

WETHERBY



They Fought for our Freedom of Speech

Free Press

Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

Issue 54 until 15 Dec '23

The Voice of Common Sense



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



Contents overleaf

MEET THE EDITOR

Great Success but Critics No Show

A big Thank You to all who came to meet me at Morrison's new café. It was a pleasure to meet you and rest assured all your comments have been taken on board.

It was a shame that not a single critic could make either of the 2 dates. Not one of Wetherby's Town Councillors or staff either, despite Cllr Mulhall saying he wanted to meet. No surprise the cowards who insult anonymously on social media did not want to face me.

It was most gratifying to know that so many of you don't believe the nonsense on social media and can't understand why the Wetherby Mafia have taken such extreme action to stop us existing, by contacting our supporters and advertisers.

I was particularly grateful to a village Parish Councillor who explained their position on one issue, and an interesting discussion on others followed.

It seems that most village councillors are not politically driven, or have purely selfish motives. It is a great shame that our Town Council is not run like some of our Parish Councils eg they can manage their affairs without the need for expensive paid staff and yet still have good quality websites and newsletters.

Thank you to those who used the opportunity to give us a donation. Your financial and written support are what keep us going.

The Editor is always willing to meet Wetherby residents. Please contact me by Facebook messenger or by email, see Page 10



Bus Blocking Continues - Enough is Enough!

A selfish car driver has caused inconvenience to hundreds of bus users. They blocked the bus station exit, parking on double yellow lines for over an hour. This is a frequent occurrence and first highlighted in WFP in November 2021 —

EXACTLY 2 YEARS. We have been assured by Cllr Lamb that he is working on this issue but nothing has physically been done to resolve the problem ie no new signs or paint on the road.

Cllr Lamb says that bus passengers must take some responsibility for the situation and call the Police when it happens. This is not easy for many elderly and disabled passengers. The drivers of the buses took pictures and informed their managers. One told the Editor it took hours for the Police to turn up the last time it happened.

Enough is enough. This has been going on for far too long, at least 2 years in fact. When are Cllr Lamb and others going to clearly communicate with us and tell us 1) exactly what they are doing and 2) when definite action will take place?

Spare a thought for the 100s of passengers waiting in the cold at bus stops in B Spa, Clifford, Tockwith, East Keswick, Scarcoft, Leeds etc who waited for a bus that didn't arrive because of the delay to at least 5 services. There is the knock-on effect, too.

All thanks to one selfish car driver. There was no disabled badge or anything else on display in the windscreen.

If the driver of this BMW (reg ending YAT) is local and would like to explain the reason for this parking and apologise, please get in touch.



Councillor Quits Wetherby Town Council

Cllr Barbara Harpham has left the Town Council after starting 6 months ago. No reason is stated in meeting minutes.

Hurry! Hurry!

if you want to replace her, write to the Returning Officer, Leeds City Council, Electoral Services, Civic Hall, Calverley Street, LS1 1UR by

Tuesday 5 December

For more details, contact Iona Taylor, Town Clerk



Cllr Lamb on ITV Calendar

Campaign to Stop Parking Charges on TV News

The online petition has attracted 1000s of signatures.

We play Devil's Advocate and look at the bigger picture on Page 4.



East Keswick Unhappy at X99 Bus Service & Changes - P4

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What do you get when you divide the circumference of a pumpkin by its diameter? Pumpkin pi.

Do you know how to make holy water? You boil the hell out of it.

Your body has run out of magnesium. Omg !!

Why don't anarchists drink good tea? Property is theft.



My fat parrot just passed away. At least that's a weight off my shoulders.

Two cannibals are eating a clown. One turns to the other. "Does this taste funny to you?".

If I was asked to describe myself in three words, I would say "Lazy".

The Christmas A phabet is not good. It has Noel



Editor Responds to Online Slurs

As Editor of a newsletter that speaks truth to power, I get a lot of stick; that is to be expected. It's easy to ignore the immature online insults from those who don't have the intelligence to have a sensible debate. But some recent slurs have crossed the line and must be responded to.

I have been portrayed as an obsessed, disturbed, deeply unhappy individual who makes people's lives miserable for no apparent reason and must have completely fooled his new wife (recently married), family, friends, neighbours, charity colleagues and 1000s of WFP readers into thinking he's a decent bloke.

If the contents of these posts are even half true, I must be the biggest hypocrite alive, banging on about the truth and integrity all the time. If you want to believe them, that is up to you.

Fair-minded people make judgements on evidence and facts, not general statements. They should try to meet the people involved and then make a decision on who to believe. If you want a fuller picture, please go to page 5.



Wetherby Town Council Meeting - Oct

12/15 Councillors and 3 residents attended. It lasted 2 hours.

Changes in Town Hall Paid Staff:

Barry Riley, the Deputy Clerk has left. The new Assistant Clerk is Rowann Fitzpatrick. The new Communications & Events Officer is Helena Briden, not in post at the time of this meeting. (No photos of staff are on the Town Hall website, unlike Otley)

The newsletter of Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd is mentioned. *The Wetherby Free Press continues to be ignored. The Climate Emergency Committee is to be disbanded. Again, it would be nice to have a report from this committee on what they achieved over their lifetime.*

Crime Stats for September: 8 anti-social and 96 other "There are no major crime issues in the ward". *What do you think about that statement?*

New Website, New Leaflets & Surveys

Our Suggestions finally being taken up - but will they be done properly? See inside



Keep Informed Wetherby Facebook Pages

As well as the excellent *Wetherby Free Press* Facebook page there is the *Wetherby Deserves Better* page too. Both are edited entirely separately from the newsletter Follow, Don't get FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)



Lucky Duck Food

from CANCER RESEARCH UK & TREASURES Toys **OPEN SUNDAYS**



only £1

Morrisons Big Store Relaunch

Thursday 7th December at 9am
Brass Band at 13.30 for Crossley Street Primary School Choir singing carols.
Market Street tasters & other 'treats' throughout the store.





Thorp Arch
Merry Christmas
Craft Market
at
The Pax Inn
Saturday 9th December
11-3pm

 Bee-Crafty Markets

All Saints' Church, Kirkby Overblow
29th November to 2nd December 2023, 7.30pm

The Friends of All Saints presents
KODS production of

YES, PRIME MINISTER

By Anthony Jay & Jonathan Lynn

For tickets & reservations email
kodstickets@gmail.com

Tickets £15 including programme
Under 16s £10



WETHERBY LIONS DICKENSIAN Christmas Market & Craft Fayre

Inside the Town Hall and outside in the Market Place
and The Shambles

10th December 2023
9.00 am — 3.00 pm

Artisan Market; Santa's Grotto & Sleigh; Festive Petting Animals;
Family Fun Stalls; Craft Fayre & refreshments inside the Town Hall;
Seasonal Market Stalls; Wetherby Silver Band & Collingham Band;
School & Community Choirs; Freshly Cooked Food Ready to Eat





Boston Spa Methodist Church
presents its ninth annual

Christmas Tree Festival 2023

Friday 8th December 10.30am–7.00pm
12 noon Our renowned pre-concert lunches
1pm Lunchtime Concert (tickets £6 on the door)
with John Nancarro, Bass and David Hammond, Piano
3.00pm Organ Recital – Geoffrey Coffin
on our fabulous Harrison & Harrison organ
5.30pm Father Christmas arrives on his sleigh

Saturday 9th December 10.00am–5.30pm
Watch out for a visit from Santa
From 10.30am (weather permitting) Donkey rides
10.30am Collingham Band
2.00pm Organ Recital – David Wilks
3.30pm Christmas performance by Voices of Rock

Sunday 10th December 12 noon–4.30pm
10.30am A Christmas Celebration (a short service for all ages)
6.00pm Festival Carol Service

- A stunning display of beautifully decorated trees
- "Get in the Picture" – Nativity photo opportunity
- Tombola and Cake Stall
- Refreshments available throughout

ENTRY to the FESTIVAL is FREE
(except for the Friday Lunchtime Concert – £6)

In aid of "All We Can" and Church funds
Please see our website for further details:
www.bostonspamethodistchurch.org.uk
or check out our Facebook page






East Keswick Not Satisfied with X98/99. Claim W'by Businesses Suffer too

Following the favourable results for Transdev (Harrogate Bus Company) of their takeover of the X98/99 route, we received an email from Andrew Batty, Chair of East Keswick Parish Council. He wrote:

“ I have to disagree with those of your readers who thought the X99 bus service had improved since being taken over by Transdev/ Harrogate Bus Company. Their opinion is not shared in East Keswick.

The X99 is the primary link for those bus users in the Keswick Lane area of Bardsey, the Harewood Road area of Collingham and the villages of East Keswick and Linton.

This is an hourly service which has proven unreliable causing young people to miss getting to zero hour contracts and older people to miss appointments and connections.

The much heralded 'Sky Class' double-deckers are increasingly replaced by aged single-deckers which are even longer to negotiate the narrow roads of East Keswick and Linton. These single deckers are overcrowded at peak hours causing passengers to stand.

The route has been changed to miss out The Headrow and LGI area of Leeds, but a much greater concern is the service has now been made two-hourly on evenings and Sundays as alternate buses are sent down the more sparsely populated A58. Cheaper to the bus company but really inconvenient to villagers..

When the service was operated by First Leeds the last bus from Wetherby was at 23.28. Now it's 22.08, one hour and twenty minutes earlier. The effect on the Wetherby night time economy must be a cause for concern. It also has an effect on the viability of earlier evening services since nobody on the route is going to go for a night out in a Wetherby cinema, pub or restaurant when the last bus leaves so soon after 10.

The Parish Council has raised these concerns with the bus company directly and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) / Metro which pays for evening and Sunday services from the public purse. The response so far has been disappointing. In the meantime young people tell us they are having to give up hospitality jobs and older carless villagers feel increasingly isolated and overlooked. ”



Comment Cllr Batty's email came as a surprise to a passenger like the Editor who was unaware of these problems. It was particularly disturbing to hear that the bus not turning up has greatly affected the lives of the young and elderly. It is not just individuals, Transdev's decisions affect Wetherby businesses too. Cllr Batty told us of a resident who has stopped going to the cinema because of the early last bus. And others who go to Leeds instead of Wetherby to have a full night out. As for the 'disappointing' response from the bus company and WYCA / Metro, that is no surprise to us. Wetherby Deserves Better.

TV Publicity for Car Parking Charges Campaign

Cllr Lamb is leading a campaign to stop Leeds City Council charging for the Wilderness and other car parks. An online petition has reached over 4000 signatures. A short report was included on the local ITV Calendar news. His main argument is that it will put people off using local businesses and they will shop elsewhere.

A local bus company manager said “Free parking really should be a thing of the past now - but we can't expect any support from Wetherby's MP”. He added that the “lack of the bus station on the map in the town's new leaflet really shows how important public transport is on peoples radar - nothing surprises me any more”.

Penny Stables, Leeds City Councillor is “concerned about the impact on workers in Wetherby who are on a low income and the volunteers for our many charity shops, that are not able to get the bus into the town to work. They may well be forced for financial reasons to look for work elsewhere, which will in turn impact the businesses in Wetherby and the charity shops who rely on volunteers. The introduction of parking charges even on this small scale will have unforeseen knock on effects for Wetherby.”

Cllr Alan Lamb is one of 3 Ward Councillors for Wetherby on Labour-run Leeds City Council. He is Leader of the Council's Conservatives.



Cllr Lamb interviewed by Calendar cameraman, sound recordist, lights person & reporter Matt Price

Comment Like most City Councils, Leeds are in massive debt and have to pay for essential services somehow. Parking charges is an obvious method of extra revenue. Most other towns in the Leeds city council area have some form of pay and display parking. Wetherby is a rare exception to have none. Of course, nobody is going to want to pay for something they have not paid for before, including the Editor. But all voices must be heard, including the climate aspect for a less one-sided debate. To park by the river in one central park in Knaresborough is 30p for an hour. That is not a lot is it?

Cllr Lamb's belief that people would travel to another town to shop if charges were introduced must be questioned. That would cost money in petrol and all towns nearby have some form of charging, so what would be the point?

And looking at the bigger picture, if charges meant people using their cars less (and using a bus instead) is that not a good thing for the planet? Of course, we know not everyone lives on a bus route or has a decent bus service to use.

Slurs on the Editor's Character and False Accusations on Social Media

We live in a country where the fundamental right of freedom of expression to defend your reputation should be allowed.

The Editor is limited in what he can say for obvious reasons but here are some facts:

- * **A RESTRAINING ORDER (RO) IS NOT AN ADMISSION OF GUILT (of anything, let alone a criminal offence).**
- * **I do not have a criminal record; I have not been found guilty of any criminal offence.**
- * I have not caused harassment in the criminal sense, or in the general sense, to anyone at any time. In the only case I was involved in, the prosecution offered no evidence and I was accordingly acquitted. In a free country writing emails to publicly-funded organisations and printing facts about them should never be seen as harassment .
- * The prosecution were keen to avoid a trial and they spent 2+ hours negotiating the details of an RO with me at court.
- * I agreed to negotiate the RO to avoid a stressful court case which would cost everyone time and money.
- * The RO was to basically ignore 2 people and not go near one building in Wetherby — very easy to keep.
- * **I have not breached the Restraining Order at any point since it began 16 months ago (obviously or I would have been arrested)**

The use of the RO on social media as a weapon against me now is totally unwarranted. I must be able to fully defend myself against these slurs. I therefore applied to have the Restraining Order removed. A hearing was due to take place on 23 Nov 2023 but I was unable to attend because of unforeseen circumstances (bus station exit blocked, see front page). I rang the court telling them I could not make it.

The Court decided to dismiss my application because of my non-attendance so I have re-applied.

I hope this shows that there is always 2 sides to a story – please try not to make judgements and take decisions before knowing the facts. Question general statements, especially about people's beliefs, when they have no detail or examples to back them up, or the accused are not able to fully defend themselves. And try to assess the motives of people, whoever they are. If possible, meet the people involved and make your own mind up.

I am grateful to have the support and advice from a retired solicitor – the 'Sandwell Skidder', who has experience of cases like this. He speaks truth to power, like myself, and I highly recommend his blog (www.thesandwellskidder.blogspot.com/). He has featured in Private Eye. Thank you for your kind messages too.

I am always available to meet if you are interested enough to know more detail. The Truth Always Comes Out in the End, Folks.

There Are Two
Sides to Every
Story

Social Media is 'Poison' says Y Post Editor.



The words of James Mitchinson of the Yorkshire Post are very strong, left.

The Yorkshire Post has become less and less influential as more and more people get their news from social media. So this attack on social media is not surprising. Fewer readers means fewer advertisers means less income means massive cuts in journalists and other staff.

The decline of the Wetherby News is clear evidence of this (same company as Yorks. Post).

Mr Mitchinson is a strong character who is unafraid to voice his own views on Twitter (X). This has made him unpopular with many Conservative MPs and supporters. The Editor of WFP would never express any political views on his social media.

His language in this post is exaggerated but his general point is right. The minority can spoil it for the majority. They abuse a fantastic tool for strangers to connect in a positive way. They insult at will and spread their paranoid misinformation.

Twitter is mainly a forum for opinions so you should expect extreme views, insults and lies. Unless it breaks the law or defames you, you have to ignore it. Anyone can set up an anonymous account so you simply cannot win.

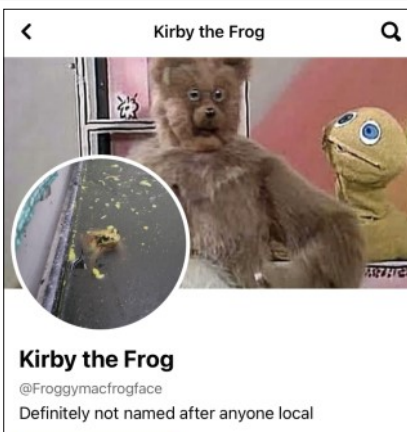
Facebook is different, it is a social platform where you connect with family and friends. You are not faceless or anonymous. Or you should not be!

But sadly, the morons and haters amongst us are able to have Facebook accounts with only a name - no images are on their profile. Those names can of course be made up, and they proceed to insult and defame with impunity. It is amazing how many labradors make offensive comments about the Editor!

There is only one word for these anonymous immature humans - and that is:



COWARDS



Twitter Wind Ups are Best Ignored

Facebook Group administrators should exclude anyone who does not have an image of themselves on their profile and makes personal offensive comments. We will print these cowards posts in future issues in a 'Cowards Corner' feature. And hold Facebook Group admin accountable. If you see it, call it out. We can then have a more civilised debate without fear of harassment.



The 15 Wetherby Town Councillors are unpaid volunteers. Most are Conservative & raised our Council Tax precept by 80% in a cost-of-living crisis in 23/24, much of it to pay for new staff.

The Town Clerk is Iona Taylor

The new Assistant Clerk is Rowann Fitzpatrick

The new Communications Officer is Helena Briden

These 3 salaries alone cost about £100,000 per year.

There is also a Facilities Manager and other staff.

Added to this much work is contracted out.

Would anybody like to compare staff costs to those of the village councils, and comparable town councils?

There are still no images of staff on the Council's website (unlike Otley) and no diagram to show line management structure.

Communications Ctte Meeting of September:

A new website will be designed

The Free Press has been telling you how awful the current website is for the last 2 years. No improvements have been made to it at all in that time despite sensible suggestions from us.

As a main tool for information and accountability, it is a disgrace that it was in that state for so long. It gave a poor impression to visitors and did not promote the town in an imaginative, vibrant way. It has been a lost opportunity to attract visitors, new residents and businesses to the area.

More importantly this dull grey website provided the minimum amount of information for any resident (or newsletter) to make decision-makers and publicly-paid officials accountable for their actions/inaction.

It's common sense to look at how other towns produce high quality websites. Will the Town Council do this or will they try to reinvent the wheel and cost us £1000s in setting it up and maintaining it (something the parish councils spend next to nothing on)?

Looking at the uninspiring new town leaflet we can but hope. At time of publication, the old dull website is still in place.

No distribution list for the new town leaflet had been made. A very simple task. See page 7 for a review of this leaflet.



The Uninspiring Showcase of Wetherby to the World



Quality Leaflets with Smiling Faces from Otley

There will be more themed Wetherby leaflets.

We have shown readers the variety and high quality of Otley's many leaflets, see left.

Wetherby are years behind already and timescales are rarely ever provided in Council minutes. When will it happen?

A Newsletter / Info Bulletin will be produced. Quotes from Graphic Designers will be requested.

Parish Councils and other towns produce interesting newsletters without the need for costly Graphic Designers. We thought the whole point of a costly new Comms Officer was to do this type of work in-house and save money. Apparently not. Any enthusiastic person with basic computer skills should be able to produce a reasonable newsletter, it's not rocket science.

If their newsletter is non-political, is honest ie mistakes are admitted and apologized for, is interesting & well formatted, and gives all information

not just stuff that makes the Council look good, then we are not against a Council newsletter. But our experience of Wetherby Town Council suggests it is a highly defensive (and political) organization and that mistakes or low standards are not even acknowledged, let alone apologized for.

Cllr Harpham is to write the first newsletter and be a liaison between all the different committees. She has resigned since. ?

SURVEYS: It was agreed that consultations be carried out with the following groups: • Market traders and users • Visitors • Businesses

Can anyone see who is missing? Yes, **ORDINARY WETHERBY RESIDENTS LIKE YOU & ME** and other Interested Parties (like WFP).

So it sounds like they do **not** want to know what the opinion of people who elect them and pay for the Town Hall staff!

Proper surveys of the Wetherby population would be prohibitively expensive but social media is free and can give an idea of peoples views. Written versions should always be available at the Town Hall / Library etc. for the 1000s who don't or won't go online.

As usual the word 'bus' or 'library' is not mentioned once in the general town council meetings. Both public services continues to be given no/low priority by our Town Councillors.



Will they use free surveys on Twitter and Facebook to find out what we think?

Germans No Longer Run Local Bus Route

It may surprise many to know that one of the UK's biggest bus companies, Arriva, is owned by the German state railway, Deutsche Bahn (DB).

Arriva is the operator of the 174 Wetherby to Wakefield (via Boston Spa, Clifford, Bramham, Aberford & Garforth). Deutsche Bahn is selling the company to a Miami-based investment group.

With the high standard of public transport in Germany, there were high hopes when DB bought Arriva in 2010. But standards did not improve greatly (if at all in many areas) and their website was totally useless for basic information.

The Editor is reluctant to criticise the company locally as it has run the 174, a rural route for many years, providing a vital link for many communities.



The 174 linking our villages to Aberford, Garforth & Wakefield 5 times a day, including Saturday

No Bus Station on New Town Leaflet! A Full Critique



The map is awful by anyone's standards.

But it beggars belief that Town Councillors did not include the bus station.

Buses are a vital asset for the town bringing in hundreds of shoppers and visitors a week. (Bizarrely, they have included 2 Coach Pick Up points).

As a local bus manager says, it is proof of the low/no priority the Town Council gives to buses.

Not Enough Detail There is no detail that people need eg street names. It is simply not clear where important locations are, like the toilets on the Shambles.

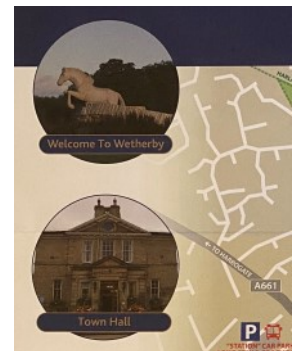
No Smiling Faces The leaflet is uninspiring. There is not a single smiling face on it showing what a friendly bunch of folk we are (in general).



Small & Very Dark Images The photos used are so small (6cm) that they have minimal impact, see right. The images used are dark and do not show our lovely town in the best possible light.



No Advertising to Help Pay for It This leaflet has taken many months to produce and cost £1500 to design and £370 to print. Otleys is bigger and promotes local businesses, which helps to pay for it. Why did we not do the same?



Dark & Dull

Own Up to Mistake & Say Sorry? Who was ultimately responsible for the bus station cock-up? Yes, you've guessed it - nobody has owned up publicly. Indeed, the Council have not even acknowledged the bus station error. They claim the leaflet has been 'well-received'.



Our luxury X98 bus is only 3cm in diameter and in half the image! Truly dismal.

Reprint with Changes? There is mention of a reprint in one Council agenda. Will they include the bus station or leave it for a few years before doing anything?

If they had consulted with residents (and the Editor), such an obvious error would have been noticed.

It is disappointing the Town Council cannot even produce a high quality leaflet to showcase the town.



has joined the team at *Furever Pets* on Aire Road, Wetherby.

We specialise in small to medium sized dogs.

To make an appointment for your loveable pooch for a Full Groom or just a freshen up with a Bath and Blow Dry, please

call **Vanessa** on **07970 546615**
or email **info@pawsgrooming.co.uk**



Elderly Caring & Domestic Help

15 years Experience



NVQ Level 2 Qualification

References available

Call Kerry on 07876 525 589



Wetherby Foodbank

the trussell trust
Stop UK Hunger

30 NOVEMBER - 2 DECEMBER

DONATE DURING THIS WINTER'S TESCO FOOD COLLECTION
at **TESCO** stores nationwide

Our designated store:
Tesco Extra,
Clifton Moor,
York

"This is a major source of donations for us & helps get us through the long winter months. If you're in the Tesco Extra at Clifton Moor, please pop an item or two in your trolley for us if you can! THANK YOU for your support"

Wetherby News

NEWSWATCH

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

We do this in the hope they will wake up and take up some of our stories. Nothing so far.

Issue of 9 Nov '23

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

Community Green Action Event at Town Hall we covered comprehensively

Issue of 23 Nov '23

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

20mph speed limits to be introduced.

Issue of 30 Nov '23

News Items - 1 Letters - 0

One-sided item on Parking Charges

They have had **one story maximum** per issue about Wetherby & area for last few months!

Wetherby Deserves Better



Wildlife of Wetherby

The Bat



Furry but not cute and cuddly!

At dusk in late summer you can often see a bat darting about. There are 18 species in Britain and all are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Not the most cuddly of animals but bats are quite remarkable and worthy of our interest and respect. They are the only mammals capable of controlled flight - and their aerobatic skills have to be seen to be believed! British bats eat insects and nothing else. This makes them valuable friends and allies as many farmers and gardeners seek to reduce insect numbers, as some insects can cause damage to valuable crops and flowers.

The most common bat seen in Britain is also the smallest and it is known as the pipistrelle. This little bat (wing span about 22 to 25cm) is often mistaken for a dusk-flying bird as it flits among the trees and hedgerows seeking insect prey.

Although bats have reasonable eyesight they catch their food (flying insects) by using a remarkable form of 'radar'! The high-pitched sounds they emit are usually out of range of human hearing, although some lower frequency calls are certainly audible. The sound waves from each squeaking call bounce back so allowing the bat to avoid obstacles or to home in on insect prey.

More info at www.ypte.org.uk/

MP Alec Shelbrooke: Using Newspaper Format to Inform Us

Space for Alec (basic salary of £86.5K) **to talk to Residents**

Nothing received since we began 2 years ago

Unedited, max 400

alec.shelbrooke.mp@parliament.uk / alec@wetherbyandeasingwold.co.uk

Alec is sensible to communicate with us using the printed word. A newsletter / newspaper is the best way to spread the message to all his constituents, not just those with access to the internet.

It is a shame he and his Conservative colleagues would not help the only comprehensive written publication in town, the Wetherby Free Press. They could have free space once or twice a month to tell us what they are up to and have a civilised debate. Of course, they would have to allow us to edit it in an unbiased and independent way. They have admitted to us that Wetherby needs a proper news source but not offered anything to achieve one ie funding.

In his paper Alec says his local achievements in the past year are:

- * dealing with over 8,000 constituent cases. That is an incredible 22 per day!!!
- * 'secured investment for the rebuild of 3 local schools'
- * working with local colleagues to bring illegal traveller encampments to the attention of the Police
- * challenging Labour-led West Yorks Combined Authority to ensure funding for our 'unreliable' bus services.

Alec mentions our current Prime Minister Rishi Sunak just the once in the paper's 4 pages and there is no hint of an apology for any of the mistakes his government has made in the past year. Even Michael Gove recently said sorry in the Covid Enquiry but the default position locally for Conservatives is to provide minimum info and never say sorry. Disappointing! Disagree? Write to us.



Why does Alec still use this photo? It must be at least 10 years old

Alec's Twitter Binge



Jun - Oct	2
Nov	4

A massive increase in Tweets from Alec this month, twice as many as the previous 5 months for his 17K followers. Maybe he does read our esteemed organ! The table shows the number of Alec's tweets purely about his constituency. In November his Tweets were about attending Remembrance Weekend events, visiting groups in Scarcroft & Bardsey, opposing Parking Charges & Visiting Walton Village Hall.

facebook

On Facebook, with less than 3000 followers, Alec posted about the same things as on Twitter in November.

Consumer Corner

The Case of Mouldy Batchelors Rice



It was quite shocking to find the contents of this rice packet (use before date of July 2025) had gone off. How could it happen and what if I had not noticed or it had just begun to go off? Food poisoning is a truly horrible experience.

So I wrote to Premier Foods with images. To their credit they responded promptly at all times with the appropriate apologetic language. But I was not satisfied with their first email and £6 of vouchers so I wrote to their Chief Exec.

A fuller response arrived saying they were not sure exactly where it occurred and this time offering £10 of additional vouchers. Not particularly generous for the distress caused but not worth the hassle of asking for more.

So, the moral is just because it's in a sealed bag do not expect food to be fresh - always check it. And write to Chief Execs when complaining if you're not happy with initial reply!



Leeds United finished off a great month of football with a fine home victory. November saw them winning at leaders Leicester, a home win against Plymouth and a draw at Rotherham.

Swansea were the visitors for the midweek match at Elland Road. The Swans are the club Dan James started his career with. Within a minute the player had the ball in the net but the goal was disallowed. Twenty seconds later the visitors were ahead with a deft lob after a defensive error by Leeds.

Within 4 minutes on-form Summerville stormed into the area passing for Piroe to score an easy equaliser. Leeds went into half-time ahead 2 - 1 ahead seconds before the whistle went; Rutter with his first goal for Leeds.

James eventually got his goal against his old club for another great win.

United are in 3rd place before games against two big North East teams.

Utd v Middlesboro on Sat 2 Dec at 15.00
Blackburn v Utd on Sat 9 Dec at 12.30
Sunderland v Utd on Tues 12 Dec at 20.00



The new season of rugby league kicks off on Friday 16 February 2024 for Leeds Rhinos.
 They are at home to Salford Red Devils.
 The Challenge Cup final is set for Saturday 8 June at Wembley Stadium.



The Super League's Magic Weekend format has been retained and it's convenient for local fans as Elland Road is the new host venue for all 12 matches. The Rhinos are playing Warrington Wolves on Saturday 17 August.

The play-offs start on the 28 September.

The Grand Final is at Old Trafford on Saturday 12 October.



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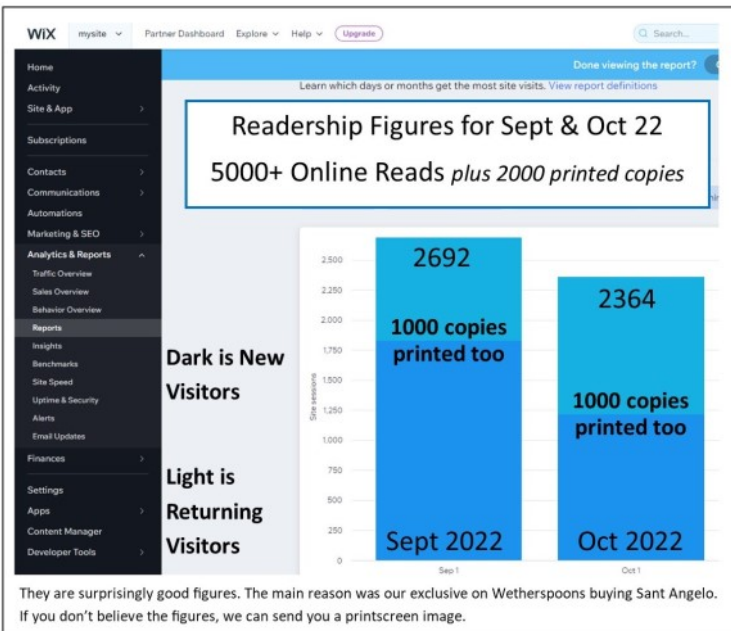
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