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Community
Newsletter

WETHERBY

ISSUE 79 until 27 June 2025

Free Press

Est 2021 Facts & Integrity

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WETHERSPOONS

Should Be Open For Xmas



Our contact at *Spoons* says:

"Subject to a few planning conditions which need to be addressed, *JD Wetherspoon* aims to start building work in July and open around Christmas."

They have released a large pdf document containing a history of the building and images of what it could look like.

Great news for the town, the vast majority will agree. Meanwhile, the *Royal Oak* has closed and new tenants are being sought.



"Overall Look & Feel" - More Images on Page 8

Windmill Burglary 'Devastating'

New owners of the Linton pub, Michelle and Rob, were heartbroken when they were broken into. Just three weeks after opening the thieves took staff tips, takings, a large bag of change and wages. They were shaken after being woken by the alarm at 12:15am and found the back door smashed in. It appears the intruder may have had prior access to a safe key.

Villagers are urged to contact the police, or speak to the pub directly, if you have any information, or CCTV footage.



After 2.5 Years Harrogate Bus Company Give
Up on the X98/99



From The Best to this

Our post on social media

management went from hero to zero in less than 3 years. They treated us to the best buses in the country and then took them away, replacing them with old, unreliable vehicles. The *Free Press* has chronicled the decline of this route whilst other local papers and news websites have ignored it. Read more on page 3.

From 31 August there will be another operator running the main route to Leeds. Everyone thought it terrific when Harrogate Bus Company (*Transdev*) brought us the ultimate in quality buses and customer service. Things looked great for the X98/99 but this company's

Join our Large Mailing List for New Issue Reminder and please send your News, Views & Events to:
WetherbyFreePress@PM.me

TRANSPORT NEWS

Pages 3 & 4

Transdev Quit X98/99 Bus Route - Letter about Box Junction

Outrageous Parking Charges - Low Metro Standards

Use 'Operation Snap' to report bus blockers, say Cllrs

Fly Tipping, New Bike Track & Resident's Petition Page 5

Hotel's Award & Goosemoor Nature Open Again Page 9

Free Singing Course & Local Volunteer's Award Page 10



* "I bought you an elephant for your room."
"Thank you."
"Don't mention it."

* Have you heard about that new trend of skydiving without a parachute? It's a once in a lifetime opportunity.

* I think my attempts at reducing use of clichés is going well. I'm just taking it one day at a time and giving it 110%.

* Oldie but goodie: A sloth is crossing the road when he's mugged by two snails and a turtle. When the police ask what happened, the sloth just shrugged and said "I don't know. It all happened so fast."

* I lost my job for giving up my seat on the bus for someone else. Stupid me, I was the driver.



Another fine actor ruined by drink and drugs



* I know a bunch of good jokes about umbrellas. But they usually go over people's heads.
* What made me want to become an editor? Well, to cut a long story short.
* Quitting caffeine is the best decision I will never make.

More funnies on back page

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.



Follow & Don't Get



Next Wetherby Town Council Mtg

Tues 10 June at 7pm

www.wetherbytowncouncil.gov.uk

If you go, why not tell us your views on it?



Fly Tipping, New Bike Track & Resident's Petition Page 5

Hotel's Award & Goosemoor Nature Open Again Page 9

Free Singing Course & Local Volunteer's Award Page 10

£1.25 per bag

Lucky Ducky Duck Food

OPEN SUNDAYS
CANCER RESEARCH UK

TREASURES Toys

Brass Bands on Sundays at 2.30, and some Saturdays

'No' to Flora & Fauna Information by River

The Free Press highlighted the lack of nature boards by the river in May 2024 and compared it to the number in Otley (Issue 62).

On national TV Mark Barrow, underwater film-maker, has stated that most people are unaware of the wonderful wildlife in the River Wharfe, the town's best asset (Issue 71).

Wetherby Town Council have finally discussed the matter and said displays like this are a 'low priority' and will not happen in the near future. The Chair of Welcome to Wetherby is Cllr Dean Buckle. Otley has 12 signs by the Wharfe, while Wetherby has 5. Otley also has a high profile Wildlife Group.



Wetherby does not have any like this by the river

This shows to us that Conservative Cllr Buckle and his committee are not interested in providing a basic improvement like this, despite the fact it would show that the town loves and cares about the life in and around the river, as well as providing interesting information. It is a great shame. Fellow Conservative Mark Barrow says he would like a better educated public but it's not going to happen any time soon, sadly. Wetherby & Villages Clean River Group, also Conservative led, should be involved in this area of public education too.

Please write to us with any achievements of 'Welcome to Wetherby'.

TRANSPORT NEWS



Yes, you read it right, a whopping £5.30 is what *York City Council* want for one hour's parking to pop into a shop.

Bishophthorpe Road is a well-known, vibrant and very popular high street in York. It was once named the best in Britain.

York City Council want to increase already high charges to raise cash but also to encourage bus use, they say.

We remind readers that Wetherby's proposed charges include a **first free hour** and that **Sundays are free**.

Do not worry, we are many years away from exorbitant fees, like in York. Some may say we have been very fortunate to have paid nothing at all so far for parking. As we all know, many motorists coming off the A1(M) expect to pay.

The main argument in favour of charging something is the fact that non-car owners (including bus users) are currently **subsidising motorists** to park there. It costs money to maintain car parks (CCTV, painting, signage etc). It seems obvious to us that those who use a service should pay for it, a philosophy that surely all political parties agree with.

Yet it is strange to us that our Conservative councillors, and even our Green councillor, think they shouldn't. They have yet to produce any evidence that it will affect shops and businesses detrimentally in the town. Anecdotal evidence about it making life difficult for a small number of shop workers is not enough. In a close community like ours, many can get lifts off friends, family, colleagues, neighbours or WISE's transport service, if they are not on a bus route.



Transdev Quit the X98 / 99 Bus to Leeds on 30 Aug

Paul Turner, Commercial Director at *Harrogate Bus Company*, explains their decision:

“ We serve the two most sparsely populated wards in Leeds with high car ownership which unfortunately constrains demand for public transport. Despite an increase in customers since we started, we have not been able to generate sufficient additional custom to make the service sustainable as costs have increased substantially over the last three years.

With a base in Harrogate, remote from the route, it is very challenging to quickly respond to disruptions and breakdowns and therefore hard to provide the reliable, punctual service our customers expect. ”

It's not just bus users should care about this; Wetherby businesses and employers should too. This route brings many visitors from Leeds to the river, the races and the market. Importantly, it also brings vital workers to Wetherby, and takes residents to Leeds. *Transdev* finish on 30 August when another operator will take over.

So what are the possibilities?

First Bus are unlikely to want to run it again unless there is a guaranteed acceptable profit for them. *Connexions* have had difficulties attracting and keeping drivers so them taking it over is also unlikely. And not appealing to passengers unless they buy some new buses.

There are two good quality large operators in the UK. *Stagecoach* sadly don't run buses in this area but *Go-Ahead* have a foothold in York so hopefully they may be interested. A good quality small local operator, *Reliance* has just been swallowed up by *Transdev*.

Despite the impression local Councillors may like to give, there is nothing they can do to influence the *Metro* / *WYCA* tendering process. There is no reason why it will not continue as a half-hourly service. Politically, it would be very damaging for the Labour Mayor if it was reduced to hourly, like the 7 to Leeds via Boston Spa.

Apart from the bus company, who is also responsible for its demise? Who did nothing to encourage car owners to use this luxury service when it was introduced? We cannot find anything that *Wetherby Town Council* did to promote this important public service. Perhaps not surprising when they have shown little interest in resolving the 3+ year problem of bus blocking. And in the last edition of *WFP* we highlighted the tiny amount of bus information they have on their new website.

The only Councillor who has proven their interest in this route is Cllr Andrew Batty, Chair of *East Keswick Parish Council*. He even persuaded *Transdev* to reinstate a late bus from Wetherby to his village, which sadly was not successful. He deserves our respect and admiration.

Nothing in the 3 *Wetherby News* editions following this news release. Is it because it's a business in Harrogate they don't want to upset?



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

- ◇ It costs £5 return to Leeds, Otley, York & Garforth and £6 return to Knaresboro' & Harrogate
 - ◇ *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), ending in 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
 - ◇ *WYCA/Metro* have stopped printing their 7 invaluable network maps. The Wharfedale one is not displayed at W'by Bus Sta
 - ◇ If you want a *WYCA / Metro* printed timetable for the 174 to Garforth & Wakefield, you have to go to Wakefield for it
- 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 authority in a national survey in both 2023 & 2024.
- Opinion based on above facts: *Metro / WYCA* are a large bureaucracy with low standards and a poor record.



Hi Paul

Thank you for keeping us all informed and for your work in trying to keep Wetherby a nice place.



The Box Junction Introduced Late Last Year - A Good Thing

However, I have to take issue with your constant comments about the box junction on the junction of Market Place and Castle Gate. In my opinion, as a layman, the box junction is not in the wrong place, there is no way there could be a box junction along Castle Gate (where the parked cars cause the problem) because for a box junction to work one must be able to see that one can pass through it before entering it. If the area where the parked cars are causing the problem was made into a box junction (it's not even a junction?!?) driving from Scott Lane one could not see if the road was clear to enter Market Place and then turn right or left.

Notwithstanding, the current box junction (when drivers on Market Place observe the rules/law) has been a great help to all vehicles, buses and trucks/cars alike, being able to leave Castle Gate and turn into Market Place

As one who lives next to this area, I see and am as frustrated by the situation as anyone but, I believe (as I say, as a layman) a box junction on Castle Gate is not the answer but perhaps double RED lines and an enforcement camera might be?

Thanks again for the rest of your publication, I read it with great interest as soon as it is published.

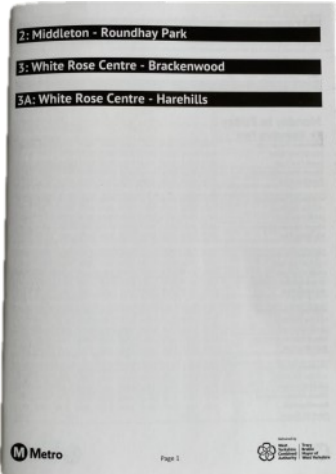
From a local resident/reader

We thank the Resident / Reader (RR) for their letter. In it RR also mentioned that he thought the Free Press was campaigning to have the Box Junction removed. On consideration RR realised this was not the case. We think the box junction is useful and benefits bus drivers and all motorists but found its introduction perplexing when a serious traffic problem exists just metres away. It may be a coincidence but the Editor has not been sent any documents to show the box junction was asked for and specifically in that location. Whatever the truth, the most important thing is that the problem of bus blocking is resolved. There's not even a cone there now. It will happen again and again. Double RED lines



Sign at Bus Station. Why isn't there one on Castle Gate?

The Most Minimalistic Printed Timetable Ever?



Showing Us Just How Much Metro / WYCA Care about Bus Passengers

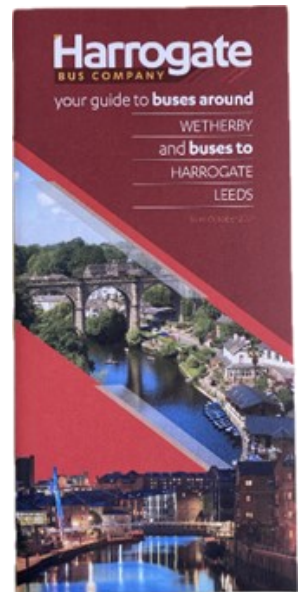
The timetable on the left shows the low standards **Metro / West Yorkshire Transport Authority (WYCA)** have descended to.

They have never produced attractive printed timetables designed to entice new passengers. But this latest timetable format takes the word 'minimalism' to a new level.

Yes, that is the front page, it fair took the Editor's breath away. They have reached a new low. The 2, 3 & 3A is a high-frequency *First Leeds* route. They have not even bothered to include 'Leeds', through which all the routes pass, nor the word 'bus'. Extremely unhelpful for new users and visitors.

But perhaps it's not that surprising because *Metro / WYCA* came bottom (again) in the latest *Transport Focus* annual survey of local transport authorities. It is quite a contrast to the money they must spend on the publicity for an irrelevant (to most passengers) name and colour scheme for the West Yorkshire soon-to-be-franchised network – 'Network Weaver', see last issue. Most passengers don't care about the name or colour of their buses, they just want the service to be reliable and comfy.

There is no route map in the timetable, of course. Or a useful 'valid from' date on it. The fact they print their own logos on the timetable so small shows that they do not want to be associated with this low/no quality product.



Compare and contrast with *Transdev's* (right) and Nottingham's high-quality timetables and literature. We hope Cllr Lamb, member of the *Metro / WYCA* Board, will comment on this.

How to Report Bus Blocking - 'Operation Snap' Online

Cllrs Lamb & Harrington's focus to resolve the bus blocking issue has always been for you to report it to Police when it happens, and now to send a video too. This seems way down the list of priorities in our view - surely the bus driver / company reports it. Councillor pressure on the authorities to resolve the problem would be top of our list. If you witness a vehicle blocking the exit to Wetherby bus station they would like you to send a video to this website

www.westyorkshire.police.uk/SaferRoadsSubmissions

You will be asked to provide: personal details, details of the incident (date, time, location), information about the vehicle involved (registration, make, model, colour) & the footage in a digital format, and finally details of the device used to record the footage.

How many people are going to bother to do that, we wonder.

Resident Sets Up Petition on Tax Allowance

A reader has written asking for publicity for a petition and we are only too pleased to provide it.

Patrick Wright says:

“ I am running a petition, asking the government to link the personal tax free allowance to a cost of living index.

This allowance has been frozen since 2020 and the current government are continuing with that until 2028.

Meanwhile there has been a cost of living crisis and more and more people are struggling to keep their heads above the water.

This screenshot, right, is from the Bank of England's inflation calculator and shows how much the value of the allowance has been eroded in 5 years.

There was a debate on 12th May on a similar petition asking for the allowance to be raised to £20k. As per the written response at 10k signatures the debate was nothing more than going through the motions and the meeting itself probably cost a small fortune, paid for by the taxpayer. Labour claims to be helping people 'put money in their back pocket' but it looks like they are just looking to cut yet one more hole in that pocket.

This petition currently has had a good response but we need some help to get the numbers up and attract publicity around the country.

I have made our MP Alec Shelbrooke aware of this, and though his party froze the allowance, he has stated that he will write to the Treasury with my permission.

The link to the petition can be found at <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/710008> or scan the QR code

We neither agree nor disagree with this petition. We are non-political. We publish this simply because Patrick asked us to. We admire any local resident who takes action to improve something they believe in.

What would goods and services costing

£12570

in

2020

cost in

Mar 25

?

Show amount

£15,732.24

”



Radio Turn Off While Boom is Booming

Those woefully woke managers at the BBC have made Radio 2 the dullest station in the UK.

Scott Mills, right, will never be a household name yet is now doing the breakfast show after the equally banal Zoe Ball gave it up. Terry Wogan would turn in his grave. There are a couple of decent presenters still there but they are drowned out by those without any charisma playing music at peak listening times aimed at just a couple of groups in society. Lucky them!

Meanwhile, other stations gain from the exodus of listeners. On *Boom* and *Boom Rock* you will find the best music from the 70s, 80s and later; classics Radio 2 rarely or never play, from the likes of the Smiths, Sparks, the Glitterband!, Boomtown Rats, Status Quo, Avril Lavigne, Tom Petty, Cult etc.

**BOOM
Rock**



Pictures of Our Wetherby (you'll never see in Yorkshire Life etc)

We accept articles in Yorkshire Life etc are not meant to reflect reality but the image one portrayed recently painted the town as a ridiculously perfect place. *It could have been written by the Town Council which puts PR high on their list of priorities, employing a Comms Officer.*



FLY TIPPING

A reader was disgusted at this sight, as they walked next to the

A1(M) approaching Walton Road (opp Parkhill Vets). She noted there was no sign warning fly tippers of hefty fines and CCTV in operation as a deterrent.

Looks like we'll see more of this then in future, costing us to clear it up.



BIKE TRACK BY RACECOURSE

The Editor is amazed at the snail-like speed of progress on this job. It should take a few days but is taking many weeks. There are no signs with information or warnings of the health and safety risks. Leeds City Council are responsible but Wetherby Town Council take no interest in it - no updates on social media.

Let's hope we see kids on bikes (a rare sight!) in the near future.

Let's Brighten Up Wetherby for Residents & Visitors

Our campaign to brighten up Wetherby continues. We would love our town representatives, organisation leaders and resident artists to express their creativity and imagination. None have emerged yet but we live in hope.

We encourage them to come forward and make our environment more attractive and interesting. We haven't seen any street art on our dull street furniture, like traffic light boxes, cable boxes or any walls.

Nor have we seen anything to make our many empty shop fronts look better. *Wetherby Business Association* seem to be doing nothing to help. Or *Wetherby Town Council*. Or the property management companies. Or the owners.



Why Doesn't Wetherby have a single box like this?



Why Doesn't Wetherby have any house ends like this?



Why Doesn't Wetherby have a single empty shop promoting the town like this?

On a recent day out in North Wales the Editor found one empty shop with a wonderful image promoting the town, see above right.

And he came across an awe-inspiring mural on a house end on an ordinary town centre street, see above middle.

Our town could be so much more interesting and attractive to visitors and residents. Flowers are fantastic but surely we can expect more. Just look down the road in Leeds for inspiration, above left. Don't we love Wetherby and want to tell everybody how proud we are to live here? Apparently not.

Other places around the UK encourage residents to express themselves to the delight of all. Our *Town Council* does not seem interested in encouraging such positive actions.

Perhaps we are just an ordinary town with little or no creativity and imagination, like our correspondent claimed in the last Issue. Please send us any evidence to the contrary.



We believe important matters should not be reported once and then forgotten.

Our reminders may speed things up and motivate those responsible to explain the reasons for the delay. If you have a 'still waiting' item, please tell us.



Leeds North East Inspector Richard Armitage promised to get back to a resident about a serious matter nearly 1 year ago. Still no contact.

Time: 353 Days Those ultimately responsible are:

Chief Constable John Robins
Mayor of West Yorkshire, Tracy Brabin

Rebuilding the Wall at Church on the Corner, Hallfield Lane

After including this in the last edition, work has finally begun.

It took well over a year for Wetherby Town Council to start this work.



Elderly Caring & Domestic Help

15 years
Experience



NVQ Level 2
Qualification

References available

Call Kerry on 07876 525 589

Terrible Spelling BBC!

An obvious error on *Look North* that surely somebody should have noticed. Don't they use software with automatic spell-checking?



We pointed it out to wonderful weatherperson Paul Hudson in a jokey way on social media but no response. We are still bemused by how his and *Calendar* forecasts are often so different. One computer model must be better than the other.

Wetherby Town Council - Dominated by One Party

Vacancy in North Wetherby after Billie Ager-Mills resigned. Filled by co-opting somebody

Chair of Markets



Paul Bradley
Conservative

Chair of Welcome to Wetherby



Dean Buckle
Conservative



Harry Chapman
Conservative

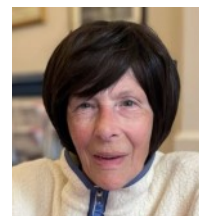


David Frame
Conservative

Leeds City Cllr too
Chair of Staffing



Norma Harrington
Conservative



Kazia Knight
None / Independent

Chair of Town Hall



Jane Lavocah
Independent



Galan Moss
Conservative



Elaine Smith
Conservative

Chair of Budgets



Stuart Newcombe
Conservative

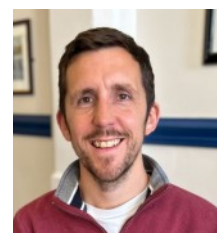
Chair of CIL



Neil O'Byrne
Conservative

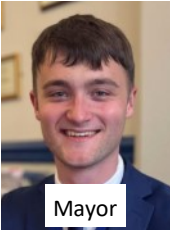


Dawn Carr (Payne)
Conservative



Alex Riddell
Labour

Chair of Property
Chair of Planning
Chair of Comms



Mayor
Connor Mulhall
Conservative

In 25/26 they are responsible for a £674,000 budget. 11 / 14 Cllrs are Conservative. Chairs of the main 9 committees are Conservative. There are no biographical details of our Councillors on the new website. We are not informed of their interests, their skills and experience or why they want to be councillors. When they started and their political party is not stated either.

One is available every Thursday in the Town Hall foyer to answer your questions 11 - 1

We pay over £300,000 for Staff * 5 Admin Staff: Town Clerk (full time), Asst Clerk (full time), Comms & Events Officer (full time), Admin Officer p/t & Finance Assistant p/t. * 3 Facilities Staff : Facilities Officer (full time) Burials Officer (p/t) & Facilities Caretaker (full time). Plus Relief Caretakers & Cleaner.

In 2025 they stopped telling us the exact staff costs. It is at least half of the total spend, £330,000 we think.



Space for any of our 15 Town Cllrs to Say Anything to Residents

Unedited, max 400 words

Nothing Sent Yet

After every issue we ask them to respond to our legitimate questions and issues raised. Oddly, a staff member acknowledges receipt of the email but then we hear nothing. The Editor resides in Wetherby East and in particular asks **Cllrs Bradley, Lavocah, Knight, Newcombe & Payne** to respond. It is frustrating, especially when Councillor Lavocah admits that she has little direct contact from constituents.

Thank You for the Compliment

Constant critic Steve Cooper of Bramham has somewhat surprisingly described the Editor as an 'investigative local journalist'.

Such high praise is, I'm afraid, unwarranted. But much appreciated anyway. 'Citizen journalist' would be more accurate. The Editor would love to have more time to investigate stuff because, like any town or city, there's a lot goes on that people in authority don't want you to know. Readers tell us some very interesting info that sadly is difficult to verify. The truth always comes out in the end though. **Would love to meet up** and thank you personally, Steve. Let me buy you a *Morrisons* coffee. Meanwhile, keep up the good work promoting the *Wetherby News*. It needs all the help it can get! See page 11

Cllrs & Staff Continue to Provide No Response to our Legitimate Questions & Issues

This Town Council are acting in a rude, undemocratic manner to a resident of 30+ years and are also showing gross disrespect to you, our readers, most of whom will also be council tax paying residents. Here are just a few of our issues that not one of the above Councillors or Town Clerk has responded to so far this year:

- Dog fouling on Westgate complaint by business owner *Issue 74*
- Low attendance at meetings by Councillors (6 cancelled in one month) *Issue 75 & 76*
- Large increase in fly posting *Issue 75*
- Hiding Council staff costs *Issue 75*
- 'Resolution to ongoing staffing matter ... been negotiated' Town Clerk quits soon after *Issue 76*
- No committee covering bus issues, unlike Otley *Issue 76*
- Why we won't miss Iona Taylor, outgoing Town Clerk *Issue 76*
- Put 'Buses' instead of Metro / WYCA, see image *Issue 76*



A Useless Sign Outside Town Hall for Years - Symbolic of this Council



'Buses' are not an organisation

- **Plans unveiled as Leeds City Council grants premises licence, see images below**
- **Work should start next month (July)**
- **Should be open by Christmas (3 years after it was bought)**

Reassurance from 'Spoons

Will have family-friendly atmosphere
Food sales will be crucial
Policies to prevent drunkenness
Experience in other racing towns eg added security
CCTV, challenge 21 policy, no drinks outside after 11pm

Opening Hours:

Mon - Wed 9am to midnight
Thurs - Sun 9am to 1am
Last orders on Thurs at midnight



Summary of Saga

- * Sant Angelo sold in Oct 22
- * Bought for £1.7M
- * Investing £2.25M
- * Create 50-60 jobs

'We're too snooty a town' for Spoons headline in The Sun - Oct 22 (Issue 30)

We report on rumours in 2023 and Spoons refuse to comment

After one year in Oct 23 they have 'chosen to sell the property' (Issue 49)

PLANS BACK ON in Apr-24 (Issue 61)
WFP first to tell news on social media



Planning obstacles (Issues 63 etc)

Two Wetherby Town Cllrs voted against application in June 24 (Issue 67)

WFP encourage readers in Oct 24 to comment on application on LCC Planning Dept website resulting in massive increase in support (Issue 69)

251 Spoons Pubs in Good Beer Guide 2025 - (1 in Wetherby, 4 in Knaresboro & 5 in Otley, Issue 70)

4 Arrests at Leeds City Council Planning Dept plus 5 others in Dec-24. Nothing heard about this since (Issue 72)

Full planning permission granted with conditions in Jan-25 (Issue 73)



We provided the most consistent coverage of this story, more than any other local publication

Bridge Hotel at Walshford Wins Wedding Award



Rebecca
Child
receiving
the
Award

The Bridge Hotel & Spa is thrilled to announce its recent win at the I DO Wedding Awards 2025, where it was named 'Wedding Coordinator of the Year'.

This highly coveted award, voted for by real couples and industry peers, recognises outstanding service, creativity, and dedication in delivering exceptional wedding experiences.

The ceremony, held on 13th May 2025 at Sheffield City Hall, brought together the very best of the UK wedding industry. Now in its 9th year, the I DO Awards celebrate the very best wedding suppliers across Yorkshire, Derbyshire, and beyond. The awards are unique in being voted for entirely by brides and grooms who have personally experienced the services of the nominated businesses.

John Gascoyne, General Manager says the award celebrates the tireless work and personal touch of Rebecca Child, whose attention to detail and passion for creating unforgettable moments has earned the hotel a reputation as one of the most loved wedding venues in the region.

He adds "During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rebecca worked tirelessly engaging with brides and grooms to navigate the uncertainty - postponing, reimagining, and rescheduling weddings with compassion and flexibility. That commitment to our couples never wavered, and it laid the foundation for the trusted relationships we continue to build today. Emerging stronger and more connected to our community, we believe this resilience and dedication played a key role in our recognition as 'Wedding Coordinator of the Year'".



"Winning this award is a tremendous honour for us as an independent Yorkshire hotel a proud Yorkshire independent hotel renowned for its bespoke celebrations and warm Yorkshire hospitality" John continues. "Every wedding we host is unique, and we're deeply grateful to the couples who trusted us with their special day and took the time to vote. We are exceptionally proud of Rebecca who we feel thoroughly deserves this award".

Nestled in the heart of Yorkshire, The Bridge has long been a cherished venue for couples seeking a blend of elegance, charm, and a personalised approach. To learn more about weddings at The Bridge Hotel & Spa, visit their website at www.bridgewetherby.co.uk or call 01937 580 115

'Exciting Time of Year' at Goosemoor Nature Reserve

Springwatch is on our TVs and doorstep. The BBC series and the excellent naturalist and punk rocker Chris Packham encourage us to go out and experience it for ourselves. And we are fortunate we don't have to go far to find it at this wonderful place.

If you've not been yet, Goosemoor is down War Field Lane in Cowthorpe. It has 2 Facebook groups - Nature Reserve and Nature Reserve Group. The latter has more wonderful images like these.

It is a peaceful place to sit and watch some amazing wildlife. Not just a fantastic variety of birds but also bats, bugs, newts, moths, butterflies and small mammals.

If you would like to help out, they always welcome new volunteers. Details online or contact us if you aren't online.

latest news

OPEN AGAIN

The reeds are full of goslings like this, says photographer Shaun



In mid-May "a very big part of an oak tree has come down behind the first hide this is precariously attached to another branch and may all come crashing down..." The reason it took some time to resolve was because the tree does not belong to the reserve.



Female Broad-Bodied Chaser

Shaun Stothard
PHOTOGRAPHY

Local Lady Clair Nominated for Volunteer Award



Clair Lou Maxted Wiggins of Boston Spa has been nominated and short listed for a volunteer of the year award, organised by York Mix radio station. The 46-year-old is delighted and says: "I think it is for the 500+ care packages that I made in December 2024 and Easter 2025,

each one packaged with a ribbon and bow and a personal message. It was sent to adults, children and babies, locally and across York, Harrogate, North & West Yorkshire, Kirklees, and even north Lincolnshire via the Trussel Trust distribution centres. I also made clothes packages shared amongst the Salvation Army network and collected by a fellow charity volunteer."

Life has not been easy for Clair. She has been very unwell with arthritis, fibromyalgia and Ehlers Danlos-Syndrome, causing immense pain. Added to that she lives with other serious illnesses, including Chronic Spontaneous Urticaria / MCAS & Thrombocytopenia. This involves constant hospital visits, immunotherapy and going through many procedures.

She says: "It's been absolutely chaotic. Yet I still smiled and made all these gifts to help others who may have been struggling over Christmas and Easter. Items for the packages were donated by local people and businesses and I'm forever grateful for people's

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When: Thursdays from 12th June to 10th July

Where: Wetherby Methodist Church Hall, LS22 6NQ

Time: 8.00pm - 9.30pm

Contact: Dean on 07923 957488 or email

enquiries@spritofharmony.co.uk

More info at www.spiritofharmony.co.uk

and Facebook & Instagram too

Charity no 1164140



Scan the QR code for more details!



One of Clair's 'Pamper Hampers' for Harrogate Hospital

support. Since COVID I've made well over 1500 to 2000 care packages, firstly for NHS frontliners and key workers at Harrogate hospital and the Community, then for families and those in need locally, like at the Crypt in Leeds and Harrogate homeless shelter. I have enjoyed making them; it's taken my mind off my pain and kept me busy."

She added: "Iain (my partner) and I will attend the award ceremony on 20 June at York racecourse. I'm still in shock".

Clair tells us she is taking a little break from her charity work and volunteering, but she will continue crafting.

"I hope to do more in the future but my health comes first. I've done fundraising, charity work and volunteering since I was 15. I have raised £70,000 for various charities and am so proud of all my achievements, particularly when I was told at secondary school that I would never achieve a great deal with my arthritis. I think I proved them wrong! But now it's time to rest and think of my health. I will be back for more fundraising and volunteering when I can."

We wish Clair all the best at the awards and hope she has a well-deserved rest! She is an inspiration to us all, particularly when she has so many physical challenges to overcome. Whatever the outcome, she has our total admiration. You can email her at

clairescharitywork@gmail.com or follow her on Facebook



At this location there are

Commonwealth War Graves

www.cwgc.org

Armed Forces Festival: Commonwealth War Graves Commission talk

5.30 - 6.30pm, Thursday 26 June
Wetherby Community Hub and Library



In support of Armed Forces Festival 2025, join us for this talk about the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The CWGC aims to commemorate those who have died in service as a result of conflict so that they are remembered forever. You can find out more about CWGC at www.cwgc.org.

Free event for adults
Booking essential at www.ticketsource.co.uk/leedslibraryevents

  @LeedsLibraries 

Wetherby Foodbank

June 2025 Foodbank Wish List

- Tinned custard
- Microwave rice
- Tinned spaghetti
- Tinned sweetcorn
- Tinned carrots
- Tinned potatoes
- Instant mashed potato
- Pasta'n'sauce packets
- Tinned rice pudding
- Instant coffee (small jars please)
- Sugar (small bags please)
- Hot chocolate
- Shampoo
- Washing-up liquid
- Carrier bags

Thank you!

Did you know...?
You can access financial advice & support at our sessions.

Wetherby: Fridays 10am - noon


Wetherby News

NEWSWATCH

Issue of 22 May
News Items - 1 Letters - 1
Bridge Inn wins award

Issue of 29 May
News Items - 1 Letters - 0
Wetherspools progress

Issue of 5 June
News Items - 1 Letters - 0
Marin House press release - plea for support for hydrotherapy pool

In one group's local papers, you can read this about our town:
"Unlike many of today's towns and cities, you won't find an empty shop in sight".


Fact: One of our streets has more empty shops than open ones (Cross Street). The group's editor reacted in a reasonable and professional manner when we pointed this out, so we will not name the Group or its papers.

1.15 news items per issue in '24 costing £1.91 each

WE DESERVE BETTER



Boston Spa Methodist Church

Lunchtime Concert



Fri 13 June at 1pm £6

Harrogate Harmony Barbershop Chorus

Boston Spa Methodist Church is full of music on the second Friday of each month (with the exception of July and August) with concerts starting at 1pm. Light lunches are served from noon. *Why not "come, sit and let the sounds of music creep into your ears" (Shakespeare)*

Organiser: Margaret Jowett T: 0113 268 2041 / 07702 977696
E: margaretjowett@btinternet.co.uk

The Harrogate Harmony Chorus was formed in 1986, when four men who enjoyed singing formed a harmony group in Killinghall Village Hall. The chorus has grown over the years and now has a membership of twenty six like-minded men whose ages range from 62 to 93.

To provide a pleasant interlude for the audience the group has a ukulele section, who help to provide some audience participation by way of well known sing-along tunes.

Also a couple of members have a good repertoire of monologues and jokes which all help to enhance the audience's experience.

The State of Yorkshire Football

Most of us are very pleased that a city the size of Leeds has a team in the top league again. A county the size of Yorkshire should have at least two. The Midlands had 4 this season.

It was a great disappointment that Sheffield United threw it away in the play-off final at Wembley. This means no Yorkshire derbies against Leeds in the Premiership next season.

So how did the other teams in Yorkshire do after last year's dismal performance, described in Issue 62?

Sheffield Wednesday were a mid-table team in the Championship (old Division 2) and **Hull City** avoided relegation by the skin of their teeth.

In League 1 (old Division 3) **Huddersfield, Barnsley** and **Rotherham** were 14 to 18 points off a play-off place.

The best news came in the bottom division. **Doncaster** were promoted as Champions and **Bradford** managed to squeeze in the third automatic promotion place.

Harrogate finished in the bottom half of League 2 (Old Div 4).

So in summary - 3 promotions, a mediocre season for most and a sigh of relief none were relegated.

As usual, the North West and London had the most success on the pitch.

East of Pennines v West of Pennines

Next season there will be 5 teams from the North West in the top league and 3 from the North East.

In the second tier there are 4 in the North East (2 Sheffields, Hull & the Boro). Compare that to 2 from the North West (Preston & Blackburn). So in the top two leagues, it's a draw 7 - 7.



Rhinos on the Charge

It was a packed-out Headingley, where the first anniversary of Leeds hero Rob Burrow's death was marked by an **MND Awareness** match. A 15,000 crowd made it an emotional occasion that many more witnessed across the nation, live on **BBC TV**.

The Editor attended and so did his wife for the first time. She enjoyed the atmosphere and a good match. Well worth the £35 paid for a seat in the North Stand.

Opponents Wakefield were on a winning streak with impressive displays recently, particularly against Warrington. But they were not up to that



Remembering Rob

standard in this game and, though a late comeback made for an exciting climax, they lost the game 22 - 18.

The win took the Rhinos up to the heady heights of third place. Some very tough games coming up though.

Rhinos v Warrington on Sat 14 Jun at 17.30

St Helens v Rhinos on Fri 20 Jun at 20.00

Rhinos v Leigh on Fri 27 Jun at 20.00

Hull KR v Rhinos on Sun 6 Jul at 15.00



Wetherby Free Press
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News, Funny Stuff & Improving Accountability

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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 not professionals (but have high standards). We are not 'journalists' - we simply 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 6 'Meet the Editor' events so far. None of our harshest online critics have turned up yet to have a mature face-to-face discussion.



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