

Newsletter January 2023

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



A warm welcome to our first newsletter of 2023. For those new readers who visited the BW display at the recent Lions Dickensian Market and signed up for the newsletter, thank you for your interest and support.

This edition contains updates regarding the RA development, Bellway, Maltkiln and, pleasingly, the withdrawal of the planning application by Lidl.

Given current astronomical energy prices, with more in the pipeline, pardon the pun, you may be interested to learn that there is an Energy Fair at Wetherby Town Hall on 28th January.

You will find more details later in the newsletter.

A gentle reminder to please consider assisting our efforts. We did collect a number of contact details at the Dickensian Market and I will be making personal contact over the next weeks. We hope some of our new supporters may wish to get involved. Our contact details are shown in this newsletter and can also be found on the website. If you would care to contact me by phone on 07973 805055 or by email at roger.owen.3@btopenworld.com I will be pleased to provide more information.

Thanks for reading.

Roger Owen

Chair: **Better Wetherby Partnership**

RACECOURSE APPROACH DEVELOPMENT – SWINNOW PARK – UPDATE

As [previously reported](#), it is pleasing that Taylor Wimpey has responded positively to representations from BW, the Civic Society and Ward Councillors. After 2 years of meetings we are almost there. [The outcome](#) is that significant changes have been made by TW to improve the plans for this huge development which will have a significant impact on our Town. The LCC Plans Panel met on 12th January to consider the revised scheme. BW issued a statement of support and compliments to all who have helped make key improvements from the original scheme, heading it towards the exemplary scheme we all want to achieve. There are still some points to clear up.

One of the issues raised by BW relates to the safety of pedestrians walking from the RA development on York Road into Wetherby. It is understood that plans are in place for a number of measures which should help mitigate excessive speed on this busy stretch of road. TW have also agreed to widen footpaths within the development to allow easier pedestrian access into Wetherby town centre. BW have already flagged that any future Applications (the major will be for the remaining 300 dwellings) must incorporate up-to-date thinking and BW is ready to give further input along with our partners.

Information, documents and plans regarding the development can be viewed on the Leeds City Council Planning portal ([see our website](#) for a full list of links)

PROPOSED MALKILN DEVELOPMENT AT CATTAL

BW has made detailed representations to the Harrogate Borough consultation exercise, and also in respect of the [planning application to build up to 4,000 dwellings](#) on the site around Cattal Station. We have also written to NYCC about the lack of affordable housing which falls below the HBC standards.

The proposed scheme has the potential to ruin our Town with some 6,000 additional motor vehicles, more emissions and pollution, more pressure on our overstretched infrastructure, including schools and medical services, and all this within a 10 minute drive. There are already objections to the scheme from National Highways in connection with capacity on the A59 and the Environment Agency as part of the identified site is on the highest risk Flood Plain. BW representatives will be meeting our constituency M.P. to discuss our concerns over the next weeks. More updates will follow as things progress.

Stop Press! On 17th January, it was reported in the Stray Ferret, the online news agency for Harrogate, that one of the landowners has withdrawn support for the development. However, the developers behind the project, the Wetherby-based Caddick Group, maintain that they are confident that the project will go ahead. A link to the article can be [found here](#).

BELLWAY- SPOFFORTH PARK

Meetings have been held between Planners, Ward Councillor Norma Harrington and Bellway, as the [development nears completion](#). The final Balancing Pond is constructed and has seen 'action' during the recent heavy rain falls. BW hope this will help alleviate some of the problems around Harland Way. Cllr. Harrington has worked hard to get drainage work secured which will help improve the situation. In addition, new replacement planting and surfacing of the Bridleway from Spofforth Hill to Harland Way is also programmed to happen. All of this leaves one or two other issues to be resolved, but BW hopes we are near the 'finishing line' after a long effort, well spent.

LIDL - PLANNING APPLICATION WITHDRAWN

In June 2022 the supermarket chain, Lidl, announced their intention to submit a planning application to demolish the Mercure Hotel on Wetherby Road and replace it with a supermarket, along with a new elderly care facility. Following the submission of [a formal planning application](#) in October 2022, BW submitted a strong and detailed objection to the Leeds Planning Authorities, as did many local residents. It is pleasing to report that on 16th January 2023 the application was withdrawn.

[BW's objection](#) highlighted the refusal in 2012 of LCC Planning authorities of an application by Sainsbury's to replace the Mercure Hotel with a supermarket. BW contended that the grounds for refusal in 2012 remained; that it would have a significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of Wetherby Town Centre and it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the adjacent Conservation Area.

Additionally, the Leeds Site Allocation Plan (SAP) makes it clear that should the hotel go, then the site should be for older persons housing/independent living and that any future development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. As this site is within the Wetherby Conservation Area, BW contend that this is simply the wrong location for a new store, whether this be a Lidl or any other supermarket.

Although the withdrawal of the planning application is welcomed by BW, it is important to note that there remains the possibility that Lidl can submit a further application for the same character or development of the site, within 12 months. BW therefore intends to closely monitor the situation.

WEST YORKSHIRE MASS TRANSIT VISION 2040 CONSULTATION

The West Yorkshire Mass Transit Vision 2040, is aimed at a new transport system for a greener, more inclusive and better connected West Yorkshire. A consultation exercise concluded on 16th January. A response was submitted by BW expressing concerns at the almost complete lack of content in the 'Vision' document to address the public transport needs of Wetherby and the wider, Leeds Outer North East area.

The BW response can be seen www.betterwetherby.com/transport

ENERGY SAVING EVENT – GETTING THROUGH THE ENERGY CRISIS!

Saturday 28th January 10am to 2pm – Wetherby Town Hall

Many people are struggling to cope with the steep rise in energy costs that have hit households and businesses hard during the past year. Although the government has taken action to help with energy bills and to cap energy prices, it's likely that the cap will be raised again in April 2023 and prices will be even higher. So, with inflation at its highest level for many years and a cost of living crisis, conserving energy and keeping costs manageable is a priority.

To help local people get through the energy crisis, a free event is being organised by the Boston Spa, Wetherby and Villages Community Green Group. It is supported by Wetherby Town Council, Wetherby Ward Councillors and Friends of the Earth. The event follows on from a successful Eco-Energy Fair held in September 2022.

The focus is to raise awareness of measures that people can take, such as using renewables and retro fitting of homes, to help conserve energy and reduce energy bills. There will be displays and presentations on a range of issues on saving energy, retrofitting insulation, installing low carbon solar and heat pumps, renewable energy and other topics, with tips and practical advice.

Drop in any time between 10am and 2pm. It's free and might just help you save money on your energy bills!

WETHERBY DICKENSIAN CHRISTMAS MARKET AND CRAFT FAYRE

Thanks to all who visited the Better Wetherby display at the recent Dickensian Market. Despite the freezing weather, a great many people enjoyed the various attractions, stalls and music. Those of us on the BW display were pleased with the interest shown and support for our efforts. Congratulations to Wetherby Lions for putting on such a super event and raising funds to provide a complimentary 'Senior Citizens' Persons Party' to start 2023.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT BW? CONTACT US:

If any local organisations wish to learn more about BW, a talk about our activities can be arranged. We also very much welcome and encourage volunteers and supporters to assist our efforts.

Please contact us with any comments and queries. If you wish to be included on our mailing list please send a request by email to betterwetherby@gmail.com. Please feel free to share this newsletter - the more people that are aware of these important local issues, the better.