

Newsletter September 2024

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

A very warm welcome to our latest BW Newsletter. I hope you are all refreshed from summer, even if you've experienced regular soakings!

Here at BW we have kept active, attending the so-called public consultation regarding the Maltkiln proposals, monitoring events with the Lidl appeal and examining the recent plans to reform our planning system in which the government is looking to impose new housing development levels on local authorities. This is concerning for Wetherby, given the developments at Racecourse Approach in particular, when set against a creaking public transport network, overloaded health and school capacities, etc. BW will be keeping our eye on this ball along with national organisations.

Now we are back into regular meetings I would again ask that if you have any interests or abilities you think can help us with, please get in touch. I have been heartened with the arrival of our new Secretary, Jacquie Clarke and two other prospective members of our Steering Group, but we can always do with more help. Even if you don't feel you can commit but could help on issues of special interest to you, please get in touch.

Thanks for reading.

Roger Owen

Chair: **Better Wetherby Partnership**



LIDL PLANNING APPEAL UPDATE

Just a reminder that the Public Inquiry regarding the appeal by Lidl against the unanimous decision of the Leeds City Council's North and East Plans Panel to refuse their application ([Ref 23/01507FU](#)) to demolish the Mercure Hotel and build a Lidl store and adjoining retirement accommodation starts on Tuesday, 22nd October 2024. The venue for Inquiry is Leeds Civic Hall. These events usually run from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and BW understands that the Inquiry is set for 4 days.

As reported in the [July newsletter](#), Leeds Planning officials made a compelling case for the Lidl application to be refused. It is understood they will be maintaining their strong opposition at the Inquiry. BW is supportive of the LCC position, but we will not be directly involved in the Inquiry.

The hotel has now been closed for several months and is listed at the Land Registry as being sold in May 2024 for almost £7 million. However, to date, we have no information about the new ownership.

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Better Wetherby Partnership Ltd (Company Number 11855009), 41 Spofforth Hill, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS22 6SF

MALTKILN DEVELOPMENT HEARINGS START 17 SEPTEMBER

Details were recently announced of Hearings by a Government appointed Inspector regarding this proposed major housing development. The Inspector, Mr Clive Coyne, is tasked by the Secretary of State for Housing to undertake an independent examination of [The New Settlement \(Maltkiln\) Development Plan Document \(DPD\)](#), which sets out a vision and policy framework to guide how the new settlement is designed and developed.

As part of the examination, public hearing sessions will be held at Civic Centre, St Luke's Avenue, Harrogate HG1 2AE starting on Tuesday 17 September until Friday 20 September 2024 and, if necessary on Tuesday 24 September until Friday 27 September 2024. There will be a morning and afternoon session each day. Morning sessions will start at 10am. Afternoon sessions will commence at 2pm.

The close proximity to Wetherby of this huge, 4,000 home settlement at Cattal, may well bring additional trade to Wetherby businesses. However, it is also likely to have serious consequences for the town, particularly in respect of the negative impact on already overstretched local services such as doctors, dentists and schools. Another concern relates to highways and parking. The several hundred new homes to be built on Racecourse Approach over the next few years will add hundreds of extra vehicles to the town's already congested roads. Should the Maltkiln scheme get the green light, then the consequence will be hundreds more vehicles adding significantly to the growing highway and parking problems. High levels of air pollution from exhaust emissions in the town centre will be made even worse.

It should be emphasised that this independent examination is part of a longer term process, which will culminate in examination of planning application at a later date. Although not participating in the DPD hearings, BW have [submitted a formal statement](#) addressing particular concerns. We will be maintaining a watching brief and will provide an update in the next newsletter. North Yorkshire Councillor, Arnold Warneken, has also raised a number of questions and concerns about this process which are still to be answered.

Prior to the DPD hearings being announced, BW submitted a number of detailed comments ([see our website](#)) with regards to the actual planning application (ref [19/00017/EIAMAJ](#)), focusing on a number of key concerns. Since the BW submission, and immediately prior to the DPD, a raft of new and revised documents, have been submitted by the developers of the project, the Wetherby based, Caddick Group. BW will be responding to these new documents once there is clarity on the outcome of the DPD hearings.

You can obtain the latest information on the DPD hearings [via this link](#), we will also provide an update on both the hearing and the [planning application](#) in our next newsletter.

RACECOURSE APPROACH

Some keen eyes may have noticed that Taylor Wimpey have started work on the first elements of this scheme. BW are aware that not all Planning Conditions have been cleared at this time and have made appropriate comment about this to LCC.

Additionally BW is aware that Persimmon have submitted revised plans for the 130 or so dwellings on their site. This is down from the



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original plan of 300 dwellings, due to site issues. BW remains concerned that effective Noise and Air pollution measures to protect dwellings from the effects of the A1 Motorway are not fully in place and will be making representations about this to LCC.

PARKING CHARGES TO BE INTRODUCED IN WETHERBY

In the [January newsletter](#), we reported on proposals by Leeds City Council to introduce parking charges at the Wilderness and Old Station car parks in Wetherby.

Despite strong opposition voiced to LCC officials at a public meeting and the fact that over 6,000 people signed a petition opposing the proposals, an announcement was recently made on the LCC website that they intend to proceed with the next stage of implementation.

Ward Councillor, Alan Lamb, who organised the public meeting and petition, commented in a recent update:

“I continue to believe that parking charges would be a disaster for our Town and its businesses. I believe it will simply move parking onto residential streets and I believe a no-cash option will lead many people deciding not to come to Wetherby at all. It will increase social isolation and have many other poor consequences.

As part of the next step, there has to be a further statutory consultation in order for the Council to be able to implement the necessary traffic regulation order. This is due from October 2024, however, as yet, no specific date has been published. While they are clearly determined to press ahead with these proposals, we need to ensure that we get as many responses as possible once again. I will be doing everything possible to fight against these damaging charges”.

PLANS TO BUILD A SOLAR FARM NEAR WETHERBY SERVICES APPROVED

Plans were recently approved by North Yorkshire Council to build a huge solar farm adjacent to Wetherby Services. Over 12,000 solar panels will be erected on 5 hectares of land close to the service station, some 600 yards to the north of the Racecourse Approach development where hundreds of new homes will be built over the next few years by Taylor Wimpey. Further details can be found on the [BBC News website](#).

WETHERBY CLEAN RIVER GROUP NEWS

Linda Richards and other members of Wetherby and Villages Clean River group (WVCRG) recently attended a meeting convened by Leeds City Council regarding the implications of achieving Bathing Water status for the River Wharfe in Wetherby. Claire Campbell from the Environment Agency gave an update as to the action and sampling which the Agency undertake as a result of bathing water status. This sampling is done weekly from May 1 to September 30. It is expected that, in November, a classification (from excellent to poor) of the quality of the river water in Wetherby will be made. It is noted that the River Wharfe bathing quality at Ilkley, some 20 miles upstream, has been classified as “poor” for the last 3 years.

WVCRG is also involved in an ongoing additional sampling project with York University. All designated bathing water sites across the UK were invited to participate, along with Surfers against Sewage and Watershed Investigations. This project involved daily sampling of the Wharfe at Wetherby to enable broader analysis of the pollutants in the river.

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WVCRG is continuing to push for improvement in the quality of the river. Achieving the water status has raised the profile of water quality with Leeds City Council and they now engage positively on this issue. Signage will be available regarding the water quality not only on the bathing site but possibly elsewhere. People are encouraged to report any pollution incidents on the river via the incident hotline for the Environment Agency - 0800 807060.

PRESENTATION ABOUT THE RIVER WHARFE AT THE WETHERBY FESTIVAL

There will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about the state of the river in an event '**The River Wharfe – Liquid Eden**' during the forthcoming Wetherby Festival which opens on Friday, 4th and runs until the 12th.

Mark Barrow, who has featured in many TV reports and documentary programmes, will be appearing at the Festival on Wednesday, 9th Oct. at 8pm. You can find details and book on the [Festival website](#)

The Festival, now in its fifth decade, is a great part of our lovely community. There is a wonderful programme in place. You will find more at www.wetherbyfestival.co.uk/whats-on.



WETHERBY 200 CELEBRATIONS – SATURDAY, 12TH OCTOBER 2024



Saturday, 12th October, 2024 marks the 200th anniversary of the '**Great Sale of Wetherby.**' The bicentenary commemorates the auction sale by the Duke of Devonshire of the Manor of Wetherby, which included the whole of the town and its surrounding fields.

Members of Wetherby Civic Society, working with other local organisations, have put together a great programme.

There will be an exhibition in the Town Hall between 10am and 4pm, the unveiling of a commemorative plaque on the Town Hall by the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire at 12 noon, '*Wetherby Then and Now*' walking tours with the Civic Society, two illustrated talks about the auction itself and music by the Wetherby Silver Band. Free admission to all events.

To find more information and timings, please see the following links:

www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk/wetherby-200-programme/

www.wetherbyfestival.co.uk/tickets/p/wetherby-200

JOIN US

If you wish to be included on our mailing list please send a request via our website or 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.

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