



Free Press
Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability
Issue 89 Extra of Your Community Newsletter

Large Hike in Local Tax Again

from the 'low tax' party!

W'by Town Council Precept	Band C %	Total
2023 / 24	80%	
2024 / 25	0.5%	
2025 / 26	9.6%	£675,000
2026 / 27	8.5%	£725,000



They will spend £725,000 of our money next year, £50K more than last. Why? See what they spend it on overleaf



- * Staff Costs **DOUBLED** in 3 years from 21/22 to 24/25.
- * They now **HIDE** the cost of staff so we cannot compare with previous years or other Councils.
- * In 24 / 25 staff cost us about **HALF** the total precept. So this year it could be half of £655K = **£327,000 just on staff** (a staggering amount).
- * The **increase of 80%** in 23/24 was never fully explained. What benefit has any resident noticed since then?

* This Council have **not produced a news release** about this year's large increase **BEFORE** the bills dropped on our doorstep - no explanation, nothing, see reverse.

Comment - poor behaviour and low standards yet again from the whole Town Council, Town Hall senior staff but particularly Cllr Mulhall (Communications Ctte Chair) for reasons overleaf.

Who is Responsible? Here are the Most Influential Figures

Dianne Rickaby



Town Clerk
drew up the Budget Plan

Stuart Newcombe
Conservative



Chair of Budgets Ctte
Chair of Property Ctte

Norma Harrington
Conservative



Chair of Staffing Ctte
Leeds City Cllr too

Connor Mulhall
Conservative



Mayor
Chair of Co-option Ctte
Chair of Comms Ctte

Dawn Payne
Conservative



Chair of Finance Ctte
Chair of Planning Ctte

Will any of them provide clear explanations to residents?

Plse Turn Over

They continue to take

News and Notices



the Mickey

Post date: March 16, 2026
Councillor Vacancy – East Ward, Wetherby

Post date: March 5, 2026
Wetherby's own wins national award!

Just **TWO** news releases this year on the Town Council website. Nothing about their large increase in Council Tax on the day the bills landed on doorsteps (18 March)

No announcement of the death of Cllr Knight (Independent). But they promote the Mayor (Conservative) for winning an award related to his young age.

And who is the Chair of the Communications Ctte? Yes, the Mayor, Cllr Mulhall.

This shows their priorities.

It beggars belief that the website has the gall to say:

Keep up to date with all the latest Wetherby Town Council news, notices and important announcements affecting the town.

Parish	Precept 2025/26	Precept 2026/27	% Increase / Decrease
Bardsey cum Rigton	£43,500	£42,700	-2%
Clifford	£42,700	£44,300	4%
Bramham cum Oglethorpe	£34,000	£35,300	4%
Boston Spa	£78,400	£81,900	4%
Walton	£7,700	£8,100	5%
East Keswick	£23,800	£25,000	5%
WETHERBY* pop'n 12,000	£593,700	£654,400	9%
Thorp Arch	£30,000	£33,300	10%
Scarcroft	£33,000	£40,000	17%
Collingham with Linton	£54,000	£95,000	43%
Morley* pop'n 32,000	£242,000	£242,000	0%
Otley* pop'n 14,000	£502,500	£512,500	2%

* Wetherby is Conservative-dominated, no Lib Dems

* Otley is Lib Dem-dominated, no Conservatives

* Morley has a much bigger Town Hall than ours.

Staggering Figures



Yes, you read that right. Bardsey needs LESS money this year.



The Biggest Question is why does Wetherby needs so much money, compared to Morley which needs HALF the money we need with more than DOUBLE the population and has NO RISE this year. And why does Otley need far less than us?

A large expense is staff. Just look at all the admin at Wetherby Town Council:

Town Clerk - Full time

Asst Town Clerk - Full time

Admin Officer - Part time

Finance Asst - Part time

Comms & Events Officer - Full Time

The 'Communications & Events Officer' organises the same 2 events every year (bonfire & remembrance) and has yet to produce a newsletter we were promised. Only one printed copy of their Annual Report last year was published for the 'offline and overlooked' (Age UK phrase). Wetherby has a large elderly population.

The full meeting in January to discuss this budget lasted only 75 mins. And 20% of the Councillors did not attend. *Seriously? Is that proper scrutiny? What were the concerns of those who did ask questions? The minutes don't clearly say.*

Our Comms Officer has time to write for the local press under her own name but has no time to put important news on the Council website, see above. We have yet to read an article / social media post by her that does not say how wonderful



It's Time to Make Them Accountable

everything and everybody is ie it is pure propaganda for her political bosses. Most editions of our newsletter shows that everything is far from rosy in the Council garden. She ignores it and does not communicate with the only general community newsletter in the town.

Another large expenditure is the Town Hall. We have subsidised this crumbling building with 100s of £1000s over the years. Some windows were replaced, others are still a disgrace. A new lift is going to be installed which is unnecessary, according to a former Facilities Manager. They cannot make hiring rooms pay for themselves. Is it time to sell up and move staff to a cheaper building?

More £1000s go to parks, like Sandringham. It cost us over £200K and looks very ordinary to us, despite winning awards. With a smattering of daffodils this Spring and one flower box, it looks nothing special - no art or sculptures. **The Council also give £1000s to groups like BMX Track** who took nearly a year to get near finishing, and provided no info at the track itself. Who at the Council monitors projects like this to see if money is spent properly? Answer - no individual Cllr is named.

We sent this to our 'friendly' Town Councillor who had no corrections to make. Proof we give you facts

Read the Free Press at www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press