

Newsletter March 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Welcome to the latest edition of the Better Wetherby (BW) Newsletter. Well, the nights are getting lighter, even if we are still a little chilled and damp. But, above all, spirits are lifting. As I pen this piece there is an increasingly stronger light at the end of the COVID tunnel and we are now able to look forward to seeing the spring flowers blossom and businesses in our great town opening their doors once more.

Whilst a full return to normality will take time and we will have to live with COVID as we do with 'flu, I for one can't wait to see our pubs, shops and restaurants busy and thriving again, not just with us locals, but racegoers and tourists.

BW too can now start to plan ahead. Our long delayed Workshop to pen our future can now be planned, with full participation in place of a Zoom screen. That said, despite the pandemic restrictions, we continue to be active. Over several months, BW has provided constructive input to the Taylor Wimpey Design Workshops for the massive Racecourse Approach development. Unfortunately the workshops are currently paused, mainly due to the heavy workload of Leeds City Planners, but we hope to continue our productive and positive contributions when the workshops resume over the coming weeks. Also, during March, Taylor Wimpey's Planning Consultant has agreed to give a presentation to the BW Steering Group, another positive demonstration of co-operation as we seek to get the exemplar development Wetherby deserves, given the substantial effect it will have on our Town.

BW representatives recently had a meeting with Leeds City Council (LCC) on Sustainable Development, Transport and the Climate Emergency, see report below. We also continue to work closely with Wetherby Town Council on these matters.

Also reported elsewhere we are working closely with several authorities in connection with the soon to be completed Spofforth Park development which, so far, has neglected some of its important planning obligations. We also continue to monitor other issues around development elsewhere in Wetherby.

Keep well, stay safe and vigilant and enjoy the spring. Thanks for reading.

Roger Owen

Chair: ***Better Wetherby Partnership***

MEETING WITH LEEDS CITY COUNCIL (LCC)

At the end of January a small group from BW, including Ward Councillors Norma Harrington and Alan Lamb, met with Councillor Lisa Mulherin, the LCC Cabinet Member for Climate, Transport and Sustainable Development, and other council officials. We were keen to establish the position of LCC on these important matters in relation to Wetherby's status as a "Major Settlement" and the impending development of some 1100 homes at Racecourse Approach.

Cllr. Mulherin advised that she is to leave her post in Cabinet in March to take up a role outside LCC and her Cabinet post and current responsibilities will be taken by Cllr. Helen Hayden. For her part Cllr. Mulherin confirmed:-

- LCC aims to be a Carbon Neutral Authority by 2030.
- Local Plans will be redrafted to take this and other changes on transport and sustainable construction into account.

BW advised we had been taking readings of emissions around the town for some time and had concerns given the likely impact of traffic from the building of 1100 additional homes in the future.

On Transport, we made the point that most of the LCC policy issues seem to be city centre orientated, ignoring the needs of major settlements such as Wetherby. There is never a reference to improving or widening the scope of public transport in our area and no mention of this in the emerging Transport strategy, to which [BW has submitted a detailed response](#). (Please see paragraph below on how to give your views on the draft strategy).

On Sustainable Development, we were heartened by LCC comments that the Racecourse Approach development should be 'exemplar' in terms of standards and forms of construction and the incorporation of technology. Furthermore, an undertaking was given by LCC that they would be closely monitoring the Taylor Wimpey proposals and looking to ensure that all phases of the development fall in line with legislation current at the time of construction, for example heating methods and insulation standards.

After the meeting BW Chair, Roger Owen said, *"Although some parts of the hour long meeting were a bit short on detail specific to Wetherby, we were heartened by the fact that LCC, like us, want the Racecourse Approach development to be 'exemplar'. That is something we are working towards in the Taylor Wimpey Design Workshops which are planned to resume in mid-March.*

We were also encouraged by Senior Officer and Cabinet Member invitations to "Tell us what you want to see" and to hear the view of LCC that they envisage no more than a 15-20 minute journey to access all needs as being very important in the future. Councillor Mulherin spoke about schemes such as Car Clubs which is interesting, but we need to see how these issues will play out with the next Transport Policy Review, for example".

BW will be looking to arrange a meeting with the new Cabinet Member, Helen Hayden, in due course.

LEEDS TRANSPORT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

A reminder that a public consultation on a draft Transport Strategy for Leeds is currently taking place. **Note that there is a deadline of 26th March 2021 to submit your views.** To find out more and register your comments, go to <https://leedstransportstrategy.commonplace.is/about> .

A key factor in the success of the strategy will be the provision of improved bus services. Yet, paradoxically, for a strategy with such an ambitious vision, the current draft includes no prospect of

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better public transport for Wetherby and the outer suburbs of Leeds. It is important that LCC be made aware that as well as providing efficient and regular bus services to Leeds and Harrogate, the current lack of bus services from Wetherby to York needs to be addressed to give people wider access for business, education, employment and hospitals and also to railway stations such as York and Cattal. For further information, please visit our website [transport page](#).

KINGS MEADOW VIEW – STOCKELD PARK/PERSIMMON HOMES

Many of our supporters will recall that their introduction to BW was through Wetherby & Kirk Deighton Countryside Partnership (WKDCP) – a partner and founding organisation of the BWP. WKDCP itself was formed to support concerned local residents in the Kings Meadow View area of Wetherby, including Kirk Deighton, to respond to a pre-planning application consultation for 120 houses - some three and a half years ago from Persimmon Homes.

The public consultation, conducted without any prior notice from Persimmon, ran between the 9th and 31st August 2017 (only three weeks) during a peak holiday season including a Bank Holiday. Nonetheless, the consultation attracted more than 200 objections and a Public Meeting took place with over 100 residents in attendance.

Unfortunately, whilst residents engaged in good faith with the pre-planning consultation, Persimmon have never provided any outcomes or updates from this process. As a consequence, WKDCP wrote to Persimmon in early February 2021 requesting an update regarding intentions for this site. Alas, no response has been received despite a follow-up. WKDCP and BW believe it quite reasonable for clarification regarding Kings Meadow View to be forthcoming, and we will continue to progress accordingly. LCC's Chief Planning Officer has already been contacted regarding this matter too.

As more information becomes available, we will of course share this with all our supporters.

SPOFFORTH PARK (Bellways) – Latest Information.

It is understood by BW that LCC Planning officials have finally had a meeting with Bellways about their failure to provide the necessary planting and other matters which were conditions required when planning approval for the Spofforth Park development was given. This follows discussion at a recent BW Steering Group meeting and the support and persistence of Ward Councillor Alan Lamb to make progress. We are hopeful that progress towards major new planting, a resurfaced bridleway, plus removal of the temporary access way will, at long last, soon be underway. A more detailed update will be provided in the April newsletter, and [also on our website](#).

CONTACT US

We welcome further 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 issues, the better.

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