- Rhinos v Leigh on Fri 27 Jun at 20.00
- Hull KR v Rhinos on Sun 6 Jul at 15.00
- Rhinos v St Helens on Fri 11 Jul at 20.00
- Rhinos v Salford on Fri 18 Jul at 20.00



Unexciting Fixture List for Utd

Leeds kick off the season on 18 Aug at home to Everton.

The toffees are not one of the biggest clubs in the Premier League, ending in the bottom half last season. Had it been at their new ground in the docks of Liverpool, that would be a special match indeed.

Over both Christmas and Easter 2026 United play Sunderland. The biggest game over the holiday periods is away to Liverpool between Christmas and New Year.

Many fans will be disappointed that Leeds are not playing any of the following - Man Utd, City, Arsenal, Spurs or Newcastle at these special times of the year.

They finish the season at home to Brighton and then away at West Ham.

United have signed 26-year-old forward Lukas Nmecha from German side VfL Wolfsburg. He was the first arrival for German manager Daniel Farke.

The second was Jaka Bijol from Udinese for £15m.



Leeds Ewe-nited
LucyPittaway.co.uk



Free Press
Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

Your Not-for-Profit Community Newsletter

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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

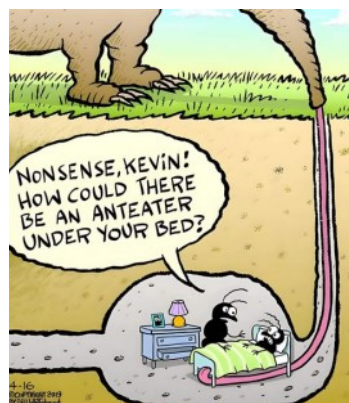
Unjustifiable threats of legal action can be seen as harassment.

The Editor has had 7 '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

More Funny Stuff



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