

- The Green Party turned a 1000 vote defeat last time into a 1000 vote win in the Leeds City Council elections
- In an election where nationally the Conservatives lost 1000 seats
- Wetherby had the highest turnout in all of Leeds 46%



In the more deprived areas of Leeds the turnout was as low as 18%. This showed that Wetherby residents were keen to send our politicians a message.



Cllr Stables first day at Civic Hall

On social media ClIr Alan Lamb thanked losing colleague Linda Richards and said "Norma and I would like to congratulate Wetherby's new Councillor. While we clearly disagree on many things politically, we will

work constructively" In the same message ClIr Lamb also said that councillors are subjected to 'unwarranted abuse and vitriol'. The Editor asked for any examples or evidence to back up this statement. None were provided. The Free Press has not seen, or been sent, any personal 'unwarranted abuse and vitriol' aimed at any of the candidates. Why he would make a statement like that, if he was not referring to Linda Richards being subjected to it, is a mystery. See page 6 for one view of why the Conservatives, Labour & Lib Dems performed badly



'Grow up you nit-picking idiot' Which prominent Townsperson said that on social media? Which 'professional' newspaper quoted this newsletter (wrongly) in a story? Why is a Trader regretfully leaving the Council's Thursday market? *Find Out Inside*

ANNUAL WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL Meeting at Town Hall, Tues 16 May 6pm



This poster outside the Town Hall was supposed to promote the meeting but it was not put up properly. Nobody thought to tie it correctly or add duct tape to stick it to the rail. Another example of why the Town Hall staff and

Councillors need close monitoring.

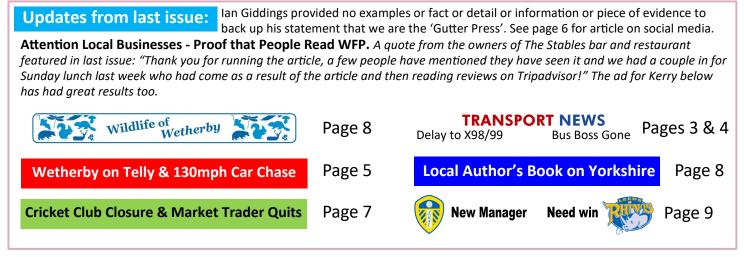
Last year NO residents attended this meeting. And NO representative of a town organisation either, like the Lions, W'by Business Association or Better Wetherby P'ship Ltd. **Total apathy last year, will it be the same this year?**

We are still 4 Councillors short - 11/15



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36 21 10 5 30 **73**

14 4 50

8 10 10 **62** 10 **51**

-6 48

-4 47

36 18

13 9 14

12 9 15 -14 45

12 11 13

36 11 9 16 -11 **42**

36 11 7 18 -18 **40**

36 11 6 19 -1 **39**



oxide with Oxo cubes have made me a laughing stock. Team P W D L GD Pts Stirling

5

6

8

9 🔻 Elgin

10 Albion

My efforts to combine nitrous

Dumbartor

East Fife

Forfar

Annan Athleti

Stenhousemui

Bonnyrigg Ros

The first time I met my wife, I knew she was a keeper. The large gloves were the giveaway.

Best courier to send a food parcel to my former wife? FedEx

I thought the word 'Caesarian' began with S but I looked it up in the dictionary and it was in the C section.



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Wetherby Town Council News

The Town Clerk, Iona Taylor, has gained a Certificate in Local Council Admin and has been awarded a pay increase by Councillors. She is on £27K+.

Let's hope we see a corresponding increase in the quality of work and accountability from Council staff. This includes not ignoring questions from a resident and the only serious news source in the town, WFP.

It has not been made clear but we think there is a Full Council mtg immediately after the Annual mtg on Tues.

No updates on the Council's Twitter feed about the lack of Cllrs - we are 4 short. Shoe Sales instead!

The (draft) minutes of April's meeting have not been published 30 days after it took place.

There was a meeting of Welcome to Wetherby on 20 March. Despite another meeting on 24 April there are NO minutes available for the March meeting yet. Are they trying to hide their actions for the Coronation event, which looks like it was a failure? Where is the final figure for this event? Possibly £1000s wasted. See page 5.

Nothing in the 'Wetherby News'

About Penny Stables Win!?!

TRANSPORT NEWS



<u>Cost of Unleaded</u> Correct on Thurs 11 May to nearest p Shell £1.50 Morrisons £1.48 - 2p difference as usual

Diff b/w Shell & H'gate to fill av tank is £3.30

S'burys H'gate £1.44

Morrisons petrol is now more competitive

Transdev (Harrogate Bus Company, Coastliner etc) are keeping quiet about a matter of public interest - the boss of a big bus company disappearing for weeks then leaving is a matter of public interest.

Alex Hornby was boss of Transdev which runs the 7, 8 & X98/99 services in Wetherby. His prolific tweets stopped and there was a silence in the whole industry. This was very strange. Speculation about sickness and poor financial figures began. People were asking what's happening and why the silence. Even their own drivers weren't told anything. Transdev have a history of keeping quiet about

important matters - we still don't know what happened when their bus crashed in Wetherby in July 21. Weeks later we are told on social media that Alex has left to become Managing Director at a Scottish bus firm.



Passengers (and shareholders) should have been told if his absence was permanent (sacked or resigned) or temporary (illness). Passengers and the bus industry have a lot to thank Alex for. He was the pioneer of luxury travel with the 36 Harrogate to Leeds, successfully tempting commuters from the train & car with airline-style seats, tables and good customer service. Other bus companies had to raise their standards to compete.

Alex was very approachable on social media and in person, which is virtually unheard of in the bus industry - most senior managers hide from the public. Nobody is perfect and Alex seemed not to take criticism, however minor, very well. Latterly, he did not wish to respond to the WFP despite often promoting his services, and praising them where appropriate (example below).

Having dealings with him on the 'Most Scenic Bus Route in Britain' survey (which Transdev won with the 840 Coastliner over the N York Moors), the Editor would be reluctant to work with him again.

We wish him well in his new post and hope the new boss of Transdev engages with the WFP.



Displays to Envy in Derbyshire

On a recent trip to a Derbyshire town the Editor came across some excellent bus infrastructure. It not only showed bus times in real time, but also train times and directions to local attractions. 21st century technology benefiting bus passengers and visitors to the town. Transport Authority Metro / WYCA and Leeds' Labour Mayor are decades away from introducing such innovation. Our councillors have shown no interest in asking them do so either. So we can but look with envy and dream Write to our Leeds City Councillors, Tracy Brabin and Metro WYCA with your views. Copy us in please.



Bird Delays Bus!

for only a couple of minutes. A sparrow had flown in through the driver's window as the X98 to Leeds approached the Oakwood Clock. The driver stopped immediately and the Editor helped him get it out of the front doors.

Just one of the wonderful strange experiences you have on the buses. Send us yours to:

WetherbyFreePress@pm.me

No response from Transdev on 6 Month Review of X98/9



In the last issue our research showed that the overwhelming majority found the new operator, Harrogate Bus Company, an <u>improvement</u> on the last. Many mentioned the comfort, cleanliness and friendliness of drivers. The Transdev app was praised too.

We asked Matt Burley, Commercial Manager and Paul Turner, Commercial Director for a response.

They sent none. This shows little regard for their passengers and the WFP. Let's hope they can find some time to address the issues of reliability and cancellations: "They appeare the sentence of the senten

- "They come when they come great, when they don't it's an absolute pain" "Every time I catch it in Leeds, its always late"
- "When buses are cancelled more are cancelled in a row and there's often no notice"

"Still cancel quite often resulting in 2/3 hr delays like the other day"

"It has been a no show for me a couple of times which makes it unreliable" "The cancellation of buses on our route is atrocious" (Bardsey passenger)

Other issues raised were:

Fancier buses but is Transdev more reliable than First? No Comment from Transdev on Mainly +ve Results

ress

- \Rightarrow Slower journey times because not limited stop service any more (why the X?)
- \Rightarrow Poor connection with their 7 bus to Harrogate

It was also disappointing to receive no response from any of our Town Councillors or Leeds City Councillors, especially those on the 'Climate Emergency Ctte'. None of them regularly use buses, as far as we know.

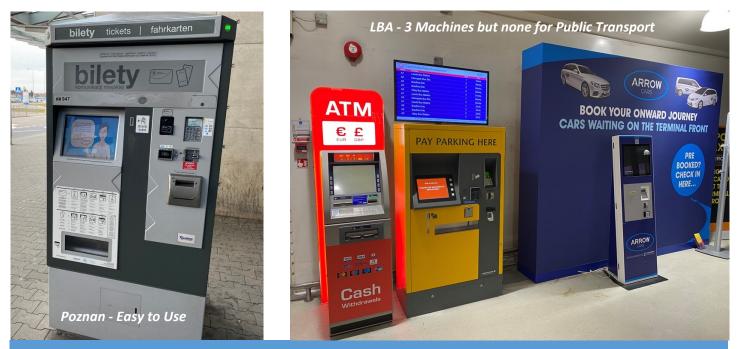








TRANSPORT NEWS Wetherby & West Yorks Deserve Better



Leeds 0 Poznan 1 - Bus Ticket Machines

The Polish city of Poznan is smaller than Leeds but its airport has a ticket machine for public transport. Visitors, like the Editor, have no problem getting the right ticket and paying with card / cash. Most European cities have machines at airports to buy tickets before you board the bus, tram or train.

The Editor informed Metro / WYCA and the bus companies years ago that a machine at Leeds Bradford Airport is needed to avoid the long delays travellers were causing. Foreign travellers often with difficulty speaking English were asking the driver which ticket they needed amongst the many available and then paying with large notes. It was frustrating for everyone. The Editor's pleas were ignored. All the airport has to encourage bus use in the terminal is one real time display (at just one of the 3 exits) and timetables at the info desk.

This is another example of how far Leeds is behind other major and minor European cities. It is frustrating - no trams, no printed maps and few printed timetables to name but a few deficiencies. Our Labour-run City Council have let Metro / WYCA spend £millions on themselves and not on basic improvements to infrastructure. Our current Mayor, Tracy Brabin, is responsible for transport but she has shown no interest in the small stuff we highlight, like printed maps and timetables.

We will ask her, Transdev, Metro/WYCA and our Leeds City Councillors to comment on this issue and take action.

Incidentally, Poznan is a fine modern European city and well worth a visit if you can afford it. Cheap fares on Ryanair from LBA.

<section-header><text><text><text><text><text>

Wetherby Bus Sta at 8.35 Returns into W'by at 19.05

Pick one up from Wetherby Library

Dales Bus

York, Seacroft,

Leeds, Horsforth, Adel, Otley & likley

Coronation Day Expenditure - 3 Questions for Town Council

1 How many people attended (roughly)?

The Editor did not see large numbers, see right.

2 How much did the whole thing cost?

There is no clear figure in minutes of Town Council or Welcome to Wetherby meetings.

3 What consultation took place with residents before this event? There was nothing on social media

Unless you have a groundswell of support from residents, it is sometime better to do nothing than spend a lot of money in a cost-of-living crisis. What evidence did the Town Council have that this event would be a success?



How many people did they ask "If the weather is good, would you come to the Market Place to watch the Coronation?"

They did not even ask the 10s of 1000s on social media which would cost nothing.

Is this another example of the Conservative Council thinking they know best and spending our money willy-nilly. We hope our new non-Conservative councillors can get the answers to these questions, and change the 'we know best' attitude of this council.

Cllr Connor Mulhall (Con) is giving the camera a wave. He is part of the Welcome to Wetherby committee who organised the event.

He should be able to answer all 3 questions and provide more facts and opinions on the day. We await his response to explain why this was not yet another misguided decision by the Town Council, and will print it in the next issue.



One chase started near Wetherby when a Merc took off from the car wash near Kirk Deighton late at night. It went through the village and up the old A(1) to Hunsingore and Cattal. It reached frightening speeds of 130mph and ended in Burton Leonard between Knaresborough and Ripon. The 22-year old driver crashed into a police car. It was his parents' car and he had cocaine in his system. William Mann of Wetherby pleaded guilty at York Crown Court to drug driving, dangerous driving and failing to stop. He was

jailed for 8 months and received a 1 year driving ban.

app App - The Best Source for Incidents

These people put the lives of the police and public at risk. Let's

hope his sentence deters him and others. His insurance premiums will be sky high when he is back on the road.

People should watch TV series like this to see how professional the police are in what is often a very difficult job, dealing with very difficult people. These programmes are an eye-opener, especially for those who live in a privileged world and prefer to believe there the problems in society have little effect on them or our town.

A lot goes on in this area that is not reported. If you want to know what is happening in Yorkshire, follow @YappAppLtd on Twitter. Example left occurred in Kirklees .



Costing £1000s and few attending. 50 seats max for a not very comfy view of a 3+ hour coronation. Few would prefer that instead of staying at home with friends and family.

Rain would have made the whole event an expensive failure. Sometimes better to do nothing unless the Town's people (not organisations) really want it.



Papers the Day After

130mph Car Chase

Wetherby has featured twice in recent episodes of 'Traffic Cops' on Channel 5. This fascinating series follows the roads unit of North Yorkshire Police. It features many

drink drivers, accidents and car chases.





Why did the Tories Lose So Badly in Wetherby?



Many factors, of course, including the national government's performance and Penny Stable's hard work in schools and the community. But Linda Richard's campaign was particularly misguided.



 Weighting for our area with Councillors Alan Lamb and Norma Harrington alongside Alec Shelbrooke MP.

 Weighting to along the second se

Too many smiles in these tough times for many?

She was using social media twice as much to promote herself than in a previous non-election year. She should have been more confident that all her hard work over the years would see her right.

She undertook a massive leaflet campaign but there was much waffle and little detail in them. It smelt of desperation to us.

Do people really want to see so many smiling faces, see left, in a cost of living crisis and when there are so many issues causing misery (foodbanks, sewage in Wharfe etc)? And at a time when her colleagues at the

Green Party GAIN Elected: STABLES Penny Candidate Description Votes NUTTGENS Lucy Kathleen Labour and Co-operat 498 arty 161 PRINCE James Andrew Liberal Democrats **RICHARDS** Linda Judith Local Conservatives 2.958 STABLES Penny Green Party 4,079 16,730 Electorate Turnout: 46% Spoilt ballots 18

Wetherby

The Full Results - May 2023

Town Council increased the Wetherby precept by a whopping 83% this year.

It's hard to believe that in this day and age that she used an old-fashioned and sexist term like 'binmen' in the leaflet. Some of her supporters tried to argue that this term included women. No doubt they think firemen and policemen are perfectly acceptable as a generic term too, instead of firefighters and police officers. Our highlighting this could not have helped her cause. Neither could the unanswered questions the WFP highlights in every issue. How can you trust anyone in this party when they refuse to answer simple questions in writing?

Disagree? Write to us and we'll print it unedited.

Labour & Lib Dems Poor Performance - Worse than 2022



Both parties were virtually invisible in this campaign. We found this extraordinary when the Conservatives are in such trouble. Why did they put such little effort into getting our vote?

The Editor had a chat with a couple of the Labour people when they had a stall near the Town Hall one Saturday. They all seemed like decent folk with interesting things to say but the WFP hasn't heard from them since.

Neither party promote themselves as individuals on local social media groups, like Grumbler and Nextdoor. Or send the WFP anything. Again, it's extraordinary, especially when it costs nothing.

How can they gain the public's trust with such a low profile? Both parties need to put a lot of hard work in before the next election to stand any chance of winning here. **Disagree? Write to us and we'll print it unedited.**

The Level of Debate on Social Media Community Groups

Online groups are fantastic to ask for advice or recommendations and tell people what is going on in the area. It is also a great tool for public debate about important local issues.

There are 2 main online community groups in Wetherby: Facebook group Wetherby Grumbler (26,000 members) and Nextdoor (1000s of members). Grumbler is run by 2 administrators who approve or decline 100s of posts a week. They are not paid and it is not a job the Editor would like. We are all very grateful to them for their time and effort in maintaining this great community asset. Nextdoor is more civilised and neighbourly. Many people called 'Leads' decide on complaints.

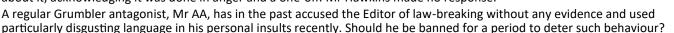
Robust Debate

Unless it is clearly illegal, almost all posts and comments are allowed on Grumbler. You can always expect to be criticised even if your opinion is of a trivial nature. You must be thick-skinned and be able to ignore personal insults because it's a waste of time arguing with stupid. Many are simply wind-up merchants.

Nextdoor is a more mature outlet for expressing points of view and has a higher bar for content. Moderators can hide comments and posts if they are disrespectful. Before the Editor posts anything critical, he asks himself whether he would say it to a neighbour he doesn't know very well to their face. Level of Debate is Decreasing.

Recent examples of personal insults have surprised even the Editor. The first was from former Town Councillor (Con) and Chair of Welcome to Wetherby, Victor Hawkins. His one and only contribution to a discussion, aimed at the Editor on Nextdoor, was: "Grow up you nit-picking idiot"

It was removed but it still upset the Editor. The Editor privately messaged Mr Hawkins requesting an apology and assurance it will not happen again. If he agreed to that, the Editor said he would forget all about it, acknowledging it was done in anger and a one-off. Mr Hawkins made no response.





It is a sad refection of the society we live in that many think this discourse is acceptable. Insulting people whom you have never met is bizarre. We think such people may need psychiatric help or anger management at the very least. Perhaps it is because the government of the past 10 years has shown little responsibility and accountability for some of its actions, that some think it's OK to act in the same way.

The last resort of making a complaint of harassment because of a debate on social media is a waste of everyone's time. But if this decline in behaviour continues, we may see the Police investigating more cases.



No regrets for public insult

What do you think? Plse tell us.

Fact: 5,000 online readers 6 in Sep & Oct 22

Reaction to Wetherby Cricket Club Closure

A letter in the last issue described how villages around Wetherby can support a cricket club yet our town cannot. Otley has 3. The author asked why this was and wondered if 'It's the same as the rest of the problems in the town - nobody can be ar**d, it's a town for old people who couldn't give a monkeys."

Wetherby Cricket Cling



The Yorkshire Evening Post followed our feature up. They said "The closure was recently covered as part of the Wetherby Free Press newsletter which called out what it views as a 'lack of care' within the community"

We are honoured to be recognised by the 'professional' press but must point out that our reader's letter and our comments did not feature the words 'lack of care' anywhere.

Locally-based cricket journalist David Hopps (@DavidKHopps on Twitter) has a long history of involvement in club cricket. He says "Many small village cricket clubs are closing as society changes



David Hopps

because they just cannot find enough players to commit to playing or contributing a regular basis. That is a sad fact of life. But for a town the size of Wetherby to



Ironic that our grey, dull Council website features a cricket match

lose a cricket club with such good facilities would be extraordinary and would be a cause for deep dismay. The loss of sporting opportunity for young people should cause Wetherby to question what sort of town it is and what sort of town it is ambitious to be."

Trader Quits Wetherby Market and Says 'People are Not Supportive'

Market Trader Zoe Cunningham has announced on Wetherby Grumbler Facebook group that she is 'very sad to leave the Thursday market'. She compliments the Town Clerk, Iona Taylor, in her efforts to revive it 'but the good people of Wetherby aren't supportive'.

She continues that the town is not backing the new initiatives and that they should 'use it or lose it'.

In her posts she claims that other markets she does, like Kirkbymoorside and Otley, are very busy and 'it just seems to be Wetherby' that isn't.

Zoe sells predominantly dress fabrics, which is not a good product to buy online - 'people need to see it and touch it, but Wetherby obviously doesn't want or need fabric', she says. She also has a large range of upholstery fabric, plus she makes fabric storage baskets and has sewing patterns, zips and sewing thread.

'I sell something that is different, I hand make things as well and have adapted. Yes there are lots of market traders out there that sell generic cheap crap, there are also lots of bored people who have bought a wax melt kit from Hobbycraft and think wow I'll do a market. Those of us who do sell things that aren't readily available on the High Street are suffering. We can adapt, but when markets are



being swamped with food stalls, wax melts, bath bombs etc it's hard. There needs to be something different, not this hobby selling on a market stall'.

She adds 'I have sat there several times with nothing sold and thought it's the product, but then I do really well on other markets, so I know it's not the product. I have upholstery fabric from DFS, Next, French connection, all £6 a metre which is £20 a metre cheaper than High Street stores, but it never clicked how cheap I was'.

Customers can now find Zoe at Otley market on Saturdays and people can message her on Facebook. The post provoked a lot of reaction - over 100 comments. Zoe received much criticism for telling us the facts and her opinions. Unfortunately, this is to be expected on social media nowadays (see article on page 6).

We are grateful to her for telling us the truth and hope others will follow suit. Nothing will change if we don't publicise things like this.



WFP told you the clearly obvious facts about the decline of Wetherby Market before Christmas. The images were proof enough of a failing enterprise, and the secrecy of why Little Bird quit the contract last year reinforced our suspicions. Some still made excuses and denied it was a Wetherby problem. It clearly is!

May Be Important Mail In There

Is it the people of Wetherby's lack of support, the range / number of stalls or the poor management / promotion by Wetherby Town Hall (Councillors)? Perhaps it's a combination.

Check Your Spam - There

COLIN SPEAKMAN





Available from Reading Roots Bookshop

If You Buy One Book about



Local Author, Colin Speakman, has produced THE book for all Yorkshire Lovers, as well as those who are simply interested in the largest county in England. Some call it 'God's Own Country'.

His love and experience of the county's history and countryside shines throughout the 314 pages. Plenty of fascinating facts and some superb imagery to make it a worthwhile purchase.

A map of the old Ridings showing where the borders used to be is of great interest. And there's a handy index which shows that Wetherby is featured a few times.

It's simply a darned good read and a few common-sense opinions are put forward for good measure. Colin sees the need for improved infrastructure and transport, as populations outside the big cities increase (in towns like Wetherby).



Colin was the main force behind the Dales Way path, created over 50 years ago





Wildlife of

Wetherby



No, it's not real !

This beautiful animal was found as roadkill near the YOI in 2013. Viccy the Vixen is now a much-loved pet and guard fox



Fascinating Facts: This

beautiful bird loves lowland farmland and has good populations in Yorkshire, Lancashire & East Anglia, according to the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). They think there may be 10,000+ breeding pairs in the UK. At this time of year they lay 4–

6 eggs and sit on them for about a month. It's a treat to see them hovering and then pouncing on small mammals.

Wetherby Free Press

8

Citizen Journalism At Its Best



Leeds have a tough run in at the end of the season with 3 games remaining. Having sacked the Spaniard Javi Gracia on his birthday after only 11 League games, Big Sam joined with a



Can Allerdyce save Utd?

games in charge of 9 Premier League sides. Leeds were 20/1 to beat the title favourites Manchester City on

Coronation Day. As expected City dominated but missed many chances. With Meslier dropped, Utd goalie Joel Robles impressed. Losing 2 - 0 it looked all over for Leeds when City were given a penalty in the 84th min. But Gundagan on a hat-trick hit the

post and Leeds scored within 2

climax. Not to be, City won 2 - 1.

mins making for an exciting

victory figure of exactly 1/3 in his 537



City miss penalty

Utd v Newcastle Utd on Sat 13 May at 12.30 BT SPORT West Ham Utd v **Utd** on Sun 21 May at 13.30 **sky** sports Utd v Tottenham on Sun 28 May at 16.30 ** Final Game **



After a break for international games (both Men's and Women's teams beat France 64 - 0 Extraordinary!) it was back to Headingley to face Salford Red Devils. Defeat at Leigh Leopards with only one try scored meant Leeds needed to start the game well.

Not the case as the Reds hit first with a fine try after a great passing movement. Poor defence led to their second try and conversion. Hope was restored as Myler scored an excellent team try just before half time. The Rhinos comeback did not materialise in the second half and

Bentley scoring late on just made the



Muted celebrations as Bentley scores for Leeds

12 - 22 score look more respectable. Head Coach Rohan Smith said 'penalties in front of the posts cost us'. Fans will say there was a lot more to it than that.

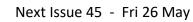
Wigan Warriors v Rhinos on Fri 12 May at 20.00 sky sports Rhinos v Wigan Warriors on Sat 20 May at 14.30 BBC ONE This second game against Wigan is in the Challenge Cup

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Editor: Paul Kirby Email: WetherbyFreePress@PM.me Twitter: @wbyfreepress

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

If facts are wrong, we will apologise publicly and correct the error. We quote directly to avoid any misunderstandings. We don't do spoken interviews.

We encourage everyone to write to us with their views, whatever they are. People have died for our Freedom of Expression so never be afraid to use it. You can remain anonymous if you wish. You, nor ourselves, can be sued for defamation as long as what is published is:

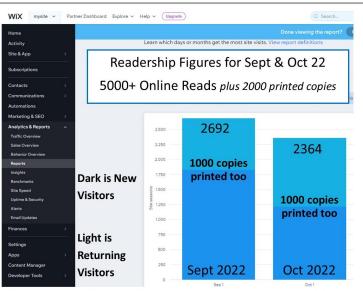
True or Honest Opinion or in the Public Interest Unjustifiable threats of legal action is bullying behaviour and will not be tolerated.



www.pkmarketing1.com/wetherby-free-press

Ihank Nov

The British Library at Boston Spa keep copies in their catalogue. The WFP lives forever!



They are surprisingly good figures. The main reason was our exclusive on Wetherspoons buying Sant Angelo. If you don't believe the figures, we can send you a printscreen image.

In 2022 we **Supported**

to cover the 2-page

printing costs





Send us your



to WetherbyFreePress@PM.me

Let's Make Wetherby Better Together in 2023