

Newsletter December 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Welcome to the latest Better Wetherby Partnership Newsletter. As we approach the end of 2020, sadly a year always to be remembered for the dreadful COVID-19 pandemic, we had the welcome news of the development of effective vaccines and the start of the vaccination process. Hopefully, over the coming weeks and months, as the roll-out of vaccines gathers pace, we can look forward to more positive times and being able to meet face-to-face again instead of on Zoom.

The end of the calendar year is a good time to reflect on the work of Better Wetherby (BW). It is just 12 months ago since Paul Crossan and other BW representatives stood in the Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) Chamber at the start of the Stockeld Public Inquiry. Largely due to the significant efforts of Paul and the BW team, the

Appeal to build 210 houses on the boundary with Wetherby was dismissed. That was an exercise which taught us much. The experience has been put to good use, particularly with our current efforts participating in Design Workshops for the Racecourse Approach development by Taylor Wimpey. More of that in the update below.

In the last newsletter I reported on efforts being made to resolve outstanding Landscaping issues with Bellway at the Spofforth Park development. Our efforts are continuing with Officers of both HBC and Leeds City Council (LCC) in trying to get a satisfactory solution to the screening of the development from the Harrogate side and other issues relating to the Footpaths and Bridleways around the site. This is a matter which I feel will run well into next year but which, I believe, will result in a positive outcome for the people of Wetherby.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we are seeking volunteers to take over the roles of Secretary and Treasurer. Both positions are yet to be filled, so I would love to hear from anyone who wishes to learn more about how they might be able to help. I can be contacted on 07973 805055 or by email at roger.owen.3@btopenworld.com.

Thank you for your support over the past year. On behalf of all at BW, may I wish you and your loved ones an enjoyable time over the festive period and a very happy and healthy 2021.

Keep safe and thanks for reading.

Roger Owen
Chair: **Better Wetherby Partnership**

RACECOURSE APPROACH – SWINNOW PARK DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

As reported in previous newsletters, BW representatives are participating in a series of Design Workshops, conducted via Zoom, with representatives of the developers, Taylor Wimpey (TW), Leeds City Council, Wetherby Town Council and Wetherby Civic Society. The aim of BW is to contribute in a practical and positive way to ensure that this large settlement of 800 new homes, to be known as Swinnow Park, meets the highest standards of design and construction that will result in an exemplar development, not only complementing our attractive town, but also becoming a model for the area, region and, hopefully, nationally.

Working to ensure that the physical character of Wetherby and District is protected and developed for the benefit of the community of both current and future generations.

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The Workshops include Highways and Access, Site Layout including Street Design, House Types and Character Areas, Blue/Green Infrastructure with management of green space, mix of housing and materials, air and noise pollution and other issues. In each of the Workshops BW fielded a strong team.

After an introductory meeting on 10th September, the first Workshop took place on 1st October. The main issues discussed related to Access Points and Highways matters. Key points of concern were identified, including the fact that there was little or no design input for off-site highways issues such as the safe crossing of York Road to access schools in Hallfield Lane or the Town Centre itself.

The main focus of the second Workshop, held on 15th October, was on Layout, Housing Design and Parking. BW put forward some innovative suggestions, and the Workshop also saw some significant input from LCC Planners in respect of environmental concerns. There was a clear indication that a number of the points raised by BW were being noted and considered. Following agreement that parties should submit responses to issues raised, BW subsequently submitted detailed responses to the Site Layout and Character Areas proposal, Access Points and Off-Site Highway Plans, and an initial response to Blue Green Infrastructure Proposals.

The Workshop of 5th November focused on the subject of the proposed Primary School to be built on the site and general education matters. Education officials from LCC participated and raised a number of questions that have yet to be satisfactorily answered. It is proposed by TW that the school will be located adjacent to the boundary with the Young Offenders Institute. It is understood that officials of HM Prison Service, who operate the YOI, have recently been in discussion with TW and, as a result, are requiring additional boundary treatment to the school site.

It had been hoped that a Sustainable Construction Workshop would be arranged before the end of the year, but there has been some slippage in the timetable and this will not now take place until early 2021.

In summary, the Design Workshops are being conducted in a very constructive manner with the input of BW being well received by the developers and LCC planning officials. We will continue our efforts and report further on progress in the next newsletter.

One final point, the Climate Emergency is now playing a significant part in reshaping thinking about housing delivery. In this respect, efforts will continue by BW to try to engage in a positive way with Councillor Lisa Mulherin, Executive Board Member for Climate Change, Transport and Sustainable Development at Leeds City Council, to encourage input into the Design Workshops on these important issues.

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.