

Edited by a 'self-appointed journalist nutter' says ex-Councillor Billie Ager-Mills. Charming! See page 13



Religion Mixing with Politics! See page 10

Vicar: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Peat Phone: 01937 520875

## Best Fed Ducks in UK Help Local Charity



Editor with Shop Manager Elisa

It's astounding that two shops in Wetherby sold 3800 bags of duck food last year, one of them *Cancer Research*. They sold 2250 bags, 120 bags more than last year, bringing £2500 into the coffers in the past 2 years. The local entrepreneurial genius (the modest Editor 😊) who makes up the bags costing £1.25 is still stunned at the success of the simple idea, which came about after seeing so many people feeding bread to the ducks. He says "We are very grateful to everyone who has bought nearly 11,000 bags in the last 3 years at the charity and *Treasures Toys*. They are supporting a very worthy charity and a local business, as well as helping our feathered friends, who bring us so much joy". "It would be great if we had some display boards informing visitors and residents about the wildlife (fishes, birds & mammals) that make our river so special, like Otley does", he added. Paul is also pretty confident that Wetherby really does have the best fed ducks in the UK and will state this until someone can prove otherwise! It is something the town should be proud of.



## Leeds City Council Election - 7 May

We will not insult your intelligence by telling you how to vote. But the 'professional press' like the *Times*, *Mail*, *Guardian*, *Mirror* etc have an opinion, and so do we. See next page.

The only party that has sent anything directly to the *Free Press* are the *Greens*. "You send it, we print it" so here it is:

“ Frances Murphy is a Boston Spa resident who grew up in Wetherby. She brings strong community roots and a focus on practical local priorities.

Frances has committed to priorities of more reliable public transport and safer roads, protecting the area's green belt and special character, and improving access to schools, healthcare and services. Frances Murphy has lived in Boston Spa since 2023 with her husband and young

# VOTE TO IMPROVE YOUR COMMUNITY



Frances Murphy, Green Party

child. A community organiser and campaigner, she co-founded a community arts group in 2020 and works as Marketing Manager for a respected Yorkshire charity. A favourite aspect of her work is supporting people into jobs and opportunities.

Frances says: "I grew up here and I want to make sure that Wetherby and our villages remain a place where people can build their lives,

whether that's getting around, finding a home, or feeling part of the community.

Having a young family, I know how important everyday life is. We need better transport, better access to local services and healthcare – and development that works for our community, with the right infrastructure in place.

I will be a strong local voice on practical improvements for Wetherby and our villages.”

*Reform UK*, *Lib Dems* & *Labour* have candidates as well as the *Conservatives* with current postholder Norma Harrington.

Town Council: **Has £855,000 to give to local groups!** A school wants some of it for basic repairs  
**Both Admin Staff Quit!** We ask why? Recruitment costs £1000s  
Kazia Knight's Replacement will be co-opted - there will be no election

inside

# £855,000

That's a lot of money!

Full Issue at [www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press](http://www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press)



We cater for the 1000s of **DIGITALLY EXCLUDED** with a **Full Copy at Library, Phoenix Café .....**

& 400+ promo copies at *Morrisons*, *Pubs*, *Cafés*, *Dentists*, *Care Homes*, *Churches*, *Hairdressers*, *Shops*

Plse send your News, Views & Events to: [WetherbyFreePress@PM.me](mailto:WetherbyFreePress@PM.me)

Don't Miss Out - Join our Large Mailing List by emailing: [WetherbyFreePress@PM.me](mailto:WetherbyFreePress@PM.me)

## Our Campaign continues



Offline and Overlooked



We Don't Forget the many 1000s of people who are offline - those who do not have (or want) internet access or a smartphone. We ask all organisations to include a phone no. and put information on PAPER eg leaflets Age UK have a similar campaign.



\* My last relationship ended because I didn't open the car door for her. Instead, I just swam for the surface.

\* Did you hear about the guy who collapsed trying to climb Mount Everest? Authorities just found Himalayan there.

\* I had a neck brace fitted weeks ago and I haven't looked back since.

\* I suspect my wife has been pouring glue on my antique firearms. She denies it but I'm sticking to my guns.

\* Haven't seen my dentist in years. Now I have to make up flossed time.

\* I've just deleted all the German contacts from my iPhone. It's now Hans free.

\* Seven star hotels are overrated.

\* The best time to add insult to injury is when you're signing your friend's broken arm cast.

\* Bought my friend an admission ticket for Artemis II for his birthday. He's gonna be over the moon.

\* Did you hear the joke about the broken submarine? It didn't go down that well.

More funnies on back page



As well as the Wetherby Free Press page on [facebook](#) there's the Wetherby Deserves Better page too.

Mafia pls note: \* Both are independently run from the newsletter \*



## Next Wetherby Town Council Mtg

Tues 12 May at 7pm

[www.wetherbytowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.wetherbytowncouncil.gov.uk)

01937 583584 [admin@wetherby.co.uk](mailto:admin@wetherby.co.uk)



## Wetherby Town Council - Pages 9, 11, 12, 13

Our Town Council spend a fortune on staff and they can't keep them very long! This Admin Officer lasted just 1 Year and they need a new Assistant too. Recruitment costs can be £3000 for each post. Why can't they keep staff?

Planning - Chair Cllr Dawn Carr (Payne)

**Lasted 17 minutes.** That is less than 2 minutes per agenda item, including planning applications.

Welcome to Wetherby - Chair Cllr Dean Buckle

**Took 7+ weeks to publish Jan's minutes.** Why?

**Community groups not interested in being on this ctte.** It's obvious why. It has low standards and little, if any, creativity.

Full Council - Chair Cllr Connor Mulhall

**Jan's minutes took 2 months to publish!**

Feb & Mar meetings took place before publication. No explanation. Simply disgraceful.

**9% precept increase. 3 voted against. Not stated who.**

**Feb minutes - Free Press chose to 'diminish' Kazia Knight.** A disgusting slur and utter nonsense, of course.

Staffing Ctte - Chair Cllr Norma Harrington

**Jan's minutes still not published 11 weeks after it took place.** Because 2 staff quit perhaps?

More details on page 9, 11, 12 & 13



## our view

**Leeds City Council Election 7 May**

Conservative Norma Harrington is wanting to be re-elected. She is already a Wetherby Town Councillor, being Chair of the Staffing Committee. One person having so much work and influence in a small town is not good, we think. Cllr Lamb could not manage both roles and resigned as Town Councillor.

Although Cllr Harrington has met the Editor in a perfectly amicable meeting (image on page 3), the Free Press has covered many issues on staffing that she is responsible for and which have been ignored. She has not been open and accountable to us. There are examples of questions that have gone unanswered in this issue of WFP.

There are no 'Independent' candidates in this election. In the last Town Council election the Lib Dems could not manage a candidate, yet they have found one for this City Council vacancy. Labour's candidate Alex Riddell is a Town Councillor who has not criticised any of his Conservative Town Councillor colleagues to our knowledge. We see very little real opposition in this Town Council. We asked him to write about our Conservative MP and he wouldn't. The Greens came very close to beating the Conservatives in the last Town Council election and are putting out a positive message on the front page. We get the Councillors we deserve, so please make your vote count.



# The Nasty Underbelly of Wetherby

## A Stain on the Whole Town

There are unpleasant people in every town but Wetherby seems to have more than its fair share. You may come across them directly one day. Here is how you may want to deal with them. We expect to get criticised from those in public positions we write about, especially the Editor. That is human nature but they or their supporters have gone well beyond any level of decency. They tell their lies and spread misinformation on social media groups that allow libellous statements. It's the world we live in, folks. You either fight it or you don't.

**The Editor has decided it is pointless responding; that just encourages more.** The Editor doesn't read any of their venom on the groups of which he is not a member. The admin person of the *Free Press* Facebook account gives him a general idea of what's been said. "What, don't you care what people say about you?" I hear you say.

I reply "People believe what they want to. If they want to believe stuff without evidence or any context, then that's up to them. Also, you can't argue with stupid - it is a complete waste of time. Many are fake profiles so they can say anything with impunity, as we have proven many times. People must remember that those in senior positions who criticise us have most to fear from us and the truth - it's usually cronyism, politics, incompetence, greed or laziness.

These cowardly keyboard warriors never turn up to my 'Meet the Editors', 7 so far. Says it all really.



And of course, the *Wetherby Mafia* are behind much of this hate, encouraging the attacks and pulling the strings of their gullible puppets. They are one or two individuals in influential positions that we have written about, no doubt, and who are not mature enough to accept criticism. Note that we have not withdrawn a single article from any of our 89 issues.

**So, like a red kite, the Editor rises above it all.**

He will not descend to their level. The latest attempt to goad him was in comments underneath the irrational statement by Cllr Jane Lavocah, see page 6. The *Free Press* admin told me it was like at school, one big pile-on, like immature schoolchildren. Everybody who knows me well knows what they write is malicious nonsense. And that's all that really matters.



**Of course, their insults and lies are to DISTRACT you from the issues we raise.** Put simply, they try to shoot the messenger, instead of addressing an issue or answering the reasonable questions we ask.

**So, if you defend yourself against their nonsense, they are being successful in this distraction.** It takes the heat off the real issues, so don't be fooled, folks.

That's why we focus on getting people to read the *Free Press* where normal, sensible people can make their own minds up.

**Truth and facts always back up our opinions.** If the Editor is arrested for any crime, like harassment or threatened with being sued for libel, we will be the first to tell you.

**The same old chestnut comes up** - comments about a Restraining Order the Editor negotiated and agreed to, when the prosecution approached him to avoid their case going to trial. It was an absurd allegation of harassment by 2 men in a publicly-funded organisation, brought against the Editor for asking reasonable questions and raising legitimate issues. **There was no trial, no guilt, no criminal record case dismissed, - just a piece of paper agreeing that he would ignore these two people.** The case relates to Issue 5, and our responses to previous comments about this are on page 5 in Issue 54 and page 5 in Issue 55. Anybody who's interested in facts and the full story on any allegation can contact us; the Editor is always willing to meet up. You can then decide what sort of a character he is. Cllrs Lamb, Harrington, Stables and our 'friendly' Town Cllr gave him the impression they think



he's a decent fella after meetings with them, example on right.

**Haters can call the Editor anything they want** - it's water off a duck's back. You respond and you will be swamped with more insults. These are sad people and we try to feel sorry for them. They attack a stranger which must feel wrong to them deep down - clearly unhappy individuals who should perhaps seek help.

**Their strong emotions, and the denial by senior figures in the town that the Mafia exists, shows to us that there is much more to uncover in this town.** Our evidence that the *Mafia* exists are in Issue 58 on the front page & pages 5 & 8. The police are suspicious of those that do not answer reasonable questions and so are we. We have a feeling the full truth of what is really going on in this town will come out soon.

**We have faith that the many good people in Wetherby will do the right thing** and come forward with anything they feel is not right. Our 'friendly' Town Councillor is a good start and we hope that will encourage others.

**The Mafia's strategy will not work.** We will not waste our time on them and will continue to focus on giving you the facts about those in authority in this town, especially those who spend our money. Their aim is to 'cancel' us. Even if they do manage that, we have a very large mailing list, increasing every week and they can never stop us contacting residents, organisations, the media etc directly.

**The *Free Press* had a vast increase in viewings on a non-publication day thanks to the online nonsense from our antagonists.**

*Like our beautiful red kites, we rise above the hate from keyboard warriors, anonymous cowards and the sensitive souls in the public eye who cannot take the mildest criticism*



## COWARDS



*Cllrs Harrington & Lamb last year not looking like they thought Paul was the despicable person portrayed by keyboard warriors*



## Obvious Error in Election Leaflet

### Harrington



Area Name should be Wetherby. Quite Important!

We only point this mistake out as not checking for errors is a constant issue with our Conservative-dominated Town Council. *There is little attention paid to detail, as shown by this example.*

**They do not check their own literature** to get them re-elected. *It is no wonder Town Council meeting minutes are so poor in many cases.*

**They have many supporters in this town** and a local constituency party with many members. *And none of them are asked to proof read; this is surprising.*

**We notice that the word 'Labour' is used 6 times** and 'Conservative' only twice in the main text. *Is this negative campaigning strategy because their party is so unpopular at the moment?*

**We also note the Conservative obsession with reversing car park charges**, a complete waste of time in our opinion. *They should focus on improving our buses, like a Saturday and evening service to York. No evidence of any progress on that yet.*

## In Bloom Working Hard to .....



... improve Wetherby. Volunteers have removed the old woody lavender and replenished the soil in Anchor Garden.

**It was 7 years in March 2019** when the anchor was transferred from outside the old social club on Sandbeck Way.

**They are always on the lookout for new volunteers** so please consider helping them.

Call Wetherby in Bloom on 01937 581234

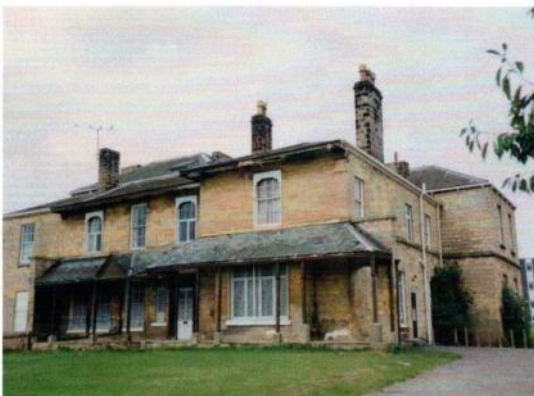
The Free Press thanks all the many volunteers in Wetherby, Boston Spa & Villages for their fantastic work

## New Booklet published

### HALLFIELD HOUSE

200 Years of History

Peter Catton



A publication by Wetherby Civic Society

Wetherby Civic Society has just published their latest booklet.

Hallfield House will be remembered as Hallfield Mansions to many in Wetherby. It was demolished in 2006 to make way for the Medical Centre.

**This is the third in their series** on the destroyed grand houses of Wetherby.

**Copies of the booklet can be obtained** from Castlegate Stationers and Kemps Bookshop.

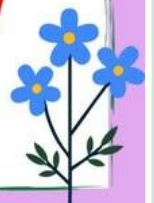


## Wetherby Foodbank

April 2026  
Foodbank Wish List

- Instant mashed potato
- Long-life fruit juice
- Tinned fruit - all types
- Tinned custard
- Puddings - e.g. long-life sponge puds
- Sugar - small packets please
- Pasta'n'sauce instant meals
- Pot noodles/instant noodle meals
- Tinned potatoes
- Tinned carrots
- Tinned sweetcorn
- Tinned meats (cold meats)
- Squash/cordials
- Household cleaning items
- loo cleaner
- Or... make a donation via our website

Thank you!



Friday 5.30 - 9.30pm \* Last orders 10.30pm \* Tickets £12  
Saturday 12 noon - 9.30pm \* Last orders 10.30pm \* Tickets £15

Buy your tickets today!  
[www.WetherbyBeerFest.com](http://www.WetherbyBeerFest.com)

# Why Does Wetherby Have No Street Art?

Let's Get Creative



Cllr Dean Buckle

**Wetherby has had no interesting or attractive sculptures, murals, paintings or any other form of artistic expression in the last 10 years.** We show in most *Free Press* editions how other places here and abroad have creativity and imagination in abundance. It would add so much to the town and show it has some character.

**Our Town Councillors and City Councillors have shown no interest at all in our campaign,** which has been going for over a year now. Cllr Dean Buckle, Chair of *Welcome to Wetherby*, continues to ignore our suggestions.

**We can't even manage a single painted telecoms cabinet!** There is nothing with imagination to admire or make you smile. Our one and only artwork is hidden away under the A1(M) well away from sight from most residents & visitors. **Our empty shops look depressing, and are a lost opportunity to promote the town.** Many individuals and organisations are responsible, all lacking any creativity to visually improve these eyesores.

## Our Campaign to Brighten Up Wetherby Continues!

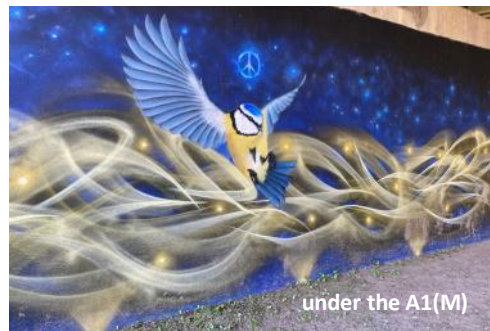


S-Bahn Station in Berlin

Nothing (to welcome visitors) at our bus sta.



Bart's Dad in Berlin



under the A1(M)

Our One & Only Piece of Streetart



Keswick



Roundhay Park

No wood sculptures anywhere on our railway path or by the river



Street Lane in Roundhay



Kendal



Bowness-on-Windermere



Children's Park in Berlin

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

- ◇ Before Oct 2025 non-car owners subsidised motorists through Council Tax to maintain free car parks
  - ◇ Costs £4 return to Knaresborough, £5 return to Leeds, Otley, York & Garforth and £5/£6 return to Harrogate on the X70/7
  - ◇ Harrogate Bus Co's route 7 to Harrogate & Leeds via B Spa was reduced to hourly from half-hourly in Nov '22
  - ◇ Harrogate Bus Co cut the 11.30pm bus on route 7 from Harrogate in Nov '22. Last bus now 10.20pm (but 12.25am to K'boro)
  - ◇ **NO SATURDAY service to York (Connexion's route 412) or Otley (Connexion's route 923) since 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
  - ◇ Their 7 invaluable bus guide network maps are online only. The Wharfedale one is not even displayed at W'by Bus Sta
- 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 transport authority in a national survey in both 2023 & 2024. Opinion based on above facts and many others: Metro / WYCA are a large bureaucracy with low standards and a poor record.
- Cllr Alan Lamb is an influential board member so plse contact him, and us, about any bus issue - alan.lamb@leeds.gov.uk**

# Cllr Lavocah Wants To Be Left Alone and Points Out That She is a Woman!

**Councillor behaviour deteriorates even more.** Read the post on social media below and see what you think.

Ms Lavocah featured in 2 articles of the last issue on pages 8 & 10. Here are the facts:

- ◇ The one on page 8 was about businesses spoiling social media groups like *Nextdoor* by advertising excessively
- ◇ We gave her restaurant as an example - 5 times in 14 days & promoting the same thing twice within 24 hours
- ◇ We said she doesn't post anything to inform us about her Town Council role
- ◇ We wrote to her asking her to reduce the number of business adverts
- ◇ **She ignored our polite email**
- ◇ **In the post below she does not address any of the points we raised**

*Is Ms Lavocah a selfish member of our community who thinks she is above answering to the public? Will she continue to misuse one of the few decent local social media groups we have - Nextdoor?*

The second article on page 10 was comparing Councillor Mulhall with Cllr Lavocah, both the youngest Councillors by far, as there seemed such a large difference between the two in terms of workload.

- ◆ See the responsibilities she has, right, compared to Cllr Mulhall's
- ◆ She attended less than 40% of meetings in the most recent published figures, the second worst attendance record of any Cllr, see Issue 83
- ◆ She is one of the Editor's local ward Councillors but has not responded to any of his emails about the many legitimate issues this newsletter raises
- ◆ She admitted to us once that she receives very little contact from residents
- ◆ We wrote to her requesting that she address these points
- ◆ **She ignored our polite email**

- ◆ **In the post below she does not address a single issue that we raised**

*A normal reaction would be to defend yourself and prove how conscientious you are. Cllr Lavocah clearly does not wish to be accountable to a resident in her ward or our readers. Why will she not provide any evidence that she does anything but turn up to a few meetings? (We have received an email from one Councillor who explained their absence from meetings, which we gladly accept, and so will not mention the issue again).*



Cllr Jane Lavocah

**Jane Lavocah**  
East Ward  
[jane.lavocah@wetherby.co.uk](mailto:jane.lavocah@wetherby.co.uk)  
Appointments  
Markets Committee  
Welcome to Wetherby

**Connor Mulhall – Mayor**  
North Ward  
[connor.mulhall@wetherby.co.uk](mailto:connor.mulhall@wetherby.co.uk)  
Appointments  
Budgets and Governance Committee  
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Committee  
Communications Committee (Chair)  
Co-option Committee (Chair)  
Finance & General Purposes Committee (Chair)  
Property Committee  
Town Hall Management Committee  
Cash Access UK Community Engagement Group – Council Representative  
Racecourse Approach Development Group – Council Representative  
Leeds Festival Working Group – Council Representative



## Editor's Resonse to Cllr Lavocah's Post

Firstly, I am not a member of this *Facebook* group. Cllr Lavocah did not have the decency to send me this in an email directly.

### Distraction Technique - Why Don't You Do The Job Yourself?

Always a popular one - shoot the messenger. I choose to improve Wetherby in my own way, thank you - by making those in power accountable and highlighting low standards. Much better than spending time with many people like you in meetings. Other former Cllrs have realised this is a waste of their time and quit.

**Cllr Lavocah couldn't make it more clear that she doesn't like being monitored** and would much rather I wasn't the Editor of the only community newsletter we have. Nobody would have the time to be Editor and Cllr, or would want to. Would she also want me to give up raising £1000s for charity (see front page) and give up my other voluntary work to spend time in ineffective meetings, like *Welcome to Wetherby*?

**Another person who doesn't know the difference between slander and libel.** THE WRITTEN WORD IS LIBEL. It's quite important to get words like this right!

**Of course we have not slandered or libelled anybody.** No example is provided. Not one of our subjects has even threatened to sue us. Our opinions are based on facts. Just like this article is. If it's not, I look forward to your solicitor's letter.

**You have to laugh at her immature 'self-glorified' insult** (and it's *Publisher*, not *PowerPoint*). To think that Cllr Lavocah once had designs on taking Alec Shelbrooke on as our MP! We find that astounding.

**Like most of her colleagues, Cllr Lavocah has not responded to any of our polite emails** in writing for years. Why is that? The written word is the best form of communication - you can be made accountable for what you write, unlike speech unless it is recorded. It's obvious why Cllrs prefer to talk instead of write. **But we are a newsletter - we publish the written word.** It is obvious why we prefer the written word. I will, of course, meet anybody on request. I will say what I write to your face, no problem. And if I were to turn up to Council meetings or their 'Meet the Councillor' on Thursdays, I have no doubt I would be accused of harassment.



**Her last paragraph is a truly pathetic excuse for not responding.** No examples of 'antagonistic behaviour' are given. It's more proof she does not want to be accountable - 'leave me alone!' she whines without any justifiable reason.

**But what she says next shocked us all.** She uses her gender to make a point. Why did she say 'from a woman' and mention respect?

**We asked that she remove it from her post,** apologise and we would say no more about it. We know angry people say stupid things in the heat of the moment.

**Sadly, she ignored our request so our response is on the next page.**

No explanation.

No apology.

## cont'd Why Does Cllr Lavocah Mention That She is a Woman?

or as a business owner ever. I would kindly ask, if you would simply, just leave me alone! This is a very simple request from a woman. I do hope you can respect that.

We couldn't quite believe that she said she was a woman and used it as a reason to be left alone and respected.

It's obvious that she is a woman, we have never doubted her gender. Is she implying that women are the weaker sex and therefore she should be left alone?

What has her being a woman got to do with anything?

Cllr Lavocah refused to clarify these words and tell us why she used them.

We must therefore assume she is playing the gender card. She must be desperate to avoid scrutiny if she is. A truly pathetic attempt at avoiding accountability for anything she does.

If she is saying I am writing about her because she is a woman and I target women only, then in a courtroom my lawyer would say:

"Cllr Dean Buckle, he's a man I'm pretty sure M'Lord. The Editor has strongly criticised him in many issues recently, and indeed called for his resignation, M'Lord. Not to mention the fact he has written about Cllr Lamb, Cllr Mulhall and many other persons, all of the male persuasion, M'Lord". Case closed.

Some of the sadder people on *Wetherby Grapevine* caught onto Cllr Lavocah's words about being a woman and spewed forth their venom, implying that I target women ie that I am a misogynist. Only fools believe what they read by those with a grudge and no facts I did not see their derogatory comments but our Facebook account admin told me about it. Cllr Lavocah did not have the decency to switch the comments function off. Legal action may follow as solicitors with consciences have been in touch.



Constant critic and prominent Lion Steve Cooper jumped on the bandwagon, and left this pathetic post on another platform, see left.

Below are the reasons why we have featured these women (and who therefore may bear a grudge against us.)

Ex Cllr Linda Richards (Con) runs the amateurish, low-profile *Wetherby & Villages Clean Rivers Group (WAVCRG)*, compared to the professional and outspoken *Ilkley Clean Rivers Group*. A comparison of their websites show you everything you need to know. There has been no significant reduction in river pollution directly resulting from this group's pressure, despite collaboration with fellow Conservative underwater cameraman, Mark Barrow. It can't seriously be called a campaign group when it refuses to criticise anything *Yorkshire Water* does. Just our opinion, of course. See Issues 48, 49, 66 & 71.

Cllr Norma Harrington has not complained to me about anything I've written. Would she meet me if she thought I was a misogynist?

Former Cllr Jo Maltby featured in Issue 36 for being the worst attender of meetings in 2022. She attended less than 1/3 of meetings with no explanation or apology to us.

We featured Nik Noble and her *Boston Spa Community & Homeless Project* in Issues 57 & 58. She wrote an immature post on social media attacking me, which was unbecoming of anybody who works in the caring sector with vulnerable people. We answered all her irrational and immature points. We pointed out that her project is not a charity and therefore cannot be monitored by the *Charity Commission* or anybody else. We advise people to be very careful where they give their money to, as anybody can set up a project like this.

Billie Ager-Mills (former Councillor) - see page 4 of Issue 77 for ONE alleged call. See page 13 of this issue for her charming comment.

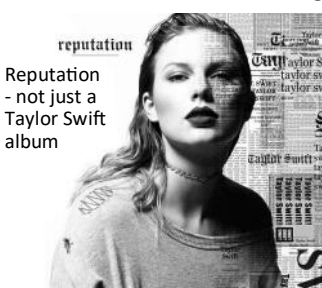
If Mr Cooper (an Elmet Lion member) took his hate-filled glasses off for a second, he would see that we criticise and compliment people of both genders in the *Free Press*. Again, we ask that this cowardly keyboard warrior (still won't say his nonsense to my face) seeks help for his problem with me/us. It is sad.

But we thank him for raising giving us another opportunity to highlight the important issues above. And we are grateful to him at least for increasing our readership whenever he and his cronies post their unpleasant remarks, see right. Any time he wants a refund for the *Free Press*, we'll willingly give it - it's a little less than his favourite paper, the *Wetherby News* at £2.30.

Only gullible people would take posts like this seriously on social media. You cannot believe most of what you read on the internet, sadly.

## We Call for Cllr Lavocah's Resignation

The Editor wrote to all *Wetherby Town Councillors* and the *Town Clerk*, expressing our view that Cllr Jane Lavocah has brought the reputation of their Council into disrepute with this post.



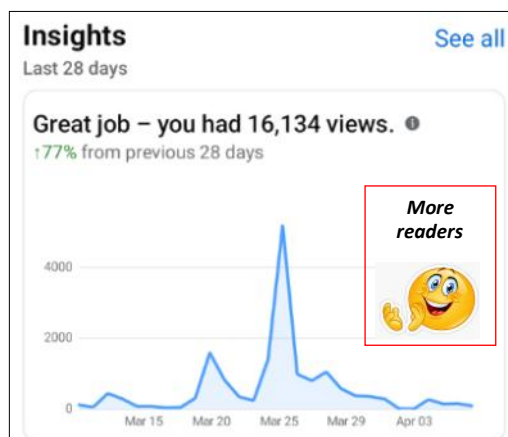
We expressed our view that the standard of Councillor behaviour has dropped even lower, and that Cllr Lavocah is unsuitable to be a Councillor and that she should resign.

We received 2 responses:

- \* A male Councillor said he supported Cllr Lavocah 'as a man'. No explanation as to the reason for his support or why he said 'as a man'. This is more proof of irrational Councillor behaviour.
- \* The Town Clerk, Dianne Rickaby asking if we wanted to make the complaint 'official'.

We say to Dianne "Why should we spend our time on this? You have all the information you need - her post, the emails and the articles in the *Free Press*. Either you want to protect the Council's reputation and deter future poor behaviour like this, or you don't. It's up to you to take this forward, not us."

Added to that, Cllr Harrington & the Town Clerk at the time added extra clauses into the complaints procedures so they can easily say any complaint is 'vexatious'. It is purely so that they can stop any complaint from going any further, including reasonable ones ie to avoid embarrassing publicity. At the time we asked them why they added it and got no response, see Issue 60.



Increase in Views thanks to Mr Cooper et al

# The Beauty of Nature on Our Doorstep - Goosemoor

As the glorious sight of the daffodils fades away for another year, there's more nature to admire at wonderful places like *Goosemoor* nature reserve 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.



**Bullfinch**



**Siskin**



**Greenfinch**

*Thanks to Jack Evans*



Boston Spa, Wetherby  
& Villages

Community Green Group

## Coordinator & Volunteers Needed

**Boston Spa Big Bike Fix is looking for a paid coordinator following their successful bid for a National Lottery Community Fund grant.**

The Boston Spa, Wetherby and Villages Big Bike Fix is a successful bicycle recycling scheme run locally from Boston Spa, which has repaired and donated over 1,000 second hand adults and kids bikes in the last 5 years.

Bikes are donated freely to us by members of the public and also by two local bikes shops. We have a team of voluntary fixers who repair the bikes so they are road worthy and then they are donated on to families and individuals in need across Leeds, including refugees and asylum seekers.

We have links with a similar scheme run in South Leeds and we also donate any surplus bikes to another bike recycling scheme who run bike repair sessions in prisons. Their bikes are then donated onto families in need in the UK and also to developing countries.

The scheme has been run and largely coordinated on a voluntary basis, and demand for this service continues to grow.

**To continue to offer this service to our local communities (and keep unnecessary waste from landfill), we are looking for additional volunteers to continue with bike fixing, plus a coordinator who will be paid £15/ hour to organise the movement of the bikes, communicate with all those involved in and with the project, help sell the top end bikes and advertise on social media.**

We are looking for people who have an interest in bikes and cycling and have some skills in repairing bikes (not essential, we can offer further training if interested).

You would also need to have good communication and organisational skills and be able to work flexibly in the role. We've started something amazing, that truly benefits our local communities and puts to good use unused bikes.

**We don't want to lose this valuable service. If you can make a difference (with admin, fixing, grant application etc), please contact [adrian.balcombe@bostongreengroup.co.uk](mailto:adrian.balcombe@bostongreengroup.co.uk) for a chat and further information.**

Know someone who might be interested? please share.

<https://bostongreengroup.co.uk/cycling/big-bike-fix-weve-started-something-amazing/>

*Adrian Balcombe*

Boston Spa, Wetherby and Villages Community Green Group is non-politically affiliated and is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Registered Charity Number 1204438)





# Supporting the Heart of Wetherby

At Wetherby Town Council our priority is simple:

To protect what makes Wetherby special and to invest in its future.

### Local Decision Making

Town Councillors are residents who understand the needs of our community. Decisions are made locally, transparently and with Wetherby at heart.

### Public Realm Improvements

Improvements to public spaces, benches, noticeboards and small infrastructure projects that make a big difference locally. Wetherby Town Council has recently undertaken additional bin emptying to ease overflowing and keep our greenspaces clean and vibrant. New memorial benches have also been sponsored by residents and placed around the town.



### Play Areas & Parks in Wetherby

Sandringham Park Play area – A community favourite

One of Wetherby's most popular spaces has been recently refurbished and officially re-opened with upgraded, safe and inclusive facilities for children and young people to enjoy. This upgrade was a real community effort delivered by Wetherby Town Council and supported by local groups such as Friends of Sandringham Park and funding partners all of which reflects the town's commitment to providing great outdoor spaces. Sandringham Park has continued to win the Green Flag award for more than 15 years.



### Protecting Our Character

From maintaining floral displays to supporting heritage and community spaces, the Town Council helps ensure Wetherby remains attractive, welcoming and flourishing.



### Civic & Community Events

Support for remembrance services, civic celebrations and community initiatives that bring residents together.



### Wetherby Community Market – A vibrant Heart of the Town

Wetherby's market is at the heart of the town and a cherished weekly tradition that dates back centuries. In fact, Wetherby was granted the right to hold a market by Royal Charter in 1240, and today the legacy lives on every Thursday via Wetherby Town Council.



### Why it matters

- Your contribution helps fund:
- A town that looks cared for
  - Events that bring people together, especially our Bonfire & Fireworks event
  - Support for local organisations and their events
  - Enhancements that improve everyday life

### Community Grants

Financial support for local organisations, clubs and voluntary groups that strengthen community life.

### Working in Partnership

We work alongside:  
• Local community groups  
• Businesses  
• Ward Councillors  
• Other public bodies  
Together, we amplify the impact of every pound spent.

### Stay involved

We welcome residents to attend council meetings share ideas and get involved in shaping the future of Wetherby.

### A Small Contribution A Big Local Impact

Because this funding stays within Wetherby, every pound works harder for our town.  
**£127.26 per year on a Band D equivalent – Pride in Wetherby**  
That's just £2.44 per week – reinvested directly into keeping Wetherby vibrant, welcoming and well cared for.

### How your 2026/27 Council Tax will look on each band per year:

Band A Council Tax Charge	Band B Council Tax Charge	Band C Council Tax Charge	Band D Council Tax Charge	Band E Council Tax Charge	Band F Council Tax Charge	Band G Council Tax Charge	Band H Council Tax Charge
£84.84	£98.98	£133.32	£127.26	£155.55	£183.83	£212.11	£254.53

## Town Council Bulletin for 26 / 27

This summary is what most residents will read as an explanation on what

**£725,000**

of our money will be spent on this year.

It shows you what **FEW RESPONSIBILITIES** they actually have

They will spend at least

**£350,000**

of £725K on STAFF. That's

**46%**

No mention of

**£250,000**

that was spent on Sandringham Park

or that it was an increase of

**9%**

on last year (which was a 10% increase on prev yr)

Open & Accountable, Mayor Mulhall? You are Having a Laugh! The Joke is On Us, Folks.

So let's look at their bulletin. We have images of a bin, a bench and flowers. And a cemetery. A Thursday market that everybody agrees has declined markedly over the years (yet other towns have more customers and traders on their more frequent market days eg Otley).

There are images of Remembrance Day & Bonfire Night - the only 2 constant events we have, both of which should pay for themselves.

**There is NO MENTION of the deteriorating Town Hall that has cost us 100s of £1000s over the years, including a new lift.** Why is that, we wonder. They never discuss selling it to decrease staff office costs.

Nothing about what they are planning to spend all that money on in 26/27 or why they need so much year after year. You could re-print this Bulletin year after year, with just the figures changing.

One thing they are very good at is telling you what they are **NOT** responsible for ie potholes, bin service, parking, library, roadworks, bus services ..... We congratulate them on that.

As it says on page 11 of this issue, there are only 20 printed bulletins at the Town Hall for the 'offline and overlooked' to peruse only, not to take away! With a budget of £725K, it beggars belief that they cater so poorly for this group (last year just ONE Annual Report printed).



## TRANSPORT NEWS

All 4 buses on the main route to Leeds are new - usb ports, friendly drivers & comfy. We are grateful. But they are all single-deckers. To grow a route you need double-deckers. People prefer them, especially at peak times when passengers have to stand. There are still complaints of bad delays into Leeds because they go up Eastgate instead of turning right into Byrom St.

This poster at Leeds Rail Station shows all you need to know about the priorities of Leeds City Council & Metro / WYCA.

They care only about taxi users. There are 2 posters for them and none for bus users, who, when the work is finished, will have to walk further to get their bus. Mature European countries that know how to do public transport properly, like Germany & Switzerland, mostly have rail and bus stations right next to each other.

We will ask WYCA Board Member Cllr Alan Lamb for his comment. (We asked him about the refusal of WYCA to let Flixbus use Leeds Bus Station in an email of 21 March. He has yet to respond or even acknowledge receipt.)



# Shouldn't the Church Steer Well Clear of Politics?

It appears not if you live in 'Tory Town' (*Leeds Live* quote) Wetherby. Even the church seems to be in the blue clique, providing our Conservative MP with a platform to speak. We were taken aback to see two of our local churches promote Alec Shelbrooke with a lecture titled 'The Common Good'.

We are all very aware of how divisive politics is. How did they think non-Conservative members of their congregations and residents would react to this poster and lecture? It would surely give most people the impression that the church is supporting him and his party, wouldn't it? The relevant factors are these:

- \* Mr Shelbrooke is not afraid to air his strong views which many strongly disagree with eg he is a large supporter of Liz Truss who caused economic turmoil in her very short period as Prime Minister.
- \* For any MP to talk about 'The Common Good' would be highly ironic and controversial to many.
- \* There are plenty of other platforms our MP could, and does, use to speak publicly eg the *Mens Forum*.

For the church to do this seemed bizarre and naïve. But this is Wetherby, of course where strange things are par for the course.



A Lent Lecture by our Conservative MP - 'The Common Good'

The following month we see a service of thanksgiving for the Mayor, also a Conservative. The *Town Council* is a political organisation as we show in most issues of the *Free Press* and there is an important local election in May. Again, this event could be seen as supporting the Conservatives.

We would prefer a service of thanksgiving for all the wonderful volunteers in the town, instead of one politician ie for the:

- ◆ Volunteers who help raise £1000s for charity in our many charity shops
- ◆ Volunteers who help those struggling in this cost-of-living crisis ie *Wetherby Foodbank*
- ◆ Volunteers who make our town more interesting and attractive eg *Wetherby in Bloom*, *Wetherby Civic Society*, *Wetherby arts Festival*, *Boston & Villages Green Group* etc

Put simply, we believe most sensible people think the church should stay well away from politics. If they don't then they must shout loud and clear standing up for the poorest and most vulnerable in society, like Jesus would have done. Let's hear them make strong statements about how shameful it is that a wealthy town like ours has a foodbank.

We wrote to Matthew Peat at *St James Church* and Ann Fox of the *Methodists* just before Easter with our best wishes at this busy and important time of the year for them. We asked them to explain why they think these two events are appropriate, especially so close to the May election.



We also asked whether any Councillors have any influence in either of their churches. We are grateful for their response below. Judge for yourselves whether it addresses the issues adequately or not.

“ Thank you for your enquiry. Both our churches, along with other members of the *Wetherby & District Churches Together* group, are committed to serving our local community in whatever way we can. We work with a range of people from all sorts of backgrounds. We are here for everyone, and our facilities are widely used and appreciated.

With regard to the Civic Service:

The Civic Service is a traditional annual event, which takes place in one of our churches. All members of the local community are welcome to attend. It would take place regardless of who held the office and how some within our community might judge their achievements. It's more about their symbolic role within the town and provides an opportunity to pray for the Mayor (whoever they are), councillors, as well as those volunteers across different organisations who give of their time to help and support the life of our community. Each year the service has an emphasis based on the Mayor's chosen charity. This year that charity is *MIND* so we shall spend some time during the service reflecting on mental health and what we can all do to help alleviate the challenges that can bring both to us and our neighbours.

With regard to the Lent lecture:

The Lent Lecture(s) emerged from an agreement between The *Methodist Church and St. James'*. Its purpose, to deepen our ties and where possible offer shared events. These have traditionally taken place in the season of Lent but had not restarted after the pandemic. We have been pleased to reintroduce the lecture this year and decided to invite Sir Alec Shelbrooke to speak to us in his capacity as our local Member of Parliament. We have yet to determine who the speaker next year will be but it will be someone different with a different theme. It was publicly advertised and anyone was welcome to come along. The evening was well attended and enjoyed by both our church families and members of the public.

Revd Matthew Peat and Revd Ann Fox ”



# Town Council Continue to Ignore Our Legitimate Questions

## TOWN COUNCIL FULL MEETING Jan '26. Chair Cllr Mulhall

**No Explanation why minutes took 2 months to publish.** Feb & March meetings had taken place before they were finally published. *Disgraceful. Was it because the 26/27 budget was being discussed?*

5 residents attended. That means 3 minutes each if they all wanted to speak. The meeting lasted 1hr 13mins.

**It cost us £13,000 for the election** that took place after a Conservative councillor quit.

### **26 / 27 COUNCIL TAX INCREASE OF 9%**

All it said about staff was "Staff remuneration was within guidelines". *We can safely assume they were at or near the maximum level, otherwise why would they make this obvious statement?*

**Staff costs are now hidden.** All it says is "Personnel" costing £9500. This clearly does not include salaries etc. See below for the actual cost we had to calculate.

**Three councillors were against the 9% increase and one could not make their mind up!** *Wow! To have no opinion on it at all is amazing. Is it a dereliction of duty too?*

**They tried to minimise the increase** by ONLY stating the weekly rise of 19p. *More proof they are not open and accountable.*

### **TOTAL EXPENDITURE IS £725,000 next year.**

We calculate staff costs in Jan were almost £350,000. That is nearly **HALF the budget** for next year. *How does that compare to other Councils like Otley, Knaresborough etc? Not one Councillor is interested in finding out.*

### **STAFFING CTTE - 22 JAN 2026 MINUTES STILL NOT PUBLISHED ON 13 APRIL.**

*Wake Up Wetherby! THAT IS 11 WEEKS. 7 other meetings after this one took place and HAVE published minutes. What is Cllr Harrington (Chair) and the Town Clerk, Dianne Rickaby, keeping from us? Is it the Admin staff resignations? Disgraceful.*

### **Budget & Governance Ctte - Feb '26.**

**Chair Cllr Newcombe.** Mtg lasted less than 1 hour.

**Only 20 copies of the Budget Bulletin will be available 'for public viewing' at the Town Hall.** *Surely with a budget of £725K next year they can afford for residents to actually take them away to read. They treat the public with contempt with actions like this. What about the 'offline and overlooked' who won't see it online or in an ad mag? And who reads an ad mag unless looking for a trader?*

**There was NO MENTION OF CHECKING that the ad mag is delivered to every household.**

*See page 9 for more details of the Bulletin - it doesn't give you the most important figures and information. Usual low standards.*



Cllr Connor Mulhall  
Conservative



Norma Harrington  
Conservative



Cllr Stuart Newcombe  
Conservative

**CHECK IT!**

## TOWN COUNCIL FULL MEETING Feb '26. Chair Cllr Mulhall

"Disappointment was expressed that a local online news outlet chose to diminish the late Councillor Knight for her absence at a council meeting"

**Assuming they mean us, how did they think we would know about her death? Or even that she was very unwell?**

They put nothing on their own website!

**The stupidity of this statement is breathtaking. Do they seriously think we would make an issue about somebody's absence from a meeting if we knew they were dead (or ill)?**

*There are clearly some deranged minds in this council if they think like this. Further questions:*

**How many people expressed 'disappointment',** one person, two, ..... everyone?

**How did we 'diminish' Kazia Knight?** *A crass word to use.*

**Which meeting?** *No detail for us to respond properly to this idiotic slur. Low standards of minuting yet again.*

**Needless to say, not one single Councillor contacted us** about this matter yet they felt so strongly they minuted it. *Disgraceful behaviour, yet again.*

**Who is responsible? Of course, nobody** will take individual blame for anything - that is Council policy - but in our eyes it is Cllr Mulhall (Chair) and Town Clerk Dianne Rickaby, both responsible for minutes. If it's not them, and they tell us who is responsible, we will make that clear in the next issue.

***This is a pathetic attempt to discredit us***

*There is at least one good Councillor who has common sense - our 'friendly' Town Councillor. They have said that "mention of this was not necessary or appropriate. This was not the right time for comment by any Councillor but to only to reflect on Cllr Knights life."*



Dianne Rickaby,  
Town Clerk

4 residents attended - each given 3.75 minutes to speak if they all wanted to. The mtg lasted 1 hr 20 mins.

**What's happening at Mercure Hotel?** 'Lidl have 5 years to begin building work'.

**Two air pollution monitors costing £500** to be installed on St James St & Victoria St.

### **Money Given to Schools?**

Some of our money from the CIL honey pot (currently £855,000) could now be given to schools or any educational facility for basics, like drainage improvements. The Council are considering it.

*Is that a correct use of our money? How will they decide what should be funded and how much? Surely the floodgates will open and all schools will be wanting money for everything.*

*We have a Department for Education to pay for all aspects of education.*

*If the Town Council decide to fund schools, why not bus routes, subsidising vital services like an evening and Saturday service to York?*

*We will ask Craig Temple of Connexions for his opinion.*



**£855,000**

## cont'd Town Council Continue to Ignore Our Legitimate Questions

**The Council will enter *Yorkshire in Bloom* this year, hopefully learning from the mistakes they made last year.**

**Increase in drugs found on Council sites.**

**Decrease in Anti-Social behaviour.**

**Police & Communities Together (PACT) figures for Jan 26** 'were noted' - none produced in minutes or Appendices. No summary. *Unhelpful.*

**Planning Ctte - Feb '26. Chair Cllr Carr (Payne). This meeting lasted 17 minutes**

There were 10 items on the agenda. That is less than 2 minutes for each item. *Clearly not much discussion.*

**Welcome to Wetherby Ctte - Jan '26. Chair Cllr Buckle.**

**These minutes took over 7 weeks to publish,** far longer than other committees.

*Why? No explanation or apology.*

Mtg lasted 1 hr 13 mins.

All 6 Councillor members attended PLUS 3 other Councillors and no less than 4 Council Staff. *Wow! What is going on. Why the sudden interest in this committee?*

**It was stated that local Community Groups have not been interested in cooperating with this Ctte in the past.**

*Fancy that! So what's changed since they last asked them? Nothing. We think this is a major reason why Cllr Dean Buckle should resign. Do local groups have no confidence in this committee led by him? We don't, and think he should go immediately. See many recent issues for other reasons why.*



Cllr Dean Buckle  
Conservative

*The beginning of these minutes are just waffle. Typical of this ctte, there are many words with little action and low standards. Just look at the events in Otley, Knaresborough & Ripon to see how poor we are in comparison.*

**Two ideas they have suggested: World Cup Screening Outdoor Event & Murder Mystery Night.** We will see if these low profile events will take place. Wetherby is unlikely to feature on *Look North* or *Calendar* any time soon, like other towns often do. It is a committee of no / low ambition.

**Wetherby in Bloom have stated that they 'are not in a position** to take part in *Yorkshire in Bloom Golden Rose* awards'.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL Ctte)** Chair Cllr O'Byrne Mtg lasted 1hr 30 mins. This Ctte has £855,000 to give away to benefit Wetherby.

That is bigger than their whole budget for this year.

**New Garden of Rest railings cost over £17,500**

**BMX Track.** *Still no clue as to who is behind this project, why it has taken so long and who is responsible for the lack of information and poor communication, particularly on the site itself.*

The Council have given it many £1000s. They hoped for an Easter opening. Nothing on the WTC website to say it happened.

*Let us hope the long time it's taken is worthwhile and that it is used. Will WTC make any judgement at some point as to whether residents got value for money with this project? With proper research to back up their conclusions? It would be a first if they did.*



## City Council Use Israeli Company

*Leeds Local Plan* seeks to identify sites for housing, a lot of housing of the wrong type and in the wrong place. It is being driven by central government targets and Whitehall bureaucrats who don't really care much about where they go, or at what density, so long as the target is being achieved.

## A Reader Writes:

This leaves human beings having to live in high density, poorly designed boxes. All the feedback that people will have provided is to be analysed by an organisation called *Commonplace*.

This is an organisation that was taken over by *Zencity*, an organisation based in Tel Aviv, Israel.

Many like me feel that Israel has been engaged in a genocide in Gaza, is murdering, intimidating and demolishing houses in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and has facilitated an illegal act of aggression against Iran, and is bombing Beirut and southern Lebanon killing many innocent people indiscriminately.

Why is *Leeds City Council* even engaging with any business based in Israel?

If you think this is happening a long way away and what's it got to do with me. Your fuel and food prices are being determined right now by the actions of the instigators of this terror that is reigning down on the Middle East.

The response to a question about this asked by Councillor Stables in September noted that "the contract to *Commonplace* had been awarded in 2021, pre-dating the current conflict, and was scheduled to expire in 2026. The council is reviewing re-procurement options for that time. Cllr Coupar also noted that they stand by the statement previously issued by Full Council about the Middle East conflict and remain committed to supporting all communities recognising the value of diversity and the need for peace and understanding within the city."

I attended *Wetherby Town Council* Meeting on 10th February and asked that they consider raising an objection to this. As nothing had happened previously (except that they recognise diversity - big deal!), there is, I believe, limited awareness about this.

'I took the matter up with Councillor Penny Stables who has advised that *Leeds City Council* will be looking to replace *Zencity* within the next 2 years which can't come soon enough. There are many councils up and down the country that have engaged *Commonplace/Zencity* to help turn Britain into one big housing estate and only then will the housing target have been achieved!

*Patrick Wright*



Food & Fuel Prices Affected by Foreign Wars

# Our Campaign to Rename the Wetherby News Continues

## Wetherby News

Costs £2.30

NEWSWATCH

Graham Chalmers is the Editor and writes the majority of news articles in the 95% Harrogate & North Yorkshire focussed

printed paper. He should change the name of his newspaper as we believe it is misleading. Real journalists would investigate and report on the issues we highlight, particularly the poor performance of our Town Council. There was NOTHING at all about our 8.5% increase in Council Tax precept! There is rarely a picture of the river, flowers etc in our beautiful town. Wetherby Deserves Better.

### 19 Mar 2 News Items. No Local Letters or Opinions

Gareth Southgate gives Martin House support. MP's statement about cost of heating oil

### 26 Mar 0 News Items. No Local Letters or Opinions

NOTHING about the Boots smash & grab!!!!

### 2 Apr 1 News Items. No Local Letters or Opinions

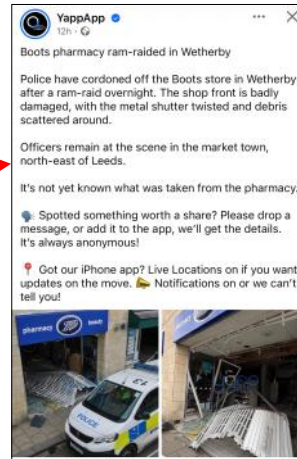
Community Group bike scheme gets Lotto cash

### 9 Apr 1 News Items. No Local Letters or Opinions

Gas-free development at Swinnow Park

### 16 Apr 1 News Items. No Local Letters or Opinions

Ladies Lunch with Christine Talbot raises £25K for Martin House



## 'Nutter' Insult by Former Town Councillor - Billie Ager-Mills

I was very vocal at the meeting when the new "communication" role was agreed. I asked specifically how the Town Council was going to justify such a large addition to the pay role. The reply was that the role was needed to raise the profile of the town, and so increase the revenue to the Town would cover the salary. WTC, can you produce such justification for the role?

Reply 1  
Billie Ager-Mills · 2h · All-star contributor  
Jan Storr It was a knee jerk reaction to deal with a self appointed journalist nutter imo

More evidence of the type of person Wetherby Town Council attracts as Councillors was in a post on social media. And as a well-known business woman in the town, it does not reflect well on the town's business community either.

People using offensive terms like 'nutter' and worse are common in Facebook groups like Wetherby Grumbler. Which is why the Editor is not a member and does not see the nonsense on it written by unpleasant keyboard warriors (the Free Press Facebook admin sent him the post).

The term 'nutter' is not particularly offensive to the Editor personally (water off a duck's back) but it may be to the many people suffering with psychological / psychiatric problems. Ms Ager-Mills belongs in a 1970s school yard using language like that.

For context, the co-opted former Councillor featured a few times in the Free Press during her 2-year period in the role.

We summarised her time there on page 4 of Issue 77 this time last year.

Apart from poor meeting attendance, she left all 5 of her committees with no explanation, many months before finally quitting.

### Mtg Attendance in 2023



featured in Issue 77

In a meeting early on in her role, she said the Free Press was 'a great idea' and gave us the impression she would shake things up and make improvements at the Council. The article in Issue 77 states there was no evidence of this after 2 years but we would gladly publish any to the contrary. None was forthcoming - just nonsense allegations on social media. If she ever wants to meet face to face instead of making derogatory remarks from behind a keyboard, the Editor would welcome the opportunity to discuss things in a mature manner.

## But Insult Revealed Truth - Comms Officer a 'knee-jerk reaction' to Free Press

Of course, we knew it. £30,000+ annually spent because the Free Press exists!

With a newsletter that doesn't blindly tow the Council line and calls a spade a spade, they needed somebody to use social media and the local press to spread positive news and counteract our facts and opinions. So they spent our money on a Communications Officer as 'a knee-jerk reaction', the former Councillor says.

The role was clearly unnecessary - just look at the small amount of work the Council actually does! A few parks, public areas and litter bins, a cemetery, a Town Hall and just 2 events a year. Planning applications rarely need publicising.

Other Councils manage perfectly well with staff doing the few necessary social media posts, press releases and website updates. And surely the 15 Councillors can help out - it's not rocket science.

Wetherby Town Council now needs over £750K to pay for everything and their many staff (exact costs now hidden).

So who was responsible for this appointment? The Town Clerk & Cllr Norma Harrington. Cllr Harrington as Chair of the Staffing Ctte and also a Conservative Leeds City Councillor, a highly political role. It is not surprising that they both want everybody to believe that everything is rosy in the garden.

So, questions for the Town Clerk & Cllr Harrington. Is what the former Councillor says true? Why does the Comms Officer, Helena Briden, not cooperate with us, the only newsletter for the town? Has she been told not to? Is it Council policy to ignore us and the Editor, a resident of 30+ years? Don't her actions prove that what Billie Ager-Mills says is true?

We note the Comms Officer has articles in the local press under her own name, because Yorkshire Post papers are so desperate for free content. It's write your own stories now!

The only contact we had with the Comms Officer was early on when we asked reasonable, legitimate questions in the public interest in a polite manner, as we always do. She makes absurd accusations of harassment and stops all communication. We ask for evidence of any harassment and none is received. This is poor behaviour from a publicly-paid official.

Cllr Norma Harrington  
Conservative



Chair of Staffing Ctte



# Utd in FA Cup Semi Final against Chelsea - Will They End 44 Years of Hurt?

The Editor found this old reminder of the last time Leeds fans could really celebrate and the whole city could be proud of itself. (It was a time when we had proper local journalists and comprehensive coverage of local news too). It was April 1992 when Leeds United won league Division One, now the Premier League.

Since the Free Press began, we have bemoaned the fact that a city the size of Leeds cannot do better than much smaller places like Bournemouth & Brighton. Their poor performances and lack of success, despite excellent facilities at Thorp Arch reflects the state of the city itself. (Leeds is the largest city in Europe without a rapid transport scheme ie a tram system. Or any sort of a decent nightbus network, despite having a renowned nightlife and a massive student population.)



But now there is hope that Leeds can make a name for itself. Their confidence is high after ending a 45-year drought at Old Trafford - they finally beat Man United there in the league by 2 goals to 1. It helped their relegation struggle. If they reach the FA Cup final it is most likely they will face the best team in Manchester - City. What a game that would be!

The semi-final takes place at



3.00

Sat 25 April

Wembley



After some strong performances by Leeds, the League looked like

Team	P	W	L	D	Pts
1 Warrington	6	5	1	0	10
2 Leeds	7	5	2	0	10
3 Wigan	7	5	2	0	10
4 Wakefield	7	5	2	0	10
5 St Helens	7	5	2	0	10

this, Warrington edging it. Could be an exciting season ahead.

**Wetherby Free Press**  
 Est 2021 Facts & Integrity  
 News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

## Your Not-for-Profit Community Newsletter

[www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press](http://www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press)

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

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

We don't do interviews, as we are not journalists. Professional journalists are very rare indeed now. Most are 'cut & paste from press releases' merchants. We have high standards and not afraid to 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**

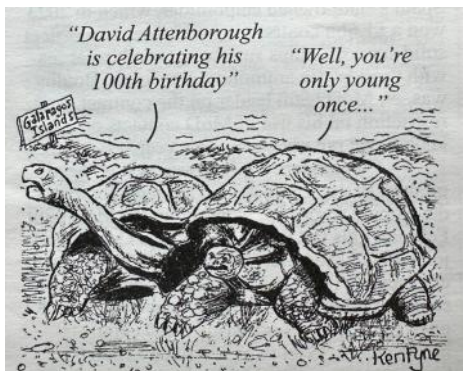
Unjustifiable threats of legal action can be seen as harassment.

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.



We Publish Both Sides, if sent to us

## More Amusing Stuff from



### NUMBER CRUNCHING

- \$12bn** Cost to Israel of Iran war so far
- \$30bn** Cost to US of Iran war so far
- \$150bn** Likely cost of conflict to Middle Eastern economies
- \$100bn** Likely benefit to Russia from increased oil and gas revenues



### U.S. AND IRAN CLAIM CONTROL OF HORMUZ STRAIT



Trump promises boom time for gulf shipping