Better Wetherby
Promoting and protecting our Future

Newsletter for November 2026

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Message From the Chairman

Welcome to our latest newsletter.

Let's start with some good news. I'm pleased to report that the proposed parking charges at Wetherby's Wilderness and Old Station car parks have been withdrawn. The overwhelming

opposition to the charges from local residents clearly had an impact, so thank you to everyone who took the time to make their views known to Leeds City Council.

This newsletter contains details of two important public consultations: the Leeds Local Plan and the North Yorkshire Local Plan. Both will have significant implications for Wetherby and the surrounding villages for many years to come. These consultations provide an important opportunity for residents to help shape the future of our community. I cannot emphasise strongly enough how important these consultations are. I encourage everyone to have their say.

In respect of the various proposals for development around the town, there has been no significant change since our last newsletter. We continue to await a hearing date for the Stockeld Park/Hallam Land application and the submission of formal planning applications arising from proposals by Miller Homes and Gladman Developments. We are monitoring all developments closely and will continue to keep residents informed.

The newsletter also includes an update on efforts to secure funding for an independent highways study and details of a film on climate change that will be shown at Walton Village Hall and Wetherby Cinema. The screenings are particularly timely as the latest United Nations climate conference, COP31, is taking place in Turkey as we go to press.

Finally, with the festive season just a few weeks away, you'll find details of the Dickensian Market organised by the Lions. It remains one of Wetherby's most popular annual events and a wonderful way to begin the Christmas celebrations.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Brian Taylor
Acting Chair, Better Wetherby.

"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"

SHAPING WETHERBY'S FUTURE: LEEDS LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION – HAVE YOUR SAY



Image *shows land between Wattle Syke and Wetherby*

The launch of a 3-month major public consultation on the emerging Leeds Local Plan is expected to open over the next few weeks. The Plan will shape where new homes, employment sites, infrastructure and community facilities are located across the city up to 2043. *It is expected to include proposed development sites that will directly affect Wetherby and surrounding communities.*

This represents an important opportunity for local residents to influence planning policy and the future development of Wetherby. Decisions taken through the Local Plan will affect not only the level of future housing growth but also the protection of green spaces, transport provision, community facilities and the character of our town.

Residents need to be aware of growing interest in building on land between Wattle Syke and the southern gateway to Wetherby, close to Junction 45 of the A1(M) where developers are exploring opportunities for a major business park, industrial development or large-scale distribution facility in this area. Tritax Big Box Developments is promoting the site, of approximately 74 acres, under the name Tritax Park Wetherby. ***[tritaxbigbox.co.uk]***

While no formal planning application has yet been submitted, the scale of the proposals could have significant implications for traffic, the environment, landscape character and the setting of Wetherby. However, the counter argument is that developments may also bring employment opportunities and economic benefits. It is essential that any proposals are properly scrutinised and considered before decisions are taken.

We encourage everyone to take the opportunity to get involved in the consultation process. It is the community's opportunity to influence how our town develops and to help ensure that growth occurs in the right place, at the right scale, and with the right infrastructure.

Further information on the Leeds Local Plan can be found at:
www.leeds.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/emerging-local-plan/leeds-local-plan-consultation

To follow progress on the Leeds Local Plan and sign up for updates, visit:
https://engage.zencity.io/leeds-city-council/en-GB/projects/leedslocalplan

NORTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION OPEN UNTIL 7TH DECEMBER 2026

North Yorkshire's housing requirement increased substantially following the Government's announcement of plans to deliver 1.5 million new homes during the current Parliament. Many developers have since submitted speculative applications and proposals, including major proposals to build on the boundary with Wetherby.

North Yorkshire Council is now inviting residents, businesses and community groups to help shape its new Local Plan. The consultation covers two key documents:

- **Scoping Consultation Document** – seeking views on the scope of the Local Plan, priorities for the area, local issues, options for future growth, and the evidence needed to support the plan.

- **Draft Engagement Strategy** – seeking views on how the Council should engage with communities and stakeholders during the preparation of the Local Plan.

This is your opportunity to influence future planning policies and development in North Yorkshire. ***The consultation ends on 7th December***. Please take part and make your views known. Have your say at: **https://northyorks-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/**

Further information is available at: ***www.northyorks.gov.uk/localplan***

LIDL STORE DEVELOPMENT ON THE FORMER MERCURE HOTEL SITE - UPDATE

The application to demolish the Mercure Hotel and replace it with a Lidl foodstore, an 84-bed care home and eight senior living homes was approved on appeal by the Planning Inspectorate in late 2024. Since that time the developer has been working through the various planning conditions that have to be completed before construction can start.

It is understood that Lidl has now concluded its pre-commencement work, so demolition of the former Mercure Hotel should start soon. The development is required to be delivered in phases, with the care home and senior living accommodation being constructed before the Lidl store can open.

This was a significant element of the approved scheme and helps ensure that the wider care-led redevelopment is delivered alongside the retail development. Better Wetherby will provide further updates as more information becomes available.



HIGHWAYS STUDY, SPEEDING AND ROAD SAFETY

The Highways and Road Safety Group meets regularly at **5.30pm on the first Tuesday of each month** at Wetherby Methodist Church. The group is chaired by Ward Councillor Alan Lamb and attended by fellow Ward Councillors Penny Stables and Norma Harrington, together with the Town Mayor, Connor Mulhall. Better Wetherby is also represented.

The group is working to address growing concerns about traffic congestion and road safety across Wetherby. Much of the town-centre road system was designed in an era before the invention of the motor car and is unable to cope with the scale and volume of modern-day traffic. There are particular pressures affecting roads within the town conservation area.

Efforts are being made to secure funding for an independent highways study. The aim is to identify practical measures to help address existing problems and provide the basis for a long-term strategy to ensure Wetherby's road network is fit for the future.

An issue of concern relates to some drivers ignoring the 20mph limit in the town centre. There is a specific problem on Linton Road where some drivers travel at speeds well above the 20mph limit, creating safety concerns for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users. The matter has been raised with West Yorkshire Police and the relevant highway authorities and action is being taken.



COMMUNITY NEWS

FILM SHOW: THE PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING

Boston Spa, Wetherby and Villages green Group has arranged for a free screening of The People's Emergency Briefing, followed by a facilitated discussion at Walton Village Hall on **Monday 23 November, 7.30–9 pm.** This 50-minute film brings together leading scientists to explain the risks posed by the climate and nature crisis, including the potential impacts on food security, public health, the economy and our local communities. Based on a major national briefing held at Westminster, it explores the challenges ahead and the actions that could help reduce these risks. To reserve your seat, please email adrian.balcombe@bostongreengroup.co.uk

If you can't make it to see the film in Walton, then Wetherby Civic Society has also arranged a screening of the film at Wetherby Cinema ***at 1pm on Saturday, 28th November.***

Bookings can be made via the cinema website and cost £2.80 including booking charge. See link: *The People's Emergency Briefing | Showtimes and Tickets | Wetherby Cinema*



DICKENSIAN CHRISTMAS MARKET AND CRAFT FAYRE SUNDAY, 13th DECEMBER

The famous annual Dickensian Christmas Market, always superbly organised by our local Lions Club, is always a great day out. It opens at 9am and runs until 3pm on Sunday, 13th December.

There are stalls and displays inside the Town Hall and outdoors, with music, choirs, hot food - and Santa making an appearance! It promises to be a wonderful day out for residents and visitors alike

If you wish to be included on our mailing list, please send a request via our website www.betterwetherby.com or by email *News@Betterwetherby.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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