



WETHERBY

ISSUE
78
Until
6 June
2025

Free Press

Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

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



We cater for the 1000s of **DIGITALLY EXCLUDED** with a **Full Copy at Library, Pheonix Café**
& 350+ promo copies at *Morrisons, Pubs, Cafés, Dentists, Care Homes, Churches, Hairdressers, Shops*



Inevitable, Homer. Buses Still Being Blocked

It's no laughing matter for the 1000s who have been greatly inconvenienced by this problem over the years. There has been no effective action taken so far this year, nothing temporary even, like official Police / Council cones or signs in windows.

There's no firm date yet when things will improve.

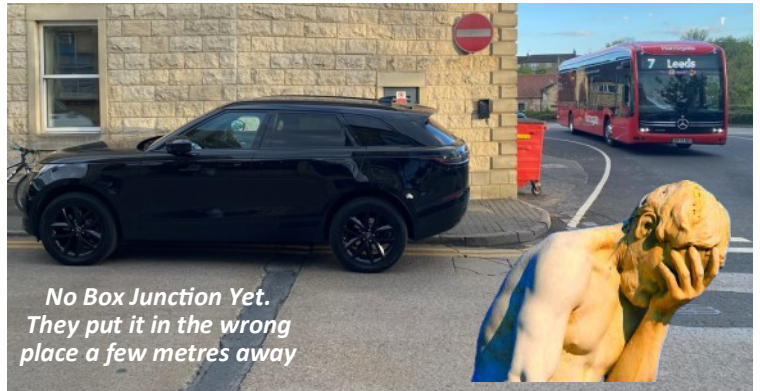
Councillors repeat call the Police and report vehicles.

Oh Dear! This will happen again and again until 'Do Not Block - Bus Sta Exit' is painted on the road with a box junction. With signage.



Thankfully, this driver was in his cab

A box junction was painted nearby at the junction with the main road opp. the Whaler. We believe it was a mistake by Leeds City Council and they put it in the wrong place. Whatever the truth, it is ironic and frustrating that it would be much more useful just a few metres away.



No Box Junction Yet. They put it in the wrong place a few metres away

Pub Requests Alcohol Licence!



Wetherspoon asks for licence for former restaurant



Not surprising really is it?, a pub applying for an alcohol licence.

Let's hope the currently boarded-up eyesore is soon an up-and-running, successful business.

Details of 'Spoons latest on page 11.

Editor Meets Councillors



The Editor had a pleasant meeting with the two of the most influential people in Wetherby, Cllr Lamb & Cllr Harrington.

There was not enough time to cover all issues but a frank exchange of views made it a most worthwhile exercise.

See page 4 for more details.

The Robots Are Here!

A robot has been seen roaming the aisles of Morrisons in Wetherby. It's name is "Tally" and stands 5' 4" tall. Katherine Allanach, Morrisons Technology Manager, explained that the robots are being used to "check that the products on the shelves are being displayed correctly and are legally compliant." The robots have also been introduced in their Redcar and Stockton stores.

Perhaps one day we can have a chat with them or ask them where the Marmite is!



Join our Large Mailing List for New Issue Reminder

And pls send your News, Views & Events to:

WetherbyFreePress@PM.me

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

History Repeating Itself - Bus Cuts & Worst Performers Again Page 4

Tree Co. Fined Page 9

Still Waiting & Dog Dirt & Community Green Group Page 5

Birds in Wetherby Page 10

Goosemoor Nature & Brightening Up Wetherby Page 6

Are We Flogging a Dead Horse? Page 9



If the person who named "Walkie Talkies" named everything else:

Stamps: Lickie Stickies
Defibrillator: Hearty Starty
Pregnancy Test: Maybe

Baby

Lamp: Lighty Brighty
Fan: Easy Breezy
Wallets: Cashy Stashy
Nightmare: Screamy

Dreamy

Knife: Slicey Dicey
Spoon: Soupy Scoopy
Colander: Holey Bowly
Cat: Furry Purry
Socks: Feetie Heaties
* There's only one thing I can't deal with, and that's a deck of cards glued together
* Sundays are always a little sad. But the day before? That's a sadder day.
* My mate got bitten by a poisonous snake so I told him a funny story. Stupid me, turns out he needed an antidote, not an anecdote
* Waited ages for an X-ray at the hospital - they only had a skeleton staff on



As well as the *Wetherby Free Press* page on [facebook](#) there's the *Wetherby Deserves Better* page too.
Both are independently run from the newsletter.



Follow & Don't Get



Next Wetherby Town Council Mtg

Tues 10 June at 7pm

www.wetherbytowncouncil.gov.uk

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



Brass Bands on Sundays at 2.30, and some Saturdays

Town Council Matters

No Election: There were not enough signatures (3) to force an election in Wetherby North following Billie Ager-Mills resignation.

Locum Town Clerk: Taking over the role until July at the earliest is Dianne Rickaby, following Iona Taylor's resignation. She works 3 days a week.

Summary of April Meeting

- * **Staff Spending Exceeded:** "Figures in 24/25 where the Council has performed worse than expected": Personnel - £5,700
- * **More Resignations:** Cllr Jane Lavocah resigns from 2 committees.
- * **Highways:** No mention of any bus issues.
- * **Speeding Problem:** Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is funding 2 Speed Indicator Devices at £5000 each. Locations being considered.
- * **Crime:** "Increase in shop lifting, but not by known local perpetrators"
- * **Council Website:** "The committee noted recent technical errors"
- * **"No Interest" from Local Schools** in developing an image library (image right)
- * **Only one quotation** received for installing security light at Hallfield Lane cemetery
- * **2.6% Increase in Cemetery Fees** for residents, 50% for non-residents
- * **Dog Dirt Problem in Cemetery** and dogs let off lead. Cttee agreed to 'refresh signage'.

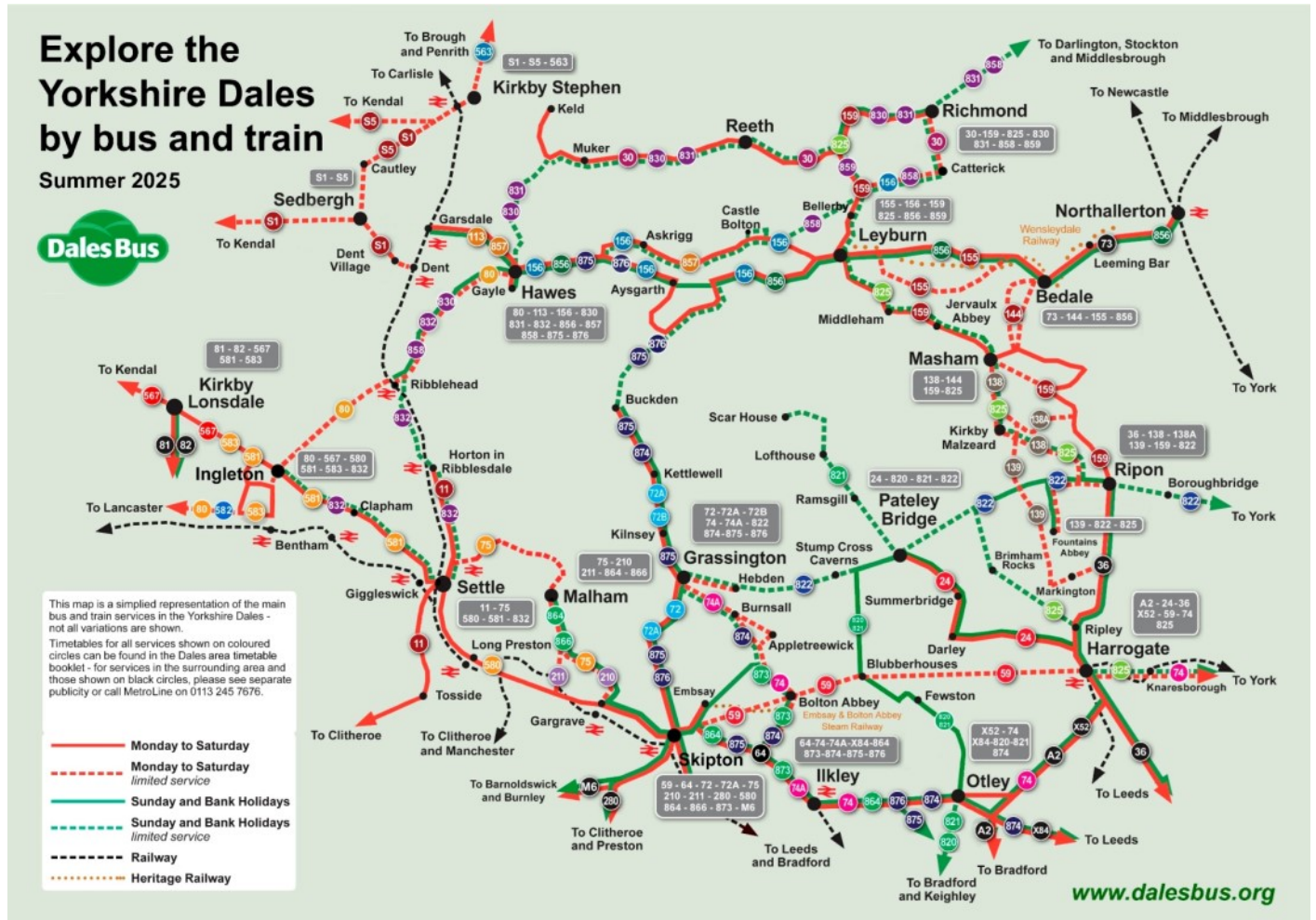
More on page 7



Admin Officer,
Wetherby Town Council
25 hrs per week
£30K pro rata
Closing Date 5pm Mon
19 May
clerk@wetherby.co.uk



TRANSPORT NEWS Summer Season of DalesBus Starts



Options from Wetherby on Sundays & Bank Hols

No 1 - 874 Direct from Wetherby Bus Sta at 8.35

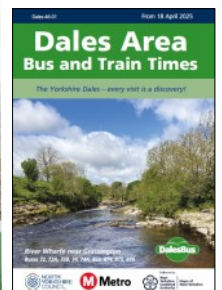
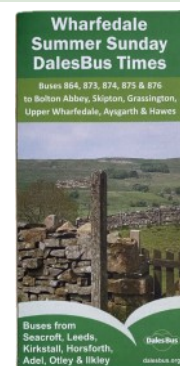
It serves all stops along the A58 in Collingham, Bardsey, Scarcroft and runs to Leeds, Ilkley, Bolton Abbey, Grassington (11.10), Kettlewell & Buckden.

Connection at Ilkley to Skipton & Malham on bus 864

The 874 arrives back in Wetherby at 7.15pm

No 2 - Catch the 7 from W'by Bus Sta to Harrogate at 9.42 It arrives at 10.06. Then take the 24 to Pateley Bridge leaving at 10.15, arriving at 11.07. From there you can take the double-decker 822 to Grassington (11.15) or the 821 to Upper Nidderdale (11.10).

No 3 - Catch the 7 to Harrogate at 9.42 It arrives at 10.06. Then take the 825 leaving at 10.15. It runs to Brimham Rocks, Fountains Abbey, Masham, Leyburn & Richmond.



Available at library, Leeds & Harrogate Bus Stations & on the buses

@DalesBus
www.dalesbus.org
TRAVEL INFORMATION FOR THE YORKSHIRE DALES

Reminder of Bus Facts for our Councillors & MP, Alec Shelbrooke

- It costs £5 return to Leeds, Otley & Garforth and £6 return to K'boro, York & H'gate
 - Transdev's route 7 to Harrogate & Leeds via B Spa was reduced to hourly from half-hourly in Nov '22
 - The late night route 7 service from Harrogate at 11.30pm was cut in Nov '22. The last bus is now 10.20pm
 - There is NO Saturday service to York (Connexion's route 412) or Otley (Connexion's route 923), ending in May 22
 - WYCA/Metro made a big mess in Wetherby of installing new bus stop flags in 2021. Half the stops are still the old type
 - WYCA/Metro have stopped printing their 7 invaluable network maps. The Wharfedale one is not displayed at W'by Bus Sta
 - If you want a WYCA / Metro printed timetable for the 174 to Garforth & Wakefield, you have to go to Wakefield for it
- The Labour Mayor Tracy Brabin is ultimately responsible for WYCA / Metro performance. They will have more staff and power when franchising comes in. They were the worst performing local authority in a survey in both 2023 & 2024.
- Opinion based on above facts: Metro / WYCA are a large bureaucracy with low standards and a poor record.

It seems nothing much changes on the buses.

Our county has the least satisfied passengers in the country * Arriva Yorkshire bottom again * First Leeds keep cutting services

Worst Passenger Satisfaction & Worst Company



@YappAppLtd

Arriva Yorkshire was at the bottom of a list of 55 bus companies for overall journey satisfaction. The report made no comment on this. They operate the 174 Wetherby to Garforth to Wakefield. The accident above involving one of their buses happened on 26 March in Kippax.

We have the least satisfied passengers in the country. Only 73% were satisfied with their experience. That is a quarter who were not satisfied. Who is to blame?

- Metro / WYCA for doing such a poor job with information, promotion, subsidised services and infrastructure (bus stations, stops, real time etc)
- Politicians & Councillors for letting Metro / WYCA do such a poor job with information, promotion, subsidised services and infrastructure (bus stations, stops, real time etc)
- The City Council / Highways for the unreliability of services due to roadworks and lack of priority measures

- The Bus Companies for their poor customer service and old, uncomfortable buses that don't turn up due to staff or mechanical issues
- The Public (Us) for not complaining enough to the people above and the media

Read the 32 page report at www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/your-bus-journey-2023-results/



A year ago we reported the results of the nationwide *Transport Focus* survey, see left. This year's report gave exactly the same results!

Arriva in West Yorkshire were bottom of the list again with 69% passenger satisfaction. They run the 174 - Wetherby & Boston Spa to Aberford, Garforth & Wakefield.

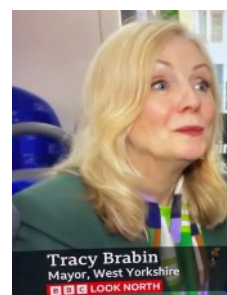
Top was *High Peak* bus company in Derbyshire with an incredible 99%.

The worst performing local authority was West Yorkshire ie *Metro / WYCA* again. They increased their satisfaction rate by 4% to 77% but are still last out of 39 authorities.

There was no comment on the survey by Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin who is responsible for Metro / WYCA.

Google '*Transport Focus* Survey 2024' for more details and interesting facts eg more than 4 billion passenger journeys were made by bus across Great Britain last year. That's two and a half times more journeys than were made by train.

Meanwhile, we are grateful to Cllr Alan Lamb for informing us on social media of upcoming timetable changes. As a member of the *Metro / WYCA* board, it would be good if he could make a brief comment on them too.



No Comment

Bus Cuts in West Yorkshire from 2 April

There were many - see www.wymetro.com. The most disturbing cuts were:

- ◆ 508 Leeds to Halifax, pictured. This route was every 20 minutes at one time but is now being cut back from every 30 minutes to hourly by First West Yorkshire.

- ◆ 9 Ring Road bus Horsforth to Seacroft via White Rose centre. This means frustration for passengers who must go into the city centre to get to anywhere on the outskirts. This is ridiculous. Leeds must have the worst orbital bus services in the country.



508 Leeds - Halifax now hourly

Here is our comment having looked down the list of changes. It was a similar story two years ago. There was bad news that *First Bus* company were cutting many buses, see left, and it is the same this time.

From Sunday 18 May a large number of their timings in Leeds, Huddersfield & Halifax are being withdrawn. This is very disappointing. We note there is no comment from the Mayor Tracy Brabin on this, yet she was keen to criticise *Arriva* when they did something similar.

Indeed, the last 'news' release from *Metro / WYCA* was on 19 November 2024. Why is that?

Cynics may suggest that cuts happening now will make

the politicians look good if services are re-instated when franchising comes in.

Good Meeting with Councillors

The Editor had a constructive meeting with Leeds City Councillors Alan Lamb & Norma Harrington. Norma is also a Wetherby Town Councillor.

It was perfectly amicable and a few moments of humour were shared too. It seemed we had more in common and agreed on more things than perhaps we all thought.

I had intended to make a few notes but that was impossible if you want to hold a proper conversation at the same time. So details of our conversation cannot be shared here (and approved in time before publication) but a wide variety of issues were covered over 1.5 hours. This included the role of the *Free Press*, the state of the *Wetherby News*, buses of course, car parking charges, public apathy and resignations from the Town Council.

I noted two points the Cllrs made: a) it is better to ask those written about for responses before publishing an article and b) that often the way to make progress with bureaucratic organisations like *WYCA & Leeds City Council* is to be diplomatic instead of being too direct.

The Editor hopes that the Councillors find time to read every edition of the *Free Press*. He said it could be time better spent than responding to posts on social media, which is not available to many residents. The *Free Press* is only once every 3 weeks or so and contains more local news than the *Wetherby News*. They may find important facts that they are unaware of and perhaps understand the frustration at the lack of progress in many areas.

The Councillors doubted the existence of the Wetherby Mafia so the Editor will send them the evidence. People trying to restrict freedom of speech in our town is a serious matter.

It seems we both have the same objective in mind - to make the Wetherby area a better place to live. Let's hope this is the start of better communication and openness leading to more improvements and accountability. Words are fine but actions are more important.

No other Wetherby Town Councillor has arranged to meet up, despite them being written about in every edition. I am not a keyboard warrior so if they want to, please get in touch. I do not approach them because of absurd accusations of harassment by others in the past.

If you want to talk to a Town Councillor, it is well advertised that you can pop in to the Town Hall for an informal chat on Thursdays between 11 & 1.

The Editor thanks the Councillors for their time and looks forward to meeting again.





We believe important matters should not be reported once and then forgotten. Our reminders may speed things up and motivate those responsible to explain the reasons for the delay. If you have a 'still waiting' item, please tell us.



Time: Over 5 Months
Responsible: Harrogate Bus Company

Promised NEW buses by Paul Turner on the X98/99 route to be introduced last year. Old buses still in operation with passengers suffering from an unreliable service.



Time: Over 10 Months
Responsible: West Yorkshire Police

Leeds North East Inspector Richard Armitage promised to get back to a resident about a serious matter. No contact made.



Time: Over 1 Year
Responsible for Repairs: Wetherby Town Council

Not pleasant for mourners and visitors to see. Church on the Corner, Hallfield Lane Cemetery

Dog Dirt Humour - Classic Painting Jigsaw with Poo Bags



Seen in Wetherby recently



Boston Spa, Wetherby
& Villages
Community Green Group

Catch up on all the recent local eco news in our latest newsletter under 'news' at www.bostongreengroup.co.uk

Read about:

- * National Walking Month
- * Zero Hour; real change
- * A nine day festival of Permaculture
- * The Climate Reality Project
- * and lots more.

* Why 'No Mow May' is so important

In the newsletter you can check out 20 tips to help you fit 20 minutes of walking into your day. There's details of the upcoming 'Zero hour; real change' launch and a nine day festival of WILD ideas to celebrate Permaculture.

We are also asking if you have a story to tell, and wish to share your low carbon journey with our community. There's the usual opportunity to 'have your say', listen, watch and learn too. Perhaps you missed the big news on international shipping last month? There's an opportunity to hear from the Climate Reality Project too.

Don't miss out, subscribe to our newsletter to stay informed.
All The Best



Adrian Balcombe, Chair of Boston Spa, Wetherby and Villages Community Green Group

National Walking Month
Step into Spring: Walk for Wellbeing



(The Group is a
Registered Charity
Number 1204438)

The Incredible Wildlife at Goosemoor Nature Reserve



Tortoiseshell

Wild Crabapple Blossom



*Thanks again to Shaun
for these superb images*

Shaun saw more butterflies in one day than all last year

Goosemoor is a real gem 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.

If you have not visited the reserve yet, you are missing out. It is a peaceful place to sit and watch some amazing wildlife. Not just a fantastic variety of birds but also bats, bugs, newts, moths, butterflies and small mammals.



Canada Goose
with 5 chicks

Street Art in Wetherby - Let's Make It Happen

Our campaign to brighten up Wetherby continues. We would love our 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. Our town could be so much more interesting and attractive to visitors and residents.

Other places around the UK encourage residents to express themselves to the delight of all. It's a shame our Town Council does not seem interested in encouraging such positive actions.

Those of us who are fortunate enough to travel abroad are amazed to see beautiful creations that bring joy to the soul, especially on mainland Europe. On his recent break abroad the Editor found these examples.

Surely there is somebody with artistic talent who lives here. We would love them to produce something similar. First point of contact would be the Town Council.

Ghent, Belgium



Antwerp,
Belgium

Something fun for children in Berlin.



Wetherby Town Council

Vacancy in North Wetherby after Billie Ager-Mills resigned. Filled by co-opting somebody

Chair of Markets



Paul Bradley
Conservative

Chair of Welcome to Wetherby



Dean Buckle
Conservative



Harry Chapman
Conservative

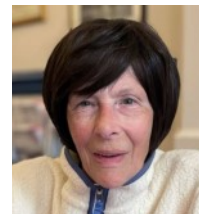


David Frame
Conservative

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

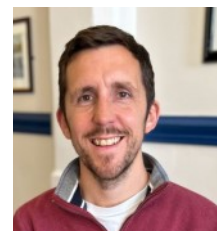
Chair of CIL



Neil O'Byrne
Conservative



Dawn Carr (Payne)
Conservative



Alex Riddell
Labour

Chair of Property
Chair of Planning
Chair of Comms



Mayor
Connor Mulhall
Conservative

In 25/26 they are responsible for a £674,000 budget. 11 / 14 Cllrs are Conservative. Chairs of the main 9 committees are Conservative. There are no biographical details of our Councillors on the new website. We are not informed of their interests, their skills and experience or why they want to be councillors. When they started and their political party is not stated either.

One is available every Thursday in the Town Hall foyer to answer your questions 11 - 1

We pay over £300,000 for Staff * 5 Admin Staff: Town Clerk (full time), Asst Clerk (full time), Comms & Events Officer (full time), Admin Officer p/t & Finance Assistant p/t. * 3 Facilities Staff : Facilities Officer (full time) Burials Officer (p/t) & Facilities Caretaker (full time). Plus Relief Caretakers & Cleaner.

In 2025 they stopped telling us the exact staff costs. It is at least half of the total spend, £330,000 we think.



Space for any of our 15 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, the staff acknowledge receipt of the email but nobody responds to anything. 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.

Minutes of Wetherby Town Council Meeting in April 2025

12 out of 14 Councillors attended. Cllrs Frame & Lavocah were absent and apologies approved. This is the second meeting runnig that Cllr Lavocah has missed.

Leeds City Council Cllr (LCC) Alan Lamb (Con) was present. Norma Harrington (Con) is both a Town Cllr & Leeds City Cllr.

No members of the public were there. The meeting lasted 1hr 15 mins. It is strange that nobody chairs the meeting. Every meeting needs a chair.

Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd's newsletter was acknowledged but the Free Press wasn't and never has been.

Property Cttee (Chair Cllr Mulhall) - *We notice that the Facilities Officer must have one of the biggest workloads and largest responsibilities in the Council. The person has been delegated authority many times by the committee. This post was downgraded from a Facilities Manager when the postholder resigned (because of job frustrations). We believe a manager would have the experience and authority to carry out the job without any interference. The money saved on downgrading the post has been spent elsewhere on staff, as the figure above shows.*

"Safe Check reports on the York Road Depot and Whittaker Building in the Garden of Rest were received and NOTED. It was NOTED that the Facilities Officer has begun works to start addressing urgent items highlighted from the report." Report not included.

"The committee expressed thanks to the Facilities Officer, noting the breadth and complexity of projects being worked on."

Staffing Cttee (Chair Cllr Harrington) - One of the council's existing members of staff has been appointed as the new Market Supervisor. *Two points: This has happened before - a staff member gets another job in this small Council of 8 staff. This presumably will cost the Council more money as they will have to recruit a replacement. No mention of this in the minutes. Nor is it stated which member of staff or the role he/she is in got the job - why the secrecy? Staff costs will rise again if they continue to recruit internally. A previous time this happened a job was not advertised externally, which seems unfair.*

Cost of at least £3750 to recruit a permanent Town Clerk.



Wetherby Town Council

cont'd from previous page

Minutes of April's meeting:

The recent filming of 'Tinsel Town' in Wetherby generated £1,800 of income for the Town Hall.

Cllr Lavocah resigned from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Cttee and Communications Cttee. She is still a member of Welcome to Wetherby Cttee and Markets Cttee.



Useless Sign Still
Outside Town Hall

Poor Public Transport Information on New Website

To find the right page, you have to realise that you must click on 'Your Visit' and then 'Getting Here' - no mention of bus, train or public transport on the website before then. How many will find it?

The old Wetherby Town Council website had a summary of bus services in the town.

There is no such useful information for residents and visitors in the new one, see right. It tells you where the bus station is (no map provided).

And it tells you a route map can be found in the library. **It can't.** Metro's 'Wharfedale & Wetherby Bus Map & Guide' can only be found online. No link to that is provided.

The link they do have sends you to a national journey planning website, not the far more useful Metro website. Traveline does not have any timetables, Metro does.

The new website should state there are buses from York, Leeds, Harrogate, Garforth, Wakefield, Otley, Knaresborough to our great town. And state their frequencies & journey times (which do not change often). And state there is a great service direct to the Yorkshire Dales every Sunday.

They provide the bare minimum which show yet again a lack of interest in buses. Welcome to Wetherby have missed yet another opportunity to provide useful information for visitors (and residents) and encourage use of public transport. They have a Communications Officer: why have they not used her? - it would take no more than an hour to find the information. We are not surprised - Cllr Dean Buckle and his colleagues missed out the bus station on a town map (still no apology, accountability or explanation). Encouraging bus use is not a priority but fighting tooth and nail to stop car parking charges certainly is.

Bus

Wetherby's bus station is located at the bottom of Market Place, near the bridge. Details of timetables and a route map can be found in Wetherby Library or online at <https://www.traveline.info/>.

The ONLY information about how to get to Wetherby on public transport!

Rail

Although Wetherby hasn't had its own station for some time, rail links are available nearby at Leeds or York. [National Rail Enquiries](#) can provide information on available services.

Minimal Information again

As for rail, see left, they can't be bothered to find out when the last passenger train left Wetherby station (1964). Or mention the fact that the closest rail station is Cattan, 13 mins away and on the Harrogate to York line. Or that York is 25 minutes away by car and London only 2 hours away from there on the train.

Response to Cooper's Comments

In the last edition of WFP we highlighted constant critic, Steve Cooper's claim that our description of him as a member of 'Wetherby Lions' was a 'lie' when in fact he is a member of a different Lions group -

Elmet in Garforth. We asked him if that was a lie or a simple mistake?

He has not responded online or to us directly. Nor has he explained why I have not been contacted by his solicitor after he claimed I defamed him.

He did not respond to any of the other points I put to him, or apologise for getting a basic fact wrong in a post he wrote (We have no problem saying sorry when we make a mistake).

His only response to the article was under a post of mine:

"I understand that I feature in the latest issue (his mis-spelling not ours) of your august journal. Having read page 7 I am reminded of your favourite politician's quote which I have paraphrased here: "I always cheer up immensely if an attack is particularly personal because I think, well, if they attack me personally, it means they have not a single argument left."

As I stated, I don't respond to Mr Cooper online, or correct his errors / poor spelling and grammar, as it gives him and his posts a respect they don't deserve. I would prefer to respond to him personally face-to-face and failing that in these pages.

He assumes he knows who my 'favourite politician' is. He does not. He may be being ironic or trying to wind me up again, who knows?

His statement is, of course, nonsense. I state plenty of arguments ie facts that back up reasonable opinion.

I guess coming out with inappropriate general statements like this is his last line of attack.

Talking of which, he came out with another one, see left. It says:

"Is the article about Billie Ager-Mills a perfect illustration of the saying 'She who sups with the devil should have a long spoon'."

No idea what that means - answers on a postcard please.

The Editor is still willing to meet Mr Cooper any time any place. With an arbitrator if he wishes. And The Free Press still offers him a 'Coopers Column' to put his views forward in a more mature manner.

We hope by publishing articles like this, it encourages people not to put up with continuous derogatory comments on social media when the authors make no reasonable attempt to justify what they say. It is not acceptable.

We also hope it encourages everybody on social media to think 'would I say that to their face?' before they write about people they've never met.



Are we wasting our time trying to improve Wetherby? One reader thinks the town is a lost cause.

The Editor had to tone down and 'edit' the content of the email. Swear words are replaced with those in 'italics'. The final draft was approved by the reader.

“ You're flogging a dead horse here, mate.

I love it you keep trying to improve stuff in this dead town. It ain't going to happen but I admire your persistence.

This town started its decline when this lot got in years ago. They haven't a clue. I mean, just look at them, most are well into their 60s and haven't had an original thought in years. You show us how much other places are way ahead of us, as a town. It's not just Otley you could compare us with, virtually anywhere. They want everything to stay as it is, they don't even want those boring street boxes painted, they want this town to continue to be as dull as possible. Just look at the grey website the Town Council had for years. What a joke that was.



Another street cabinet (for traffic lights) that could be used for art.

Parking their 'flippin' Range Rovers blocking buses and not giving a monkeys. Councillors don't care about buses, years and years they've done very little, should be ashamed of themselves.

Look at that footpath to the weir, still no sign telling people it's there. This lot don't want visitors to spoil their precious little town. And of course they don't want to pay a few quid for parking their posh car, for 'goodness' sake. They want everyone who doesn't use the car park to pay for it (its maintenance). You gotta laugh.

Good on you for keeping on at them, anyway. They deserve everything they get, can only hope things change but I doubt it. This town is a sleepy conservative town and will stay that way. If I could, I would get out now, leave 'em to it.

Don't usually get 'bothered' by stuff but had to say something. Never written or ranted about stuff before but if half of what you say is true it's a 'flippin' disgrace. Somebody needs to get these people to do their jobs properly. But not enough people care and nowt will change. Sad. Thanks for trying anyway, mate.

I don't want my name on this; call me a coward if you want but I know those little 'umpalumpurs' will come after me.

”

The writer's views (and language) are strong and perhaps over the top but we can certainly understand their frustration. It's tempting to tar all those in positions of authority with the same brush but there are some who don't play politics and want to simply do the right thing. We also think the writer should have more optimism because nothing lasts forever. People come and go and things change, though admittedly it is very slow in this town. There are many good people who will eventually find their voice and make efforts for us to reach the potential we have. Anything built on weak foundations will crumble in the end.

It is a great shame that the person did not wish to put his name to it but we can understand the reasons why. The main one they told us was the Wetherby Mafia. The writer should not worry too much about them - they do not have as much power as they think, and the truth always comes out in the end. You get haters everywhere, though usually not so many in smaller communities because it's harder to be anonymous. Wherever they hide, they're always exposed in the end.

Many will agree with the writer's opinions and many won't. If you have an opposing view to our reader, please write to us and we will print it. Are we 'flogging a dead horse' trying to improve Wetherby? The number of our suggestions that have been ignored by Councillors and other organisations over the past 3.5 years is quite astounding and would suggest the author has a point. The town deserves better as our many comparisons with Otley has proven.

We assure our reader we will not go away. We owe it to our healthy readership to carry on - criticising those who deserve it, and continuing to make sensible suggestions for improvement. We are sure a true community spirit of tolerance, freedom of thought and creativity will come to the fore one day.



A classic album with straight forward words and originality - a bit like the Free Press.



Still no sign to indicate the lovely area this path leads to, after 3+ years of highlighting it

Elderly Caring & Domestic Help

15 years
Experience



NVQ Level 2
Qualification

References available

Call Kerry on 07876 525 589

Local Tree Company Fined for Burning Waste in Wetherby

Andrew Ward of *Bardsey Tree Services Ltd* attended York Magistrates in April. He pleaded guilty to 2 offences of burning waste at Compton Lane between Collingham and East Rigton, and was fined a total of £9,120.

The *Environment Agency* told the company many times that the activity was illegal, but this was ignored, it was reported.

Mr Ward said the fires were used as a means of dealing with residual waste, but added that the site had become known as a dumping ground for other operators' waste. We asked him for additional comment but none was received.

Come & Sing with us - It's a lot of fun!

A **FREE** five week course to help you find your voice



SING WITH

Spirit of Harmony

MEN'S CLOSE HARMONY ACAPELLA CHORUS

- ♦ Give it a go and we're sure you'll enjoy yourself.
- ♦ We are a friendly group of guys, of all ages, who sing acapella (without music).
- ♦ No experience needed. You don't even need to read music.
- ♦ A chance to learn 2 new popular songs

Try Something New - Bring a Friend!

Our members say the benefits are:

- * it's good fun & you can make some new friends
- * it improves your health
- * it's a new challenge / skill & builds self-confidence



When: Thursdays from 12th June to 10th July
Where: Wetherby Methodist Church Hall, LS22 6NQ
Time: 8.00pm - 9.30pm
Contact: Dean on 07923 957488 or email enquiries@spritofharmony.co.uk
More info at www.spiritofharmony.co.uk and Facebook & Instagram too
 Charity no 1164140



Scan the QR code for more details!

Birds in Wetherby

One resident would like to share her joy of our local bird population. She recently went on a 45 minute walk along the old railway path in Wetherby and came across a magnificent array of different birds.

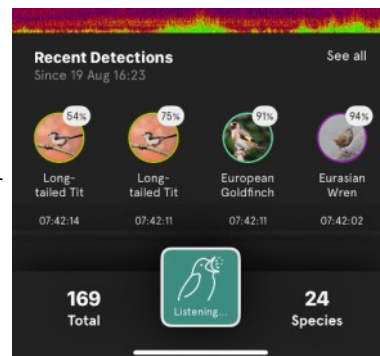
"I was surprised there were so many - and many were birds I'd not heard of before."

The reader used an app on her smartphone which her grandson had told her about - *Birdweather*. The Editor uses it too and can highly recommend it.

Apart from the common birds like the robin, wren, blackbird, rook, magpie, pigeon, chiffchaff, different tits and goldfinch, the lady could hear the songs of less well known and less recognisable birds, like

- ♦ Common whitethroat
- ♦ Dunnock
- ♦ Goldcrest
- ♦ Greenfinch
- ♦ Siskin
- ♦ Eurasian Blackcap

The 2 birds pictured have names that describe one of their features



Birdweather App



Common Whitethroat



Eurasian Blackcap

Ilkley - A Town that Knows how to get on Local Telly and Attract Visitors

Another town on the Wharfe, Ilkley, managed some great publicity recently on local telly. On Bank Holidays and Sundays local news of ITV



Ilkley Carnival Featured on BBC Look North

Yorkshire & BBC Yorkshire are desperate for a cheerful event to put on a sparse news day. Wetherby has not managed to promote itself in recent years whilst other nearby towns like Knaresborough, Otley & Ilkley have.

BBC Look North had a report on the 5 May Bank Holiday about the Ilkley Carnival. There was nothing particularly special about the event to merit being on the news. And Ilkley had somebody film it so the BBC could save some money on using their own film crew.

We hope that Welcome to Wetherby of Wetherby Town Council (Chair Cllr Dean Buckle) will collaborate with other Wetherby organisations to do something similar one day.

They should be raising the profile of our great town to attract more visitors - to spend money, helping to keep our shops and businesses open. Too many are closing at the moment and nothing of any note is being done to stop it.

There are still no signs on the A1(M) or a banner on the Services roundabout to attract motorists to the town, like we have suggested in previous editions. It is ironic that Hartlepool managed to put a banner up for over a year on the roundabout whilst the Town Council / Business Association ignore such clear, relatively cheap opportunities. The town misses out on £millions spent every year in the Services.



Boston Spa Methodist Church Lunchtime Concert



Fri 13 June at 1pm £6

Harrogate Harmony Barbershop Chorus

Boston Spa Methodist Church is full of music on the second Friday of each month (with the exception of July and August) with concerts starting at 1pm. Light lunches are served from noon. *Why not "come, sit and let the sounds of music creep into your ears" (Shakespeare)*

Organiser: Margaret Jowett T: 0113 268 2041 / 07702 977696
E: margaretjowett@btinternet.co.uk

The Harrogate Harmony Chorus was formed in 1986, when four men who enjoyed singing formed a harmony group in Killinghall Village Hall. The chorus has grown over the years and now has a membership of twenty six like-minded men whose ages range from 62 to 93.

To provide a pleasant interlude for the audience the group has a ukulele section, who help to provide some audience participation by way of well known sing-along tunes.

Also a couple of members have a good repertoire of monologues and jokes which all help to enhance the audience's experience.

Wetherby Foodbank

May 2025
Foodbank Wish List

- Instant mashed potato
- Tinned potatoes
- Instant coffee (small jars please)
- Long-life fruit juice
- Tinned custard
- Tinned cold meats
- Microwave rice
- Pot noodles
- Dried noodles (plain)
- Jams & marmalades
- Cooking oil (small bottles please)
- Pasta'n'sauce packets
- Washing-up liquid
- Shampoo

Thank
you!

Did you know...?

You can access financial advice & support at our sessions.

Wetherby: Fridays 10am - noon

Wetherby News NEWSWATCH

Issue of 17 Apr

News Items - 0 Letters - 0

Yes, not a single item of news about W'by area

Issue of 24 Apr

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

Tree Company Fined for Fires, see page 9

Issue of 1 May

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

B Spa lady raises £17K for Parkinsons

Issue of 8 May

News Items - 0 Letters - 0

Yes, not a single item of news about W'by area

Issue of 15 May

News Items - 2 Letters - 0

Spoons, see right & Martin House lunch raises £27K

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

WE
DESERVE
BETTER

WETHERSPOONS LATEST

The following report is based on the BBC article.

Pub chain JD Wetherspoon has applied for a licence for the site.

The company has asked *Leeds City Council* for permission to sell alcohol until 01:00 at weekends at the pub on High Street.

Wetherspoon's bought the Sant Angelo restaurant, also known as The Angel, in 2022.

Councillors will consider an application for a premises licence at a hearing on 20 May. In January the Council gave listed building and change of use consent for a conversion of the existing site.

A licensing sub-committee report said the council received two letters of objection from people living nearby to the licensing application. One objector wrote: "The noise levels from the clientèle will definitely disrupt our sleep."

The *Council Environmental Health* team also raised concerns and submitted a list of suggested measures to prevent public nuisance.

That included no outside drinking after 23:00 and no loudspeakers outside the premises.

The licence would allow alcohol sales

* from 09:00 until 00:00 on Sundays to Wednesdays

* until 01:00 from Thursday to Saturday.

Councillors could grant or refuse the application, or allow it with additional conditions, at the hearing at Leeds Civic Hall.



Not a good look for the town, for nearly 3 years

What will the finger pointers say to the proposed opening hours, we wonder.



Champions of the Championship

They did it! Get in, as old Harry G would say.

Left it until the last minute but who cares. Leeds are back where they belong. As a city with only one team and with such a massive support, they should have a permanent place in the top tier.

It is one way that Leeds can garner some sort of reputation as a serious European city. Thanks to poor leadership in so many areas,

Leeds has no rapid transport system and is not famous for any regular event to raise its profile. Unless you count a piano competition. Sheffield & York have made a name for snooker, which is apparently very popular still.



150,000 figure quoted celebrate on Bank Hol Mon

Anyway, congrats to United and I bet the estate agents round here are especially chuffed!

Rhinos v Hull FC on Fri 16 May at 20.00
Castleford v Rhinos on Sat 24 May at 14.30
Rhinos v Wakefield on Sat 31 May at 14.30
Rhinos v Warrington on Sat 14 Jun at 17.30



Beat Saints 17 - 4

The magic weekend at Newcastle was magic for Leeds. The same day United were promoted as Champions the Rhino's managed a rare victory against St Helens. It was



Miller with superb second try for Leeds

only their second win in 20 games against the Lancashire side.



Rhino's Edgell gets a knee in the face resulting in Saints player sin-binned for 10 mins

A great performance from the lads. It leaves them in 4th place behind Hull KR (top), Wigan & Leigh. Early days yet though.

Saints have been struggling to reach their usual high standards and in this game they lacked confidence. The Editor found the game screened live on only the 'Sky Max' channel, not on any of the sports channels. Strange. A very enjoyable watch it was too.



Free Press
 Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

Your Not-for-Profit Community Newsletter

www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press

Editor: **Paul Kirby** Email: WetherbyFreePress@PM.me

Tel: 07840 862861 Twitter/X: @wbyfreepress

Please Donate Online to Cover Printing Costs

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

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

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

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

True or Honest Opinion or in the Public Interest

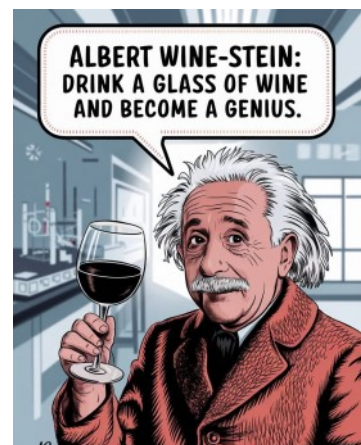
Unjustifiable threats of legal action can be seen as harassment.

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



Listen to Both Sides

**More
 Funny
 Stuff**



Last year we had 1000 online visits in 2 days

NEXT ISSUE 6 June 2025