



ISSUE 60 - until 19 April 2024



Your Not-for-Profit Community Newsletter

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



Promo copies at Morrisons, Pubs, Cafés, Bob Shop, Mason House Stores, Library, Dentists, Care Homes, Churches, Hairdressers, Banks, Shops & other Businesses



### Last 2 Banks Closing in 2025

Both Lloyds & Halifax Banks are to close on 13 January next year. This will leave no banks left in Wetherby. We have just 3 building societies, Leeds, Skipton & Yorkshire. Along with Wetherspoons backing out of the town, and many other businesses closing in recent times, this shows that Wetherby is not immune to the changing face of our high streets.

A spokesperson said "As many customers now choose to bank through their mobile app or online, visits to our Lloyds Bank and Halifax branches in Wetherby have fallen over recent years. Customers can use the local Post Office for everyday banking or at the new Banking Hub once it is up and running."

The hub will be operated by Post Office staff, and customers of any bank can withdraw and deposit cash, make bill payments and other regular transactions. Knaresborough has such a hub. *cont'd on Page 6*



### Wetherby YO1 - Another Side

Last week we highlighted a damning report of Wetherby YO1. It include disturbing incidents of inmate treatment, which were graphically described on national and local TV news.

WFP was contacted by a Wetherby resident who wanted to give a different aspect to the story. We give it equal prominence here.



“ Officers are attacked on an almost daily basis resulting in many being sent to A&E and having time off work to recover. Many leave the job. Kettles provided to inmates to make hot drinks are smashed and the elements sharpened to use as a stabbing implement. Sugar is boiled with water to throw over officers to ensure excruciating burns on bare skin . For many of the “children” on life sentences the worst punishment you can get is to have your TV taken away for a period of time.

*cont'd on page 6 where we ask "Where's the Guvn'r?"*

### Disadvantaged if Not Online

To live today you must have internet access. As the banking news above shows, you are expected to be online and if you can't or won't, you will be greatly disadvantaged. You may be reading this one-page printed copy and missing out on the other 9 pages because you are unable to access it online. You are not alone.

The Editor has been told that many residents love the one-page display copy and would love to read the whole thing. He knows this because the owner of the Phoenix café and a visiting customer told him (*fantastic coffee there bytheway*). Soon after that happened, the Editor asked a lady taking one from the Morrisons display who also said she did not read it online.

DIGITALLY EXCLUDED



We would love to print all pages, like we used to, but the Wetherby Mafia campaign (see back page) targeting our supporters has not made that possible.

All residents deserve to know what is going on in this town. The only other general news publication does not cover the area at all adequately and is expensive at £2.10. The Wetherby News has not reported on important stories that we have eg tax precept rise and nothing about the recent YO1 report or bank closures.

We are looking at ways to include the excluded. More in next issue.

### Easter Celebration

Taken place since 1969. Current cross made of wood salvaged from IRA Manchester bombing in 1996



Try this unique traditional Easter celebration at Otley Chevin on Sunday. There is an incredible community spirit. No religious beliefs required, all welcome. Just turn up at 7am. Enjoy a breakfast at 'Spoons after!



Contact Editor if lift needed for 2 people

Send your News & Views to: [WetherbyFreePress@PM.me](mailto:WetherbyFreePress@PM.me) Twitter / X: [WbyFreePress](https://twitter.com/WbyFreePress)



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

Locals on TV

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TRANSPORT NEWS

Pages 3 & 4

New DalesBus, New App, National Survey & Franchising

William Hague on Accountability

Page 7

Market Survey - Up to Standard?

Page 8



Page 6

Town Council Extra

Page 11



\* If wind turbines were human, what music would they like? They're big heavy metal fans

\* Why did the chicken cross the playground? To get to the other slide

\* What do you call someone who always states the obvious? Someone who always states the obvious

\* 3.142 percent of sailors are pi-rates

\* What do you call a dog that can do magic? A Labracabrador

\* How does the astronomist get his hair cut? Eclipse it

\* When I was a kid I started a business tying shoelaces. It was a knot-for-profit.

\* Where does Christmas come before Easter? The dictionary!



PRIVATE EYE

Every 2 Weeks £1.73  
subscription £2.99 in shop

### Town Council - Annual Mtg on 8 Apr

Last Year the Conservatives increased our Council Tax precept by a whopping 80%, mostly to pay for new staff.

Do you think the Council have improved in any areas to justify the extra burden put on us in a cost of living crisis? If you do, please send us examples and we will publicise them.

Of course, this year's % increase looks small because it is compared to last year's large increase. If you compare it to what we paid in 2022/23, we are paying 81% more.

We could not find any minuted discussions on the precept this year eg Budgets mtg of 13 Feb.  
Next general mtg is 7pm on 9 Apr at Town Hall

have your say

\* Annual Public Council Mtg \*  
Mon 8 Apr at 6pm  
Town Hall

We have a Big Story

## in the Pipeline

### Bus Blocking - It Will Happen Again



No Street Signs Yet to Deter Motorists from Parking

One or two unofficial cones is not enough to have any effect on this problem. Many will ignore them and motorists (with and without blue badges) will continue to park by Mojis. We await the next report of a blockage causing inconvenience to many 100s of bus users. This has been a problem for years but yet to be resolved by Cllrs, Police, WYCA etc.

### Elderly Caring & Domestic Help

15 years Experience



NVQ Level 2 Qualification

References available

Call Kerry on 07876 525 589

As well as the Wetherby Free Press Facebook page there is the Wetherby Deserves Better page too.

Both are run independently from the newsletter.

Follow & Don't get FOMO (Fear of Missing Out)







## New Season Starts - All Aboard the DalesBus

The Summer 2024 Season of DalesBus starts on 31 March and the network runs until late October.

Wetherby is fortunate enough to have a bus direct to Upper Wharfedale every Sunday. No changes necessary and only £2 per journey, an absolute bargain.

Though it would help keep the service going, if you could afford the Dales Rover tickets - £10 adult or £18 for 2 adults & 3 children. ENCTS Passes are valid so free for elderly and disabled.



Double-decker 822 at Pateley Bridge

These DalesBus services will restart on Easter Sunday too:

- 820 Keighley – Otley – Fewston
- 821 Keighley – Otley – Fewston – Pateley Bridge – Scar House
- 822 Pocklington – York – Ripon – Fountains Abbey – Pateley Bridge – Grassington
- 875 York – Leeds – Ilkley – Grassington – Buckden – Hawes
- 876 Leeds – Ilkley – Grassington – Buckden – Hawes



Grab a timetable from the library

Revised summer timetables will be introduced on these services too:

- 856 Northallerton – Leyburn – Hawes
- 864 Bradford – Ilkley – Skipton – Malham
- 873 Ilkley – Bolton Abbey – Skipton

These services will restart for the 2024 season on Sunday 5th May:

- 831 Middlesbrough – Darlington – Richmond – Reeth – Hawes
- 832 Hawes – Ribbleshead – Ingleton – Kirkby Lonsdale

**Wetherby Bus Sta 8.35 Bus 874 Sundays & Bank Hols**

It serves all A58 stops in Collingham, Bardsey, Scarcroft to Leeds, Otley, Ilkley, Bolton Abbey, Grassington (11.10), Kettlewell & Buckden.

*Connections to Malham & Hawes*

It arrives back in Wetherby at 7.10pm

*Or take the 7 then 24 to catch the 822 in Pat. Bridge*

## Wetherby to Leeds, Harrogate, Otley or York - still only £4 return

The Wetherby to Knaresborough 8 bus timetable will remain unchanged when Transport 21 take it over from Sun 7 April

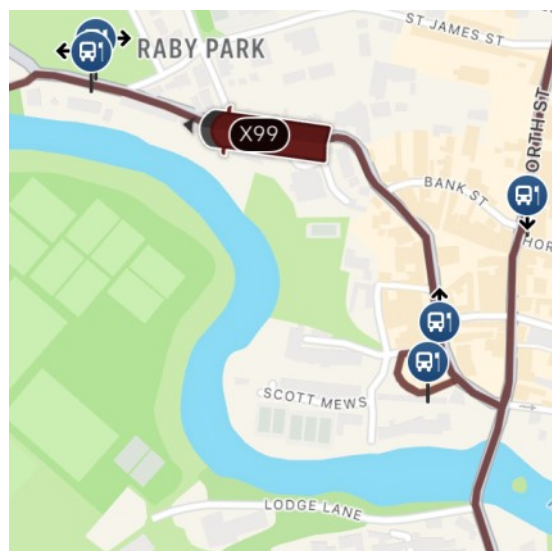
### New Transdev App from 1 April (no joke!)

We can criticise Harrogate Bus Company (Transdev) for their decisions and unwillingness to answer simple questions but they excel in passenger literature, and their app is extremely useful too.

It can tell you exactly where your bus is, as the image shows. This gives passengers almost total confidence the bus will turn up at the time the app says. The Metro real time system at bus stops is simply not to be trusted. Buses still disappear from the screen.



Their new app starts from Easter Monday so don't forget to upload it and delete the old one on your smartphone.



#### Reminder of Bus Facts

- ◇ Transdev's route 7 to Harrogate & Leeds via B Spa was reduced to hourly from half-hourly in Nov '22
- ◇ The late night route 7 service from Harrogate at 11.30pm was cut in Nov '22. The last bus is now 10.20pm
- ◇ There is NO Saturday service to York (Connexion's route 412) or Otley (Connexion's route 923) since May 22
- ◇ There is not a single bus shelter on the Aire Road/Ainsty Road estate or on Spofforth Hill
- ◇ We have old and new WYCA/Metro bus stop flags. Many stops have dirty cases and poor information.
- ◇ WYCA/Metro have stopped printing their 7 invaluable network maps



Hard to See Display





- \* Mayor & Metro (WYCA) to Control All Aspects of Bus Provision from March 2027
- \* Local Company Connexions Fears Business Closure
- \* Cost £100M to Set Up
- \* Possible New Buses worth £252M

*We ask "What will change?". 15% of journeys already subsidised. Will cut services be reinstated, like 923 to Otley & 412 to York on Saturdays before 2027? And will the no 7 to Leeds go back to half-hourly?*

Campaigner Doug Pauley was on screen for 15 seconds and mentioned bus timings, overcrowding and the fact a number of local



buses had been cut.

Bus company boss Craig Temple was again expressing his fear that the smaller companies, like his, would have to wait 5 or 7 years to bid for another contract again, if unsuccessful the first time.

We have put both sides of the argument – the option of Franchising or Enhanced Partnership plus (EP+). We have highlighted the failings of Metro/WYCA in many of our articles eg leaking bus station roof, no printed bus maps, allowing X99 changes etc.

Now the whole network will be put into the hands of politicians and Metro/WYCA at a massive cost to taxpayers. The EP+ model was rejected although it was a lot cheaper and meant working with the bus operators, not controlling every aspect of their private business.

You have none of this nonsense in most parts of Germany. They have the boring system of regular, reliable, reasonably-priced buses that hardly ever change timetables, run early mornings and late into the night and actually integrate with local rail services.

We can but hope this massive shake-up is worth the many many £illions spent on the bureaucracy, but one thing Mayor Tracy Brabin stated clearly – "WE WILL BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE WHOLE NETWORK." We must keep her and the well-paid executives at Metro/WYCA to their word.

### No Mention of Buses in Tory Election Newsletter

WYCA and against the Labour policy of franchising. In the Conservative newspaper delivered to all houses recently, we were surprised to see **not a single article about buses** - a large issue for him and the town, as we have no train service.

Yet there were no fewer than **4 articles** that were related to motorists / roads! It's clear from this that the Conservatives are targeting the motorist vote and that bus passengers are not as important.

We were surprised to see Penny Stables and Anna Jacobs of the Greens also wanting to help the motorist with their opposition to the introduction of parking charges in Wetherby. It seems strange to us that the environmentally-conscious Green Party took this pro-motorist stance.

Conservative Cllr Lamb is a board member of Metro /



Poor Metro Infrastructure at Major Retail Park

### Worst Passenger Satisfaction & Worst Company



Arriva Yorkshire was at the bottom of a list of 55 bus companies for overall journey satisfaction. The report made no comment on this. They operate the 174 Wetherby to Garforth to Wakefield. The accident above involving one of their buses happened on 26 March in Kippax.

West Yorkshire has the least satisfied bus passengers in the country. Only 73% were satisfied with their experience. That is a quarter who were not satisfied.

Who is to blame?

- Metro / WYCA for doing such a poor job with information, subsidised services and infrastructure (bus stations, stops, real time etc)
- Politicians & Councillors for letting Metro / WYCA do such a poor job with information, subsidised services and infrastructure (bus stations, stops, real time etc)
- The City Council / Highways for the unreliability of services due to roadworks and lack of priority measures

- The Bus Companies for their poor customer service and old, uncomfortable buses that don't turn up due to staff or mechanical issues
- The Public (Us) for not complaining enough to the people above and the media

Read the 32 page report at [www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/your-bus-journey-2023-results/](http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/your-bus-journey-2023-results/)

THE INDEPENDENT BUS USER SURVEY BY TRANSPORT FOCUS



Bus Services will mostly operate:

- ⇒ Good Friday, 29 March - Saturday service
- ⇒ Easter Sunday 31 March - Sunday service
- Easter Saturday 30 March - Saturday service
- Easter Monday 1 April - Sunday service

TRAINS: Transpennine Route Upgrade work is taking place from 29 March to 7 April - this will affect all rail services that run through Huddersfield.

Check [www.wymetro.com](http://www.wymetro.com)

# MP Alec Shelbrooke

## Reform UK Party Candidate

Alec Shelbrooke has been our Conservative MP for nearly 14 years since May 2010.

In 2019 he won 58% of our vote beating Labour by over 17,000 votes. He was a Remainer.

Alec is one of Liz Truss' biggest supporters. As Prime Minister she promoted him to a ministerial MoD post in Sep '22, which he then quit/was sacked after 49 days, the same length of time she lasted.

In June 2023 Alec voted for the Privileges Committee report which stated that Boris Johnson repeatedly misled parliament ie knowingly lied about parties in Downing Street whilst the rest of us had to follow the rules. *Source - www.theyworkforyou.com/*

It was announced in Dec '23 that Alec was awarded the one of the highest knighthood honours; the Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE), which entitles him to be addressed as "Sir". It was given to him by Liz Truss. He has not mentioned his honour at all on his social media but has changed official images to say 'Sir Alec ...' *We do not call him "Sir" as he has shown the Editor no respect as a constituent.*

A contender for the seat of Wetherby & Easingwold has been announced. He is Mike Jordan. More info about him at [www.mike-jordan.co.uk/](http://www.mike-jordan.co.uk/)



## Space for Alec to Say Anything to Constituents

(Unedited, max 400 words)

Nothing received since we began 2+ years ago

[alec.shelbrooke.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:alec.shelbrooke.mp@parliament.uk)



17,000+ Followers. In the last issue we informed you that Alec wants no general discussion or comments under his Tweets. He is therefore using X/Twitter purely to provide information and promote himself/his party - he wants no dialogue. We asked him if it is fair that he then uses the same platform to comment on others who do not have any such restrictions in place? And then deny them a right to reply? No response from him or his supporters.

From 1 Feb to 27 March: Number of Original Non-Labour-bashing Tweets Specifically about his Constituency: 2

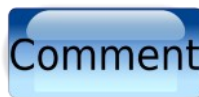
Tweet 1. Informing us that Bramham crossroads was closed due to an oil spill

Tweet 2. Claiming that he and local Councillors and representatives from Link have "secured a

banking hub for Wetherby town". *Their involvement was not mentioned in the Lloyds/Halifax/LINK press release. Surely, the banks were going to set this up anyway, like they have in other towns. Wetherby is a wealthy area and not to have any banking facilities would be unthinkable. We are not sure exactly what Alec is taking credit for here.*

We note there are no tweets directly supporting Rishi Sunak or commenting on the recent Tory scandal (Hestor) or MPs quitting.

## Where's the C-word (Conservative) in Election Paper?



It is quite amusing that this promotional publication does not state the word 'Conservative' in a single article. Yet the first word of the first article is 'Labour'.

**Surely the Conservatives are not afraid or ashamed** of using their own party's name? It says to us that they want to distance themselves from their own party in government. What other reason is there?

They put the C-word in the smallest font possible on the front page and on the back page in the about us box.

**Cllr Lamb only mentions once that he is the Leader of the Conservatives, though he uses the word 'opposition'** on Leeds City Council but does not inform us anything about that work. It must take up a great deal of his time that is not spent on Wetherby issues.

**Of course, nobody can deny Cllr Lamb works hard on many different local issues** but it's the issues that are not mentioned that we notice eg

bus blocking at Wetherby Bus Station, which has been going on for over 2 years now, see pages 2 & 4.

It is what it is - a publication with a complete bias towards Cllrs Lamb and Harrington, giving no credit to Cllr Penny Stables for anything she's done. It shows total polarisation, despite the fact they are both anti-Labour.

It doesn't instil much confidence in the Councillors' attention to detail when two obvious spilling mistakes are not noticed and corrected. 'Noma' for Norma & 'Councilor' for Councillor

**Material like this is funded by money donated by people like Frank Hester** who has recently caused a furore after comments about Diane Abbott that PM Rishi Sunak said, eventually, were 'racist'. The Conservative party has refused to return any of the £15M reportedly given to them. In other words they think the comments were not serious enough to distance themselves financially from the person who made them. But they are serious enough for West Yorkshire Police to investigate.

**Cllr Lamb's election strategy seems to involve flooding social media** with posts and messages. We have never seen so much Twitter/X and Facebook usage.

And when councillor colleagues and other supporters re-post his posts, it floods social media even more and causes frustration for many. It drowns out equally important information and views from ordinary people. This attempt at social media domination is counter-productive, as it annoys so many. Please take note councillors, less is more.

*If you have a different opinion, please write to us and we will print it unedited.*

*Write a column for us on other candidates' publications. We welcome all views. If any other party were to produce a local 'newspaper' like this, we would report it in exactly the same way.*



Thanks to Private Eye



## Wetherby YOI - Another Aspect

Cont'd from Front Page

“ Wetherby YOI holds some of the worst members of society who just happen to be under 18. Think of every bad news story you have heard - police killers, killers of other minors, rapists (sometimes of close relatives mother or grandmother) and they are all in Wetherby.

An institution that was never designed to hold girls. But because of closures elsewhere a small number of seriously violent girls unable to be housed elsewhere have been moved there.

The girl in all the stories is extremely violent and female officers are unable to control her. I believe she should have been put in a secure mental hospital, not a YOI. She takes her own clothes off in an attempt to strangle herself and end her life. The options are either leave her and get blamed for the suicide, or try and stop her and receive the headlines previously seen . I'll let your readers decide what they would do! ”

## Media Coverage & Where's the Guvn'r?

**We wanted to know what the person responsible for that institution thought, perhaps a comment or two defending his management regime. Surely they've said something!**

**So we googled "Wetherby YOI Governor" in the 'News' part to find out if he or she said anything. It gave us 6 results about the report from the media, including the BBC, Mirror, Yorkshire Post & Guardian.**

**But no comments from anybody at the establishment. The Yorkshire Post felt no need to name him or ask for comment. No mention of the report on the YOI's Twitter / X account either, see below.**



No mention of damning report on YOI Twitter / X

manager himself to address the serious issues raised by the report.

**It is disgraceful that highly paid public servants can be anonymous and stay silent when their institution hits national headlines. Where is the accountability to the local community & taxpayer?**

**If you want to ask Mr Gormley a question, email [comms.wetherby@justice.gov.uk](mailto:comms.wetherby@justice.gov.uk) and copy us in, please.**



**The Governor's name is Peter Gormley. There is no picture of him anywhere online. He did not appear on TV. Why is he so anonymous? - he does not work for MI5 or MI6, though (even tho' one of them gives interviews now!)**

**There were many comments from prison reform and children's rights groups but nothing from the**

**Ok, we've yet to spot this iconic seabird in our town!** But they can be seen a couple of hours away on our Yorkshire coast, of course.

The RSPB reserve at Bempton Cliffs near Bridlington is a favourite spot to find them between April and July.

### Fun Facts:

- ◆ Puffins dive into the water to catch their prey, usually to a depth of 30 metres but they can go down to 60.
- ◆ One puffin was recorded holding 83 small sandeels in its bill.
- ◆ They live to 18 on average, though one ringed bird made it to 42 years old.

**Not Fun Fact:** They are listed on the Red List of UK Birds of Conservation Concern. See [www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)



Bempton Cliffs

## Last Bank Closes in 9 Months

Cont'd from Front Page

**We looked for any comment from the Wetherby Business Association (WBA) on this (or any other closure) on social media or their website.**



Knaresborough

Their last tweet about anything was on 30 Nov 2023. They have posted once on Facebook since 1 Feb regarding small grants . Their last news release on their website was about

Christmas. So nothing from them on how the loss of the banks will affect local businesses to their 1000+ followers



**Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd** reports that it now looks likely to be at least several months before they actually start building the first of the planned 762 new

homes on Racecourse Approach. Next to this site Persimmon Homes wish to build a further 130. The company submitted a formal application in Nov 2023.

**Bradford paper, the T&A, reported that the "City of Culture 2025 has been awarded £6m** by a West Yorkshire authority, despite a Wetherby councillor voting against the grant."

Cllr Lamb argued such events should not get public money. A report to members said the investment of £6m "represents very high value for money." but the Leeds Conservative Leader said "Bradford could use this money in much better ways at the minute."

Councillor Poulsen, the Conservative leader in Bradford, disagreed with her party colleague, saying: "I hope you will approve this funding, and I hope that it will benefit the whole of the Bradford district."





Conservative William  
in the



Hague's Article  
Times newspaper

# Death of local papers threatens democracy

recently where he stated "In much of Britain, regional news is hollowed out or close to extinction".

That is simply a fact that surely nobody would disagree with. But the highly-respected former Conservative Leader realises that this is bad for democracy and accountability. The letter writer in the image says how it used to be: 'every word uttered by town councillors would be rigorously scrutinised and dissected'. The so-called Wetherby News does not report in any comprehensive way what our Council does and has not attended meetings for years.

There are still some local papers worth reading, like the D&S Times (see image), York Press, Craven Herald and the T&A.



The Excellent D&S weekly 40p cheaper than Wetherby News

As Mr Hague points out, the death of local papers results in publicly-paid people in authority not being made accountable for their actions in any significant way. Hence the reason why the Wetherby Free Press exists. Despite it being free and nobody forcing them to read it, it has upset a few who desperately want it closed down. Yes, censorship in its purest form in our small town.

Meanwhile, Wetherby Town Council are going to produce their own newsletter at our expense. Do you think it will print (letters of) criticism of itself, like leaving the bus station off the town map?

Social media groups are no replacement for a newsletter / newspaper. We have experienced harassment and insults on the biggest Facebook group in

Wetherby, 'Wetherby Grumbler'. It is the Wild West and the Editor is pleased to be well out of it. The Group is flooded with posts of a similar conservative viewpoint and woe betide anyone who dares to disagree with them or provide opposing facts. The ordinary person's views are often drowned out. Social media is fleeting, not permanent and has far less significance than the permanent words in a newsletter / newspaper.

The main problem is that there is simply too much stuff on it. Very few of their 30,000 members will read the hundreds of posts and their comments every week. It's like having to read through the Times, the Sun, the Daily Mail and the Guardian every day to find something that interests you. A good exchange of views often descends into personal insults by the less intelligent and the cowards who hide behind anonymity / fake profiles. This give a bad impression of the town to newcomers and outsiders.



The administrators of Wetherby Grumbler could not monitor all the misinformation, insults, fake profiles and defamation aimed at the Editor so they took the easy way out and

censored him. His only crime was bringing legitimate grumbles to the table. You have to laugh at the irony of a Grumbler group banning somebody for grumbling. Admin need to vet every member who crosses the line and uses the group to make personal insults. There should be no anonymous accounts with pictures of pets instead of the actual person. It is cowardly to insult someone without showing your face. They should ask members to prove to them that they are not a fake profile. They should restrict members to 2 original posts a week unless it's useful live information, like road closures. They should stop duplicate posts about the same subject. We suggest residents join Nextdoor with its more civilised atmosphere and a more democratic complaints and reporting system.

Let's hope the smaller Facebook groups of the villages don't go the same way as Wetherby Grumbler. Social media is a great tool for swapping local news and information but it must be properly monitored because there are many angry people who just resort to unacceptable language and insults.

Back to William Hague - a nice, honest, sensible person and a true Yorkshireman to boot. We will write to him and ask him for his opinion on our effort at making public figures accountable.

But more important is your support, which we greatly appreciate. The more intelligent of our readers realise that without an independent, influential means of allowing the public to have their say, we may as well live in Russia.

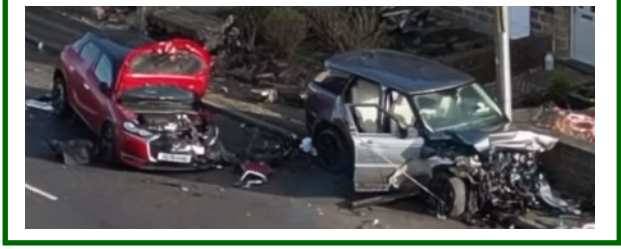
A reader of ours, and of the Times, recently sent us a letter from that esteemed publication about the demise of local papers and its effect. The letter referred to an article William Hague wrote in the Times



## Best Source of Crime & Roads Live News : @Yappapp



Their posts are quite the eye-opener. The amount of violent crime that goes on a few miles down the road in Leeds and elsewhere is quite shocking. And what they feature is a small proportion of the total.



# Wetherby Councillors - Still No Comment on Issues we Raise



Elaine Smith, Conservative

We thank the 15 Wetherby Town Councillors for being unpaid volunteers. Most are Conservative & raised our Council Tax precept by 80% in a cost-of-living crisis in 23/24, much of it to pay for new staff. The Town Clerk is Iona Taylor. She is manager to an Assistant Clerk, a Communications & Events Officer Helena Briden, a Burials Manager and a Facilities Manager (vacant). Work is also contracted out. Employment costs are well over £150,000 a year.

*There is still no up-to-date details of Town Hall staff on their website wetherby.co.uk; no images of staff (unlike Otley) and no easy-to-find diagram showing the line management structure. Why are they so reluctant to do this?*

*This is a Town Council that never feels the need to apologise when it makes mistakes. Councillors don't feel the need to make any comment or provide simple answers to reasonable questions from a resident of 30+ years. We were hoping for a change of culture and attitude when new independent councillors. But there has been no improvements that we have noticed, certainly in accountability.*

In recent months we have highlighted:

- \* the substandard town leaflet with a map with the bus station missing - no explanation or apology. Copies of old map still around town
- \* the Markets committee had NO councillors attend in Nov & Dec 2023 - no explanation or apology in minutes
- \* the 2 Council meetings in last 6 months were 'incomplete' because not enough councillors turned up
- \* the substandard website - unattractive, uninformative, user-unfriendly and vastly inferior to Otley's. The councillors' political party are still not stated, despite this being an extremely political council
- \* the Feb '24 election where the Conservatives spent a lot of effort and money on promoting their candidate, despite one of them claiming the Town Council is non-political
- \* the staff member complaining about WFP articles and emails without providing a single example to back up their complaint.



2 Consecutive Markets Ctte Meetings Cancelled

*If you think any of our criticisms are unreasonable, write to us and put forward your argument.*

***Instead of the above, we would love to publish some positive news about this Council where they have done a really good job, exceeded expectations and used creativity & imagination. Please send us an example***

**Opportunity for any of our Town Cllrs to Say Anything to Residents**

Unedited, max 400 words Nothing Sent Yet

## Councillors Produce Sub-standard Market Survey



10?  
There's only 8!

surveys, one of which still attracts national publicity. Professional questionnaires do not ask people to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 for satisfaction, see right. Could anyone put in words the difference between 6 & 7? The widely-used method is 5 options - Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neither, Dissatisfied, Very Dissatisfied. Straight forward to analyse and present results.

**The final question, no 8, does not include a text box** for you to say what products or services you would like to see when you answer 'yes'. Why is it missing? Surely the Councillors want to know - it's one of the most important questions.

**The survey is more like an official form** eg "What is your age?" instead of "Please tell us your age". Nor do they: a) ask for your email so cannot send you summary of results b) tell you when and where you can find the summary of results c) have text boxes for 'comments on survey' or 'any other comments on Wetherby market?'

**They do not even thank you for completing the survey! It's basic good manners.** This shows the attitude and culture in this council - not to show any gratitude for you taking the time and trouble to help them improve their service. Very disappointing. But not surprising. Next time they could consult an expert for free (the Editor).

### Markets Committee Members

*Will any of them take individual responsibility and apologise for this survey and reassure us that they will try to do better next time?*



Cllr Dean Buckle, Con



Cllr Paul Bradley, Con (Chair)



Cllr Billie Ager-Mills, Party Unknown



Cllr Alex Riddell, Lab



Cllr Galan Moss, Con

**As shown on the left, it seems our councillors can't count.** There are 8 questions. Their '10' questions was stated on their social media too. How can we have any confidence in the survey when they make such a basic mistake? And why wasn't this obvious error noticed? Just like the bus station missing from the town map, nobody seems to check anybody else's work.

**The Editor knows a thing or two about surveys** having organised two national bus

4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how satisfied are you with Wetherby's Thursday market?  
1 = Very Dissatisfied, 10 = Very Satisfied





# Wetherby Foodbank


**EASTER DROP-IN SESSION**  
**OPENING TIMES**


**Friday 29th March:** Barleyfields, Wetherby **CLOSED**  
**Saturday 30th March:** Barleyfields, Wetherby **OPEN as usual**  
**Monday 1st April:** The Barn, Tadcaster **CLOSED**  
**Tuesday 2nd April:** Barleyfields, Wetherby **OPEN as usual**

If you need help when we are closed,  
 please ring & leave a message  
 Wetherby: 07840 455725  
 Tadcaster: 01937 830524



## Did you know...



There's a hot drink, biscuits & a chat for everyone at our foodbank sessions.



## 2 Pints for £5 in Harrogate!

That's cider too. Where else would it be but 'Spoons? In a lovely building, the Winter Gardens, and always a fantastic atmosphere with friendly service. Even in the middle of a Tuesday afternoon. Ordering by app is quick and simple. It's only £4 there and back on a 25 min bus trip. Free Wifi. Unlimited tea & coffee.

If any Wetherby pubs want to publicise their special offers or events, just drop us a line. We love to promote local business. No charge, of course.



**JD WETHERSPOON**  
Free House

What is killing many pubs is supermarket prices. Can buy 2 pints of cider for less than £2!

## Bee-Crafty. Markets

Leeds Kirkgate Market

HAPPY Easter

Craft Market on Saturday 30th March

10am-4pm



## Wetherby News

### NEWSWATCH

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

We do this in the hope they will wake up and take up some of our stories. Not so far - they are ignoring many of the serious issues in our great town and do not deserve to have 'Wetherby' in their title.

#### Issue of 14 Mar '24

**News Items - 1 Letters - 0**

Award for Pat of Salvation Army

#### Issue of 21 Mar '24

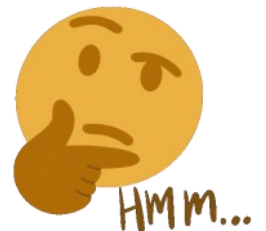
**News Items - 1 Letters - 0**

Bridge over motorway to close

#### Issue of 28 Mar '24

**News Items - 1 Letters - 0**

The Introduction of parking charges - no new information  
 Nothing about bus franchising or 2 local people on tv talking about it - see page 4. Nothing about Wetherby Town Council matters. See why this lack of reporting matters on page 7.



**Wetherby & Area Deserves Better**





Leeds are on a roll, and so was Gnonto after scoring the first goal against Millwall. The 2 - 0 victory sent them to the top of the Championship above crisp-munchers Leicester who do have a game in hand.



United fear no team at the moment, and are playing fantastic football for their German manager. They are enjoying an unbeaten league run of 19 matches and have now won 12 of their last 13 Championship games, overturning a 17-point deficit on New Year's Day when Gary Lineker's old team were top. Surely automatic promotion to the big boys league is a cert now with only 8 games to go? Sky loving Leeds and showing most of remaining fixtures live, including the two Easter ones.

- Watford v Utd on Fri 29 Mar at 20.00
- Utd v Hull City on Mon 1 Apr at 20.00
- Coventry v Utd on Sat 6 Apr at 15.00
- Utd v Sunderland on Tues 9 Apr at 20.00
- Utd v Blackburn on Sat 13 Apr at 12.30



The BBC have relegated rugby league well down their list of priorities. They have rights to the Challenge Cup but put no live matches on BBC2 as they usually do. Instead they put Leeds v St Helens on the Red Button. And there was no tackle count on the screen. And they made NO highlights programme for the round. And BBC Look North news continues to give minimal coverage of the sport. The RFL should put specific broadcast conditions in their contract with the BBC.

It was a wet and cold Headingley but to see such so many empty seats for the Cup match was depressing. Poor 'optics', to use modern parlance, for the sport when two of the biggest teams are playing. 15,000 attended the week before for the Super League fixture. Saints were again too strong for Leeds and beat them 20 - 6 in an entertaining game.

Following that disappointment, Rhinos were back to winning ways when they beat the winless Castleford Tigers by 26 points to 6 at the Jungle.



- Rhinos v Warrington on Fri 5 Apr at 20.00
- Rhinos v Huddersfield on Fri 19 Apr at 20.00

## Your Community Newsletter Editor: Paul Kirby



Email: [WetherbyFreePress@PM.me](mailto:WetherbyFreePress@PM.me)  
Tel: 07840 862861 Twitter/X: @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 don't do interviews, as we are part-timers and aren't trained in short-hand. We are not 'journalists' - we say what we see. Simple.

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. 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 4 'Meet the Editor' events so far. None of our harshest online critics have turned up to have a civilised debate.*

### Please donate online at

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

to cover printing costs

*Thank you*

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

## MAFIA



*Evidence they exist in Issue 58*

Speaking truth to power has made us unpopular with a few people in this town. They have orchestrated a deplorable campaign against the newsletter and the Editor. This is despite the fact we will print anything anyone sends us, including criticism of ourselves (we put it on the front page once). Why haven't they sent us anything to publish?

They seem unable to accept even mild criticism, taking it personally instead. How else could you explain the extremes they go to, to stop us promoting ourselves and

raising funds for printing? They fear we will become more and more popular, which unfortunately for them, is inevitable as time passes. We will find out eventually who the people are who call our supporters and bribe/threaten/misinform them. Their partial success in persuading people shows they have some influence in the town.

We wish they would let go of their anger and hate - they will feel much happier. Until they do, please inform us if they contact you.



# Free Press

*Est 2021 Facts & Integrity*

News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

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



**"You're not a journalist"** Correct, there are no journalists in Wetherby. We strive for the highest standards and the Editor has many of the qualities and skills of a professional journalist. The question is why critics would prefer no news publication in Wetherby except the costly Wetherby News.

**"You're always criticising people but what do you do for the community?"** Yes, we criticise people in authority and who spend our money or represent the town, and we clearly state the facts that our views are based on. The fact there is much to criticise is not our fault. The question is why our critics think that such criticism should not be published (when they have the opportunity to write in and put a different view, but don't take it). WFP is full of other non-critical news and information but that is ignored by critics.

It is none of anyone's business how the Editor spends his spare time, but for the record he:

- \* volunteers \* campaigns for better buses (achieved buses on Boxing Day) \* has raised £2500 for local charity so far \* edits this newsletter \* promotes the town to outsiders on F'book \* makes the town a cleaner place

**In 2023 we Supported**

**25**

**Local Charities & Organisations**

**Send us your**



to [WetherbyFreePress@PM.me](mailto:WetherbyFreePress@PM.me)



# Town Council Extra



Wetherby Town Council

## Annual TOWN MEETING

Invitation to the electors of Wetherby.

6pm

8 April, 2024

Grand opening of the Town Hall Foyer

Presentation of the Town Council's Strategy



## We Were Right! Otley is Better

The Comms Cttee of Feb 24 states "Otley Town Council was identified as a good example of a website, in part due to the index of businesses." We told them that Otley's was far superior over a year ago but still virtually nothing has been done to address the issues we have raised, particularly the lack of basic information on the website. But then what hope is there of high standards when they quote 'Normington Town Council', not once but 3 times in

number of websites that were identified as good examples of a website. Wetherby Town Council, Normington Town Council, Otley Town Council and the Communications Committee **AGREED** that the format and visual design us

Council minutes (Jan mtg once, Feb mtg twice). Why was this error not noticed? Will we have similar basic errors on the new website?

We asked Town Clerk, Iona Taylor these questions. Due to lack of space we have had to summarise her responses.

1 Why were the Communication Cttee meeting minutes that took place in October only approved in the March 2024 meeting 5 months later?

**Council Response: No information in relation to this item.**

2 In the Comm. Cttee mtg mins of Jan 24, it states that you "presented an infographic from Normington Town Council". Where is Normington? I googled it and there is no such place.

**Council Response: Normington is an error and should read Normanton. I will ensure that this is corrected.**

3 You produced cllr meeting attendance rates for the year in Dec 22 / Jan 23. The latest figures are already 2 - 3 months late. When will they be produced?

**Council Response: The councillor attendance rates are being compiled and will be tabled at the Annual Town Council Meeting in May.**

Does the Town Clerk mean April? The Annual Town Meeting is on 8 April. See left.

4 There is no mention of the Wetherby Business Association in either the Markets Cttee, Comms Cttee or Welcome to Wetherby Cttee. Why was there no involvement from the WBA in the Markets survey for businesses. Or any involvement in the new website when businesses are going to be added?

**Council Response: The WBA Chair is invited to each meeting of Welcome to Wetherby.**

**When they attend, their presence is noted in the minutes of the meeting. Where they table apologies, these are also shown in the minutes of the meeting. No information in relation to why they were not involved in Markets survey or new website.**

5 Why do you not acknowledge the Wetherby Free Press in your minutes but do acknowledge the one from Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd ?

**Council Response: The Council has a rep on BWPL. No information in relation to why they do not acknowledge WFP.**

We thank the Town Clerk for her responses. But readers can see where she is not able to answer simple questions. It is disappointing to see a lack of reassurance that she will try to ensure mistakes are kept to a minimum, and maybe even apologise for them.

## More Erosion of Democracy ..... and an Attempt to Restrict Free Speech?

We notice the Town Council is introducing a 'Vexatious Policy'.

We think they mean 'A Policy for Vexatious Questions/People'!

We found this definition of vexacious: "A vexacious complaint is one that is pursued, regardless of its merits, solely or primarily to harass, annoy, or subdue somebody. It refers to something that is unreasonable, without foundation, frivolous, repetitive, burdensome, or unwarranted. In other words, it's a complaint that lacks a valid basis and is driven by negative intent or an attempt to cause annoyance".

They give no reason for spending time on this. Why did this issue come up, we wonder. We have seen this before from another publicly-funded organisation.

We think it is purely a way of deterring people from making complaints and if they do, avoiding answering perfectly reasonable and legitimate questions. If this is their reason for introducing it, it is yet another attack on democracy and is another example of the Town Council and the Councillors avoiding any accountability to us, the electors.

We have raised many issues in WFP and not a single one has been frivolous, burdensome or any of the adjectives above. Most of these issues have been ignored by the Councillors despite all of them clearly being in the public interest, and written as a resident of 30+ years.

Of course, it's subjective so they can say a complaint is vexacious and dismiss it. Nobody independent will be involved in the complaints procedure in all likelihood so it's a bit like the water companies monitoring their own standards or like turkeys voting for Christmas.

If you disagree, write to us with examples please.

