



The Newsletter of Record

We await a response from the Archbishop of York on mixing politics and religion

WETHERBY

ISSUE 91 until June 2026

Free Press

Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

No Change in Wetherby. Large Vote for Reform



- * Cllr Norma Harrington (Con) held on to her seat
- * Labour lost overall control of Leeds City Council
- * Reform get 17% of vote

- * More than half did not vote for Norma
- * About 900 more people voted than in 2024

Result Bucks National Trend - Tories lost 563 seats, Greens gained 441 & Reform UK gained 1451



Norma Harrington, Leeds City Cllr & Wetherby Town Cllr

	2024		2026	
Cons	3727	49%	3684	44%
Green	2845	38%	2586	31%
Lab	736	10%	549	6%
Lib Dem	229	3%	182	2%
Soc Dem	43	1%	-	-
Reform			1464	17%
Total	7580		8465	

- Turnout 52% (Ilkley 63%)
- **Leeds City Council:** Greens gained 5 Cllrs & Reform gained 8
- **Yorkshire Councils:** Tories lost 18 Cllrs, Lib Dems lost 24. Greens gained 24 & Reform gained 212

OPINION

The Labour & Lib Dem results were poor. They have not gained the trust of voters. The effort by Alex Riddell (Lab) with his videos on social media was ineffective. The Lib Dems could not manage a candidate in the last *Town Council* election so they deserved what they got. We note Otley's Lib Dem candidate held their seat - a very different town to ours (plse go visit to compare). The votes for Reform were extraordinary, coming out of nowhere and following the national trend. Most of their voters (and candidates) are disillusioned Tories. We highlight in almost every edition of the *Free Press* why Wetherby needs the best people in influential roles in local government. Most of our Conservative Councillors treat us and our readers with contempt. They ignore the vast majority of our reasonable questions and issues we raise. We have no confidence in them. Their attention to detail is so poor they didn't notice an embarrassing error on their own election leaflet.

It is unfortunate that this result means Wetherby will continue to lag behind other towns like Otley for a while to come. Just an opinion. Plse send us yours and we will publish it.

Jackpot Fund to be Spent on ?



Wetherby Town Council have this large amount of our cash to fund local infrastructure. The CIL Ctte, chaired by Cllr O'Byrne, decide what to spend it on.

£855,000

Here are a couple of ideas.

This unattractive entrance still has no info or sign to a lovely peaceful area by the river. Surely not another summer will pass and nothing is done, after all the hard work by volunteers on the path and bench down there.



Suggested 2 Years ago by WFP in April 24

Otley's Wildlife Displays by River. We still have none.



The CIL Ctte meets irregularly. In the past year it met in May 25, June, Aug then nothing for 6 months until Feb 26! *More ideas on P5, 6 & 7*

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



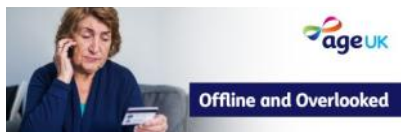
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& 400+ promo copies at *Morrisons, Pubs, Cafés, Dentists, Care Homes, Churches, Hairdressers, Shops*

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

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

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, posters



- * Can we just all agree that it's spelled "Wensday" now?
- * Why are there pop-tarts but no mom-tarts? It's due to the pastryarchy.
- * Baldwin is a cool name. It's the opposite of hairloss.



- * If you fear change, please pass it to me. I accept all coins.
- * When I was a kid, we bought a dog from a blacksmith. As soon as we got home he made a bolt for the door.
- * A man walks into a bar and shouts, "Tequila! Jagerbomb! Schnapps! Vodka!" The barman

says, "Hey! I call the shots around here!"

- * A recent study shows that 6 out of 7 dwarves are not Happy.
- * It's hard to explain puns to shoplifters because they always take things literally.
- * I knew that a counterfeit Monopoly game would never pass as the real thing. It had no Chance.

More funnies on back page

Bosun's Bar Closing in June



Our only bar/pub in the latest Good Beer Guide closes on Sun 21 June. A closing party will take place on the Saturday before at the premises on the Sandbeck Estate.



Wetherby Town Council - Page 9

Planning - Chair Cllr Dawn Carr (Payne)
 Another meeting inquorate. Wasting the time of Cllrs, staff & the public who turned up.

Full Council - Chair Cllr Connor Mulhall
 Literacy or Literature (Festival)? Do they know the difference? It appears not.

Wetherby Business Assoc'n want to quit doing the Xmas Light's Switch On & Carol Concert. No reason provided.



Staffing Cttee - Chair Cllr Norma Harrington
 No reason / apology for Jan's late meeting minutes. Took 2.5 months to be published.

Comprehensive Staff Report discussed. No general details at all provided. Meanwhile 2 new Admin staff are needed. What is going on?
Being Kept in the Dark More details on page 9

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

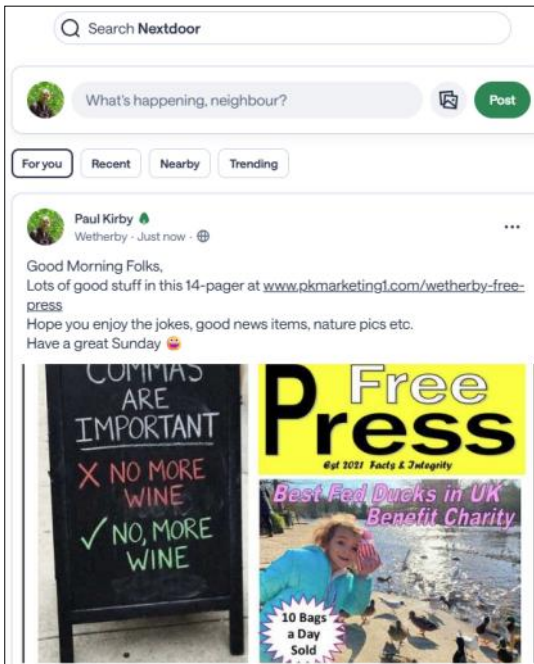
Wetherby Town Council
Mon 18 May
at 7pm in Town Hall
 Agenda should be at wetherbytowncouncil.gov.uk

Your Chance to **HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE**

CENSORED

Wow! Some people do not want you to read the Free Press. The lengths they are taking to stop you being informed are extreme, see example below. Quite disturbing that they hate Freedom of Speech so much. There is nothing in this newsletter that merits being censored.

This harmless post and another like it was removed by Nextdoor social media group. Censorship at its best / worst.



Laughably, they deemed it to be 'disrespectful'. Nobody to ask directly why. It looks like the Wetherby Mafia have infiltrated this group as well as manipulating W'by Grumbler & Grapevine Facebook group admin. As we explained in the last issue on page 3, they do NOT want you to know the facts we uncover. So, readers, you should feel lucky you can read the

information they don't want you to know. They want us to live in a Russian / Trumpian society where freedom of expression is suppressed.
They will never succeed - we have a very large mailing list and a large, loyal readership.
 We hope everyone, including the Mafia, enjoy this issue.



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

WETHERBY ECO-FAIR

Celebrating sustainability, community, and greener living

Save the Date!

Saturday, 6th June 2026

10am to 2pm Wetherby Methodist Church

FREE entry

All welcome

Local community groups' stalls

Meet the people behind neighbourhood green projects, wildlife groups, and sustainability campaigns.

Eco-friendly products

Talks;

Find out about the state of our rivers

Learn about recycling from Leeds City Council

Kids' eco activities

Fun, hands-on sessions to spark young environmentalists' imaginations.

Students fashion creations from recyclable material

Refreshments



'Be the change' find out more at tinyurl.com/ecofair2026



TOTFest® Yorkshire will take place at Wetherby Racecourse on Sunday 17 May from 12.00 to 5pm

The UK's biggest festival designed entirely for children under five is coming with a packed programme of activities and interactive brand experiences.

The event will feature more than 50 activities, shows and play zones, all included within ticket entry, with families free to explore throughout the day.

New for 2026, organisers are introducing a dedicated sensory storytelling space for children with additional needs, supported by Arts Council England funding.

The Rainbow Crew Sensory Story Lab will include tactile sensory panels and small group sessions led by specialist facilitators, designed to make creative play more accessible.

Alongside this, a number of family focused brands will be hosting interactive experiences across the site.

Across the wider festival, families can also expect storytelling, music sessions, creative play areas, toddler friendly rides and live performances.

Kerrie, Creative Director and Co Founder of TOTFest®, said: "This isn't your typical all ages children's event. We design everything around how children under 5 actually move, explore and play. That means giving them space to move freely, follow what sparks their interest and come back to things again and again."

Tickets must be booked in advance at www.totfestfestival.com




Rossini

Petite Messe Solennelle

Music Director: Charlie Murray
Registered Charity 510264

Saturday 20 June 2026, 7.30pm
St James' Church, Wetherby LS22 6LP

Wetherby Choral Society
Charlie Murray - conductor
Rose Johnson - soprano
Hannah Morley - alto
Tom Smith - tenor
Andrew Randall - bass
William Campbell - piano
Valerie Barr - accordion



Tickets: £20 (under-18s FREE) | Book online: wetherbychoral.org.uk
 • Nicolla Florist, 1 Bank Street, Wetherby (01937 585233) - CASH OR CHEQUE ONLY; NO CARDS
 • Tel: 07443 466254 / tickets@wetherbychoral.org.uk
 • Any Society member • At the door on the day - cards accepted

Wetherby Foodbank

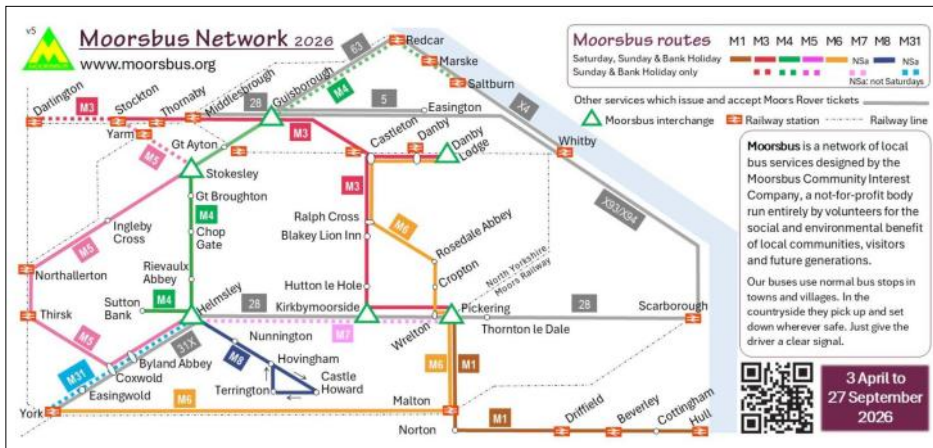
May 2026
Foodbank Wish List

- Long-life fruit juice
- Washing-up liquid
- Tinned potatoes
- Tinned sweetcorn
- Tinned carrots
- Tinned hot meats: mince, chilli, stew
- Long-life sponge puddings
- Tinned custard
- Instant coffee
- Long-life milk - full fat & semi skimmed
- Deodorants (roll-on)
- Laundry powder
- Loo cleaner
- Loo roll
- Or... make a donation via our website





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



Take the 28 Double-Decker to Thornton-le-Dale

No Fuss, Catch the Bus

If you're thinking of visiting the North York Moors at the weekend, why not let the bus take the strain? No parking hassle, just sit back and enjoy the views.

You could drive to York, Thirsk or Helmsley and pay £3 for a single, £10 for a 'Moors Rover' or £15 for a family rover. Children pay £1 or £3 for a 'Moors Rover'. ENC Passes accepted.

Like DalesBus, Moorsbus is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company run by volunteers. Timetable booklets for all services are on board.

More information at www.moorsbus.org

Friends of Moorsbus can be contacted on 07827 315131



Enjoy the Dales this Sunday from Wetherby

to Bolton Abbey, Grassington & Buckden. What a journey!



Dales Rover Tickets

£10 adult
£18 group (up to 10 adults, up to 3 children)

Buy from the driver any Sunday for a day's unlimited travel

874 runs until 18 October 2026

Max single fare £3

More info at www.dalesbus.org



Leaflets at Wetherby Library and on all DalesBuses

Reminder of Bus Facts for Councillors & MP, Alec Shelbrooke

- ◇ Before Oct 2025 non-car owners subsidised motorists to maintain free car parks
 - ◇ Costs £5 return to Leeds, Otley, York & Garforth and £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**

Our Campaign to Brighten Up Wetherby continues

Let's Get Creative

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 make you think or smile in Wetherby.

Many of 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 them.

We used to have a large coach park in the centre of town, and passengers could stretch their legs and visit the shops. The only coaches you see now park inconveniently in our bus stops for a quick visit to the fish n chip shop.

Thousands of coaches visit the expensive *Wetherby Services* instead. Our businesses lose out. What are *Welcome to Wetherby* & *Wetherby Business Association* doing to attract coaches (or cars) off the A1(M)? (answer - next to nothing). Ripon are pro-active, see below.



Cllr Dean Buckle



Amazing Carving in Whitby



Paths that an artist could use

We have many trunks and logs on our Railway



Unightly and a wasted opportunity to promote the town and events like the mascot racing at the racecourse. First we heard about it was local TV news after it took place.



Stone fish in Pickering



Bus Shelter on North Yorkshire Coast

Nice, Warm & Imaginative
Welcome to a Leeds Suburb

Why are we so dull in comparison to so many other places?
Wetherby has nothing on the walls in or around our bus station.



New Charter to Make Streets Safer, particularly for Disabled & Elderly

Leeds City Council leaders backed plans to make Leeds streets more accessible for people with disabilities after it emerged some are "forced to walk in the road" because of obstacles left on pavements.

The **Leeds Street Charter**, backed by disability charities, targets problems including wheelie bins, pavement parking, overgrown shrubbery, advertising boards, inaccessible crossings and uneven & damaged pavements.

The council would work with the police to keep pavements clear of parked vehicles. Cyclists would be encouraged to stay off pavements and bike 'by-passes' would be introduced at bus stops.

The charter was developed with groups including *RNIB*, *Guide Dogs* and *Living Streets* following a deputation to the council by campaigners from *Pavements Are For People*. It was approved by the council's Executive Board in April.

Opposition leader, Cllr Alan Lamb welcomed the charter, but questioned whether enough money had been set aside to deliver it. He said: "We're recognising that there is a problem... but there isn't actually a clear plan or any resource to do anything about it."



Selfish Thoughtless Parking

The Beauty of Nature on Our Doorstep - Goosemoor

As Spring turns to the Summer, there are lots of birds singing their hearts out. You will see plenty 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 on the internet or contact us if you aren't online.



Canada Goose

Thanks to Dave Ward



Thanks to
A. Warneken



Young Sparrowhawk



Bus Blocking Happened Again

Thanks to
the reader
who sent

us this photo of a car blocking Wetherby Bus Station exit. Literally nothing has been installed or painted since we started highlighting this problem many years ago. *Wetherby Town Councillors* have not made mention of it in any of their meeting minutes this year (but plenty about the car parking charges more proof they care not one hoot about bus users).

As our reader says, it will happen again and again, until proper signage is put up along with a box junction (and red lines). It's not rocket science.

Metro / WYCA Board member Cllr Alan Lamb puts the onus on us, to report it to the Police every time. Surely that is the driver's job. We think Cllr Lamb should take this article to the Police next time he meets them, and report back to us.

More Ideas for £855K CIL Fund



Money
for Local
Benefit

£855,000

Wetherby Town Council have this large amount of our cash to fund local infrastructure. The CIL Cttee, chaired by Cllr O'Byrne, decide what to spend it on. Their last meeting in February stated the next meeting would be in April. It wasn't. So we have no clue when the next mtg is.

Bus Service Suggestions This money was acquired from the developers of new housing estates. The residents of these estates would benefit from better bus services, as we all would. So why can't the money be spent on subsidising gaps in services, like the absent buses on Saturday to York and Otley? And an evening service to York?

Wetherby Town Council have no Transport Cttee unlike Otley, who do care about non-car owners.

Why not use it for a Saturday Service to York?



Craig Temple of *Connexions Buses* says "We'd gladly accept any funding to reinstate the 412 to York on a Saturday, and increase the level of service during the week to hourly if we could!"



Boston Spa Methodist Church

Lunchtime Concert

Friday 12th June 2026, at 1pm

Sax forte



Saxophone Quartet


TICKETS £6

Light lunches served from 12 noon

ENQUIRIES: 0113 268 2041


Bus Passengers in West Yorkshire are the Least Satisfied, the March 2026 report by *Transport Focus* has found.

Passenger Satisfaction
compared with other Urban Metro areas



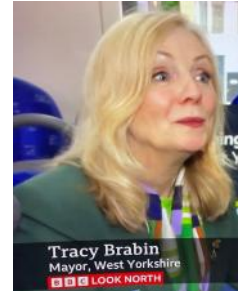
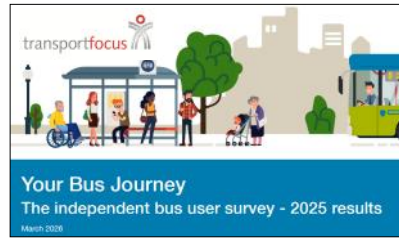
West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Tracy Brabin
Mayor of West Yorkshire



2023	73%	Bottom
2024	77%	Bottom
2025	81%	Joint Bottom

It is no surprise to us. We frequently point out the many failings of the *West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA)* to board member Cllr Alan Lamb, but nothing much seems to improve. The facts in the table speak for themselves. There is a small improvement but it is still one of the worst.



We looked for comment on the survey by Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin who is ultimately responsible for *Metro / WYCA*. We could find nothing in their press releases or in our local newspapers, like the *Yorkshire Post*. Nobody is making senior figures accountable.



We asked Cllr Lamb if he would like to comment on this *Transport Focus* report in this edition of *WFP* or the next. He has not sent us any response yet. We hope he is not ignoring us.

Arriva in West Yorkshire were second bottom of bus operators in the country (bottom the year before). They were 71st out of 72 bus companies. They run the 174 Wetherby & Boston Spa to Aberford, Garforth & Wakefield, see image.

The Editor has not experienced any problems on his admittedly infrequent journeys on that route. And he sees impressive new *Arriva* buses in the county so he guesses the main reason for their poor rating is reliability.



Metro produces the dullest bus timetable ever

Action Plan to Improve Buses - Penny Stables, Leeds City Cllr

1 Proper Service to York

I am working with a retired bus planner, who is looking at all the current services in this area and looking at how they can be adjusted to improve connectivity. We are working with all the bus operators, *WYCA* and Cllr Arnold Warneken at *North Yorkshire Council*, to get a service to York that is * fit for purpose ie connects to York Station * goes via Boston Spa * leaves early enough * comes back late enough, to allow residents to use the service to get to work and appointments, as well as for leisure.



2 Increase Frequency of 7 back to every 30 minutes

We are also trying to get funding to increase some of the number 7 services during the day to half hourly, as currently many have people standing and even leaving people at bus stops, which is not an acceptable service. I did manage to get both service ideas on the *WYCA* consideration set for Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, two of the 16 across the whole of West Yorkshire, but we weren't successful. I will keep going on this.



3 Try to Acquire Funds for Bus Shelters from £855,000 Community Infrastructure Fund (*Wetherby Town Council*)

I approached *Wetherby Town Council (WTC)* last summer and attended the CIL committee meeting to submit a request for bus shelters on Walton Road and Deighton Road. *Wetherby* has a ridiculously small number and many residents have to wait in the rain and cold, particularly in the winter months, to get a bus. Residents in both areas have asked if I could help get bus shelters and both of these areas have a high number of older and more vulnerable residents. The request was turned down.

I have recently written to *WTC* renewing the request for *WTC* to fund four bus shelters. As they are now in possession of a substantial sum of development Community Infrastructure Levy, they have plenty of money to pay for these.

I am setting up a new residents group: "**Wetherby For Better Buses**". Please get in touch if you would like to be part of this group on: penny.stables@leeds.gov.uk or call me / message me on: 07941 797902

I have been working to get better buses in *Wetherby* and villages for the last three years. Improving our bus service has been and remains one of my top priorities.

We are pleased that Penny has provided specific information about what she plans to do. We wish her all the best with her efforts.

If Cllrs Lamb or Harrington would like to detail their action plan for buses, we would be delighted to publish that too.



X98/99 Bus Shelter in Leeds

(Note a *First* bus parked up and blocking the approaching X98)

One Minute To Stop Kites' Persecution



Plea to Sign Online Petition

We are very fortunate to look up and see Red Kites every day in the skies above us. Go to the Yorkshire Dales and it's a different story. You will be lucky to see any bird of prey. Here's what the *Yorkshire Dales Society* says:

“ **Birds of prey are in catastrophic decline**, especially in the Yorkshire Dales – a UK black spot for this type of wildlife crime, with 152 confirmed incidents of raptor persecution, including 41 involving hen harriers, over a recent 15-year period in the Yorkshire Dales.

Despite more than 70 years of full legal protections for

these awe inspiring apex species, birds of prey continue to be persecuted with several now categorised as 'red' and 'amber' for Birds of Conservation Concern.

There is overwhelming evidence that birds of prey continue to be trapped, shot and poisoned on our uplands. On our website you can review the *RSPB's Birdcrime Report (2023)*, a 15 year review of the illegal killing of birds of prey in the UK.

Sign Our Petition – and help stop the criminal killing of Birds of Prey

Find it at www.friendsofthedales.org.uk/
It's quick & easy to help these beautiful birds



We are asking Mary Creagh CBE MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Nature, for three key reforms to better protect these majestic species:

1. Sentencing guidelines and the strengthening of penalties for offenders

Introduction of sentencing guidelines with more meaningful fines and the effective use of custodial sentences or community orders to deter continued offending.

2. Creation of a National Wildlife Crime Database

Making wildlife crime a notifiable offence would ensure consistent reporting, better intelligence sharing, and targeted enforcement.

3. Introduce regulation and licensing of the gamebird-shooting industry

Robust oversight is vital in areas – such as the Yorkshire Dales – where most confirmed persecution cases occur. ”

New Book of Forgotten Dales Legends



Traditional folk tales of the Yorkshire Dales are in danger of disappearing. That's the view of award-winning author, poet and Yorkshire historian Colin Speakman, pictured, whose latest publication aims to halt that decline.

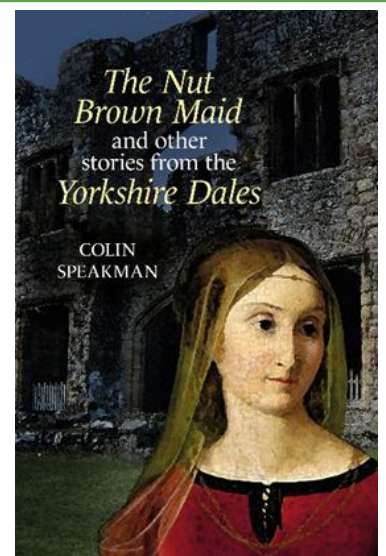
Colin says "I've been surprised about how few young people, even within the Yorkshire Dales, know the traditional stories of the Dales once told by their great grandparents around firesides. Yet folk tales are a part of their living heritage, as important in their way as the landscape, buildings and Yorkshire dialect."

Colin has selected thirteen stories and tales of the Dales for his book

The Nut Brown Maid and other stories from the Yorkshire Dales. Some are famous, some barely known or mere snippets of history, and reinvented them for modern readers, with younger readers particularly in mind. The tales include such classics as the *Ballad of Semerwater*, the *Drummer Boy*, *Potter Thompson*, and the *White Doe of Rylstone*, but others are hardly known.

Through all the stories run a vivid sense of place – the richly historic landscape of the Yorkshire Dales themselves. The tales are excellent for reading aloud to children and make the book not only an ideal gift for children aged twelve upwards, but perfect for reading at schools to remind Yorkshire children of their literary heritage.

The book is published by *Gritstone Co-operative* and costs £11.95. It's available from bookshops or direct from www.gritstonecoop.co.uk. Colin can be contacted at colinspeakman799@gmail.com



Town Council Continue to Ignore Our Legitimate Questions



WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 22nd January 2026
Time: 8.30am
Location: Town Council Offices, Wetherby Town Hall

Present:
Cllr Norma Harrington (Chair)
Cllr Neil O'Byrne
Cllr Dawn Payne
Cllr Harry Chapman

In attendance: The Town Clerk, Dianne Rickaby (virtually)

1. Apologies - No apologies received.
2. Declarations of interests and requests for dispensations – none.
3. Exclusion of the press and public.

It was resolved that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the public bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 as amended – because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted – the meeting be not open to the public during the session of item number 4 of the agenda.

4. Staffing Matters

The Chair of staffing gave members an update with regards to a request from a member of the administration team in relation to changing their place of work. The request was detailed, all of which was considered and discussed. Members advised that a reply be sent to the member of staff to ascertain more information and to relay the employee procedures within the employee handbook.

* Date of next meeting – tba.

The meeting ends at 10.30am
These minutes were recorded and prepared by Dianne Rickaby (Town Clerk)



Norma Harrington
Conservative

STAFFING CTTE - JAN 2026. Chair Cllr Harrington. These minutes took 2.5 months plus to publish. Why?



Dianne Rickaby,
Town Clerk

Cllr Harrington and Town Clerk Dianne Rickaby have not apologised or explained the delay. Open and accountable? We think not. The only thing minuted was the Admin Officer wanting to work from home (we assume, because of the vague, poor minuting) Is that the reason they took so long to publish? Strange.

Planning Ctte - 9 Mar '26. Chair Cllr Carr (Payne). This meeting lasted 30 mins (the last one only 17 mins)

There were 10 applications to consider, that is 3 mins each.



Stuart Newcombe
Conservative

Budget & Governance Ctte - Mar '26. Chair Cllr Newcombe.

Mtg last 37 mins. Cllrs Mulhall & Lavocah absent
"Members received and noted the internal auditor's comments and recommendations outlined in their pre-year end review for financial year 2025 – 26." Review not attached to minutes. No summary in minutes.

What were the auditors comments? Open and accountable? We think not.

TOWN COUNCIL FULL MEETING Mar '26. Chair Cllr Mulhall



Jane Lavocah

Cllrs Mulhall, Chapman & Lavocah absent. This is the second meeting this month that Cllr Jane Lavocah has not attended. She had the second worst attendance rate of 38% in the last published figures. *It is not looking good for the next figures coming out soon. She has never apologised to residents or explained her poor attendance record.*
"The Mayor thanked" *An obvious error as the Mayor was not present.*

Bus Stop Lighting - Leeds City Cllr Penny Stables reported that she is investigating the lack of lighting at the Deighton Road Bus Stop.

Literacy Festival - After a student survey the Council was 'more inclined to progress' with a (children's) 'literacy' festival. Students to report on 'event feasibility'. Do they mean 'literacy' or 'literature'?

- * **Literacy** - a fundamental skill, encompasses the capabilities required for reading and writing.
- * **Literature** - represents the body of written works, spanning various genres and cultures, often recognised for their artistic value or profound insights.

Surely they don't mean 'literacy', as that would mean an educational event. If they do mean literature, it just shows what ignorance there is in this council - the two words have very different meanings. Is this an ironic example of their own illiteracy?

In any case, is that the best idea they could come up with? Copy a nearby town? Ilkley Literature Festival is only 20 miles away, has been going for years and attracts the biggest names. So it's not just 'Welcome to Wetherby' who have no imagination, it is the whole Town Council.

They say themselves it should be a family or food event.

Even ex-Cllr Billie Ager-Mill's idea of attracting the pink pound with a unique event to attract the LGBTQ+ community was more imaginative than this. No mention of a general

'Wetherby Show / Gala / Carnival' for the whole family, like many other Yorkshire towns and villages can manage, including Tockwith! But they say there isn't the community effort to do it here. Why is that when we have organisations, like the Lions, Rotary Club, Wetherby Business Association and a Town Council? Surely between them they can manage something? Apparently not.

Grant of £2,000 for St Annes Community Services approved - it is for a Smart Education Interactive Touch Table to support adults with learning disabilities.



Wetherby Business Association

(WBA) don't want to do Christmas Carol Concert or Lights Stitch-on any more.
Wow! This organisation already does little to improve the town or attract more people to it, in our opinion. And now it wants to offload these important events. Wonder what's behind this.



Paul Bradley
Conservative

Markets Ctte - Mar '26. Chair Cllr Bradley.

Cllr Moss absent. Mtg lasted 1 hr 20 mins. A rep of WBA attended.

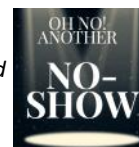
An Evening Market for Local Businesses was proposed.

"It was NOTED that the 28th, 29th and 30th has been confirmed for the next Continental Market."
No month stated. *Poor minuting. Chair & Town Clerk are responsible.*

Six Weeks of Summer Event will take place from 23 June - 27 July 2026. Stalls providing activities have been arranged, including a stall by the Wetherby Foodbank.

Bollards! They will look into the cost of installing them after an aggressive incident with a motorist in Market Place.

INQUORATE Planning Ctte - 30 Mar '26. Chair Cllr Carr (Payne). This meeting was cancelled because Cllrs Carr, Nicholson & Bradley were absent. *It wasted the time of one member of the public who turned up. Why can't they cancel the meeting BEFORE it takes place to avoid wasting people's time?*



Staffing Ctte- April 26. Chair Cllr Harrington. "The Clerk gave members a comprehensive staffing report. The Committee considered the staffing matters." No general summary was provided. About this time two Admin staff resigned. *How do we know if the matters discussed were really confidential? We need somebody truly independent on that committee. Open and Accountable? We don't think so. Recruitment costs us £1000s. Why can't this Council keep its staff is a question nobody asks.*



Our Campaign to Rename the Wetherby News Continues

Wetherby News NEWSWATCH

Costs £2.30

23 Apr 2 News Items. No Local Letters or Opinions

Press release from TOTFest - festival for Under-5s at racecourse. See P3 in this WFP. Road delays as Yorkshire Water work in town centre.

30 Apr 3 News Items. No Local Letters or Opinions

"Workers hog free parking". Charity press release on Dementia Event. Stabbing at Young Offenders

7 May 1 News Item. No Local Letters or Opinions

Martin House Hospice raises £2million

14 May 2 News Items. No Local Letters or Opinions

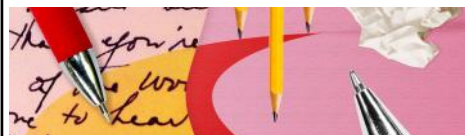
Press release from a care home commemorating VE Day. Local election results.

Graham Chalmers is the Editor and writes the majority of news articles in the 97% Harrogate & North Yorkshire focussed printed paper. He should change the name of his newspaper as we believe it is misleading. Real newspapers 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 this year! There is rarely a picture of the



river, flowers etc in our beautiful town.

Wetherby Deserves Better



your view

A Reader Writes:

“ The May 2026 Conservative local election leaflet for the Harewood Ward promotes the use of the JCB Pothole Pro, see image right.

Leeds City Council (unfortunately) appears to have been trialling the JCB pothole equipment as recently as February 2026: <https://news.leeds.gov.uk/news/new-pothole-repair-tech-tests-continue>.

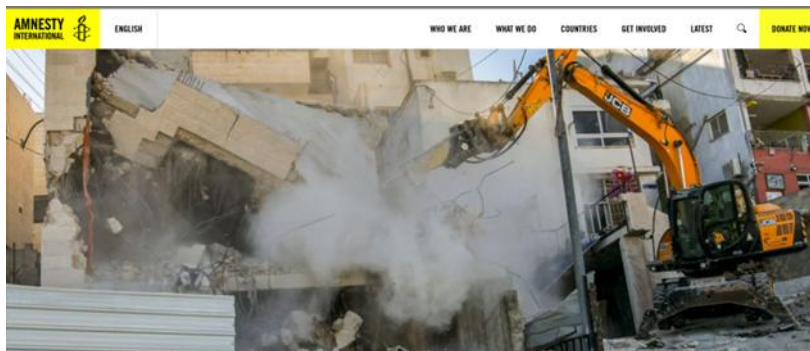
The Chairman of JCB, Lord Bamford and his family have given more than £10 million to the Conservative Party over the last 20 years via gifts and donations. (Guardian 29/09/2023). No link there then!

The JCB Human Rights Policy states: "JCB is committed to respecting internationally recognised Human Rights

principles and standards in all aspects of our business operations" written by Max Jeffery JCB Group HR Director (This policy is undated).

In the UK potholes are clearly more of a priority than respect for basic human rights. ”

It goes without saying that the WFP does not necessarily agree or disagree with the views expressed in readers' letters. Nor are we responsible for their accuracy. You send it, we print it. All opinions welcome.



Palestinian property being destroyed, source Amnesty International

Promoting JCB Pothole Repair Machinery Above Human Rights



Labour hold up pothole repairs!

YOUR local Conservative MP, Sir Alec Shelbrooke, has called out Labour-run Leeds City Council on their refusal to take emergency action on road repairs. In February, Labour Councillors blocked a costly Conservative proposal to ringfence an extra £5,000,000 to tackle the spreading pothole plague and the council's 19-year maintenance backlog across Leeds.

That same month, the number of potholes reported to the authority increased by 276% in comparison to February 2025.

BBC NEWS

14th February 2026

Is Yorkshire suffering a 'plague of potholes'?

The Conservative plan included buying 'JCB Pothole Pro' excavators to get the job done.

One machine can do an entire crew's job, cutting around clusters of defects and laying a new surface in less than eight minutes.

Sir Alec said, "The Pothole Pro operates four times faster than a crew, and at half the cost!

"The only delay is Labour being tin-eared to any advice and beholden to the trade unions.

"Labour blame everyone else for cuts, when they created their own black hole in Leeds and pour public money down the drain."

Keep reporting potholes and road issues at leeds.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel

Update on BMX Track - Not Officially Open Yet

It's a year since work started on track on the old railway line by the racecourse. £11,000 of Town Council CIL money was given to it, as reported in the last issue. We asked why it was delayed so much, what needs doing, why the lack of onsite information and when it is to be opened officially.

We were very pleased that Danny Roberts, Chairperson of Friends of Wetherby BMX Track contacted us. He told us:

* Reason for delay: "As mentioned, this is a small group of volunteers who are, like so many, constrained by the time they have available to work on the track" * Lack of onsite info: "put signs up (updates) on site using A4 laminates on stakes but these have been vandalised" * What needs doing: not specified * When hoped to be open: not specified.

Danny hopes to include a picnic area in the future. Of course, we all hope the Track is very popular and encourages children in particular to get away from their screens and exercising on their bikes. And as we said to Danny, we give a big thank you for all the hard work he and his volunteers have done on the project. The Town Council have not commented on whether they monitor progress on this project. Let's hope it is finished soon.



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HEROES & VILLAINS

Wetherby Musical Theatre Group invites you to our next show, one of heroic and villainous inclinations! Enjoy musical numbers and dramatic pieces of some of the best (and worst) characters across theatre


LINTON MEMORIAL HALL (LS22 4HL)

13 MAY 7:30PM	14 MAY 7:30PM	15 MAY 7:30PM	16 MAY 2:30PM	16 MAY 7:30PM
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Tickets are £10* and available:


- Online: <https://wmtg.sumupstore.com>
- In-person: Wetherby Library (LS22 6LL)
- Email: wetherbymtg@yahoo.co.uk

*booking fees apply for online orders



Do the heroic thing,
scan here to get your tickets

Clr Alan Lamb 'Furious' at Another Housing Development Proposal



Gladman

HAVE YOUR SAY

A new housing development of up to 593 new homes on Land off Hudson Way, Wetherby.

To view these proposals in more detail and provide your comments, please visit:
wetherby-gladman.hub.arcgis.com


Community Benefits

- Housing for all
- Public open space
- Ecological enhancements
- Thriving community
- Economic benefits
- Community footpaths

Alternative ways to contact us
Post your comments to: your.view@wetherby-mtg.co.uk (please use "Wetherby" as the subject line).
Email your comments to: your.view@wetherby-mtg.co.uk (please use "Wetherby" as the subject line).
Gladman House, Alexandra Way, Cowthorpe, CW12 5LB

Our Vision
Gladman is proposing a development of up to 593 new homes on the land edged red on this plan.
This consultation provides you with an opportunity to shape our proposals at an early stage in the process.
A more detailed plan showing areas of development and green space can be viewed on the website, and we welcome your comments on this.
A finalised plan will form the basis of our planning application to North Yorkshire Council.

Not to Scale



Google Earth

HAVE YOUR SAY
wetherby-gladman.hub.arcgis.com

Wetherby in Bloom Hard at Work

The wonderful volunteers of this amazing charity have been out in force, clearing out the planters after greenfly took hold of the winter bedding. The planters will be left for a week or so and then get fresh compost ready for the summer display. They say that "the Library look miles better after a good sweep".

They have a small request for all shops and businesses in town. "If you run a shop or business in town, could you spare two minutes to pull up the weeds along your outside wall? Imagine how smart Wetherby would look if everyone did their bit."




Morrisons Plea for Prizes

Wetherby Community Champion, Elsa, has announced that the supermarket will be holding their annual **'White Envelope Grand Raffle'** between July and August, in aid of Marie Curie.

It is the UK's leading end of life charity - "We care when there's no cure, whatever the illness. Day or night, we'll ease your pain, protect your dignity and support the people you love – putting you first".

Elsa says: "We've had some lovely prizes from local businesses donated so far, but I thought I'd reach out and ask if any other businesses or individuals would like to donate a prize / experience, lesson or voucher. Thank you."

All contributors will be acknowledged on social media posts, and she says it's also a great way to find new customers and clients, whilst helping a very deserving cause.

Contact Elsa at the store or email:
Champion.Wetherby@morrisonsplc.co.uk



A LITTLE HELP PLEASE!



Utd Out of FA Cup But Stay Up

A fan summarised it neatly - "They didn't turn up". A wasted trip to Wembley to see, let's be generous, 3 chances to score. Chelsea won the FA Cup semi-final comfortably. Many think it ridiculous to have the semis at Wembley; it devalues the final and costs the fans a fortune, both winners and losers, though less for the teams based down South, of course.



"Wetherby Whites"

Stach shot saved by Chelsea Keeper

moment. It's shameful really but we'll keep 'marching on together' in hope.

The North East isn't much better. Newcastle amused us all by going bananas over winning a Mickey Mouse (League) Cup last season. **The North West and London look set to dominate football** for many years to come.

It's all very disappointing.

Avoiding relegation seems to be the only ambition of most Yorkshire teams. Which begs the question we have asked before -

Why is Yorkshire So Poor at Football?

Such a large and proud county has had nothing to shout about for 34 years. Our main cities Sheffield and Leeds can't even compete with Brentford, Brighton and Bournemouth at the



Elvis - All Shook Up at Wembley



The Rhinos are riding high at the moment with some fantastic performances. Currently

Yorkshire does much better at rugby league, although it helps when half the teams in the Super League are from the county!

Sivo hat-trick sinks Wakefield to keep Leeds top



second in the League on the same points as St Helens, the Headingley side travel to Wigan. This is a real test and should be a highly entertaining encounter, which Sky have kindly put on their Sky One channel for us all to enjoy.



Harrogate Town FC Relegated to Amateur League

... and have abandoned their plans to build a training centre at Wetherby Racecourse. The team at Wetherby Road are waving goodbye to League 2 (old Division 4). Most managers would resign, especially after 17 years in the job, but Simon Weaver, pictured, looks to be going nowhere. He says he won't beat himself up over it. Did we mention his father is the owner/chairman of the club?!



Free Press

Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

Your Not-for-Profit Community Newsletter

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Please Donate Online to Cover Printing Costs

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

If 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 8 '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

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