

WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL

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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

held in the Micklethwaite Room
Wetherby Town Hall
at 7.30 pm on Thursday 28th May 2015



This meeting is an opportunity for local residents to meet their councillors and to ask questions about any issues that might be affecting them and to get information about what is happening in the town

The Mayor will provide a review of the work of the Town Council during the last 12 months and provide information on plans for the next 12 months.

MEMBERS OF WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL

North Ward

Cllr Harry Chapman (Mayor)

Cllr Norma Harrington

Cllr Nish Kanabar

Cllr Kazia Knight

Cllr Neil O'Byrne

East Ward

Cllr Julie Brady

Cllr Alan Lamb

Cllr Joanne Maltby

Cllr John Procter

Cllr John Trower (Deputy Mayor)

West Ward

Cllr Cindy Bentley

Cllr David Frame

Cllr Victor Hawkins

Cllr Galan Moss

Cllr Gerald Wilkinson

Picture of the Town Council



Three former Mayors of Wetherby retired at the recent local May elections.

Ron Aitken – May 1987 to May 2015

Edna Hilditch BEM – May 1999 to May 2015

Derek Nicolson – May 1970 to May 2015

The Town Council presented them with a 'Certificate of Appreciation' in recognition of their valuable contribution to the Town of Wetherby and the Town Council. Their wealth of knowledge and experience will certainly be missed.

There are four new members that have been elected onto the Town Council.

David Frame

Victor Hawkins

Nish Kanabar

Joanne Maltby

These new members will continue in the long established role of promoting the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the people of Wetherby. They will comply with all relevant Codes of Conduct and act in accordance with the highest standards of probity in public life, seeking to serve the community without personal gain.

MAYOR OF WETHERBY

The Mayor of Wetherby is elected by members at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council in early May and serves for twelve months. The Mayor can serve for two year consecutive years and Cllr Harry Chapman has just been elected for his second term of office.

During the last twelve months, the Mayor has represented the Town on many civic occasions and, in his role as Chairman of the Town Council, has been part of the resources devoted to furthering the Town's interests over a wide range of issues and concerns.

TOURISM SIGN RETURNS

In August last year we saw the return on the A1(M) of Wetherby's brown sign. It took eight years to get it back and well done to Ward Councillor Alan Lamb for never giving up this battle. This sign was very costly and without the financial support of the Business Association, Ward Councillors and Town Council, the new sign would not have happened.

LEAPING HORSE LANDMARK

What a delightful and hugely impressive symbol of Wetherby this figure is, representing Wetherby's famous racing links and being sculptured from local limestone.

The statue and the landscaping working to the roundabout were provided, at no cost to Leeds City Council or Wetherby Town Council, by Natural Stone (Leeds) Ltd and Christopher Paul Heaton Design Studios, a local company specialising in garden design and build.

This beautiful leaping horse has given the main entrance to Wetherby a unique architectural future and something to enjoy every time you come into Wetherby from the south.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

At this meeting last year we told you about the team of dedicated volunteers that would be looking at the various 9 stages that have to be included in the Wetherby Neighbourhood Plan.

By having a Neighbourhood Plan we are able to have a say in the way our town goes forward in matters such as housing, schooling, parking, highways and many more of the amenities that we take for granted.

This plan will ensure that we have much more say in the future of where money is spent. The team are now at the stage of commissioning a professional to ensure that the plan meets the criteria and is approved by Leeds Planning, ready to then go to an independent inspector.

After we have confirmation that this meets the Government guidelines, it will then be up to the people of Wetherby to vote on this and with 51% saying YES then this plan will be put in place.

PARKING IN WETHERBY

For the last two years we have been saying that the parking strategy for Wetherby is imminent and I can finally this year say that this is the case.

The plans have yet to be finalised, as there are still some areas of concerns, and the Ward Councillors are continuing their discussions with LCC Traffic Engineers.

Work on the re-surfacing of the Station Car Park has already started and this will provide unrestricted parking. Confirmation on parking restrictions in Hallfield Lane & Wilderness Car Parks is awaited.

An opportunity for coaches to park in the short term on the York Road Industrial site has been welcomed as these visitors are essential to the town.

Permit Parking is still being considered and discussions are still taking place with officers at LCC.

HGV Parking

HGV bans have been put in place to prevent goods vehicles driving through certain parts of the town and yellow lines have been put in place in areas on the Sandbeck estate. However, we still have ongoing problems with trucks in the town, centring mainly with overnight parking on the A168.

A section of the hard shoulder, on the A168 near the river bridge has been removed and logs have been placed on the small roundabout to stop lorries parking. Ideally, we would like to see this road curbed but this would be very costly and we have the LCC Executive Board to consider this.

TRAFFIC

Problems with traffic issues near to local schools continue. The new crossing on Crossley Street has proved to be a traffic calming measure but we still have parents disregarding the consequences of where they park to drop off and pick up their children.

Parents of children from St James Primary School on Hallfield Lane are campaigning for some additional traffic calming measures to be put in place. A traffic count showed that more than 50% of motorists are speeding with most driving faster than 40mph, despite the 20mph zone in the area. We are still awaiting a decision as to whether a crossing can be provided but LCC do, for financial reasons, have to prioritise these.

DEVELOPMENT

Spofforth Hill

The development on Spofforth Hill, despite the opposition of a number of residents, will be going ahead. Bellway Homes will, over the next two/three years build 325 houses.

Benfield Motors' Former Site

Churchill Retirement Living has been given the green light to provide 56 sheltered flats for the elderly on this site. The construction will get underway shortly with first occupations anticipated in March, 2017.

Aldi

The building work is all set to start on the former Vauxhall car dealership site (Sandbeck Lane) and Aldi plans to open this Wetherby store in early 2016.

WETHERBY IN BLOOM

The Wetherby in Bloom volunteers continue to work tirelessly to ensure that the flowers bed, tubs and entrances to Wetherby are always looking their best. I have to say that this spring, there has been one of the best floral displays I can remember helped, I would imagine, by the weather being kind!

Do you realise that Wetherby in Bloom also has a dedicated regular team working down at the Wilderness and in Jubilee Gardens every Tuesday? In addition, they also look after the Peace Garden area at the bottom of Caxton Street. Do remember that they always make new volunteers very welcome and do keep them busy, so if you are a budding gardener, do get in touch with them!

MARKET

The weekly Thursday Market certainly brings people into the Town and even more so when the sun is shining.

This year we have a new stall holder selling dog leads and, with the many dog lovers in Wetherby, we believe he will do well. He says that one of his leads will train a dog in a matter of weeks but we are yet to be convinced!

We have not forgotten that the market brings visitors to the town and we will certainly ensure that these traders are provided with somewhere locally to park.

GREEN SPACE AREAS

Scaur Bank

This park is very popular with dog owners as they can allow their pets to run freely. I have to say that most are very responsible as the majority do use the dog bins.

There is now a football pitch marked out at the bottom end of the field which is used on a weekend by a junior team but the park remains, as always, a public area for everyone.

Sandringham Park

There is always something to report about this area and this year East North East Homes have provided a grant for a new notice board. This has enabled the Friends of Sandringham Park to provide information to the visitors about the birds and animals that might be seen there. This year they have again achieved a Green Flag Award for this park and also been given a Yorkshire In Bloom prize.

Big lottery funding has paid for the installation of adult play exercise equipment in the park and this is being well used by adults of all ages. The equipment has been positioned in sight of the play area so parents, whilst exercising, can keep an eye on their children. The adult equipment is only suitable for adults and should not be used by anyone under the age of 14.

There is now a water supply in the park which will be a huge bonus to those volunteers who, in the past, have had to carry water from their homes. Wetherby & District Rotary Club provided the majority of the funding and their support for this park is very much appreciated.

This year the park will again be holding 'The Big Lunch' on the 7th June. People are encouraged to bring a picnic and local businesses will again be supporting this event by donating food for the picnic table.

The park is now a Queen Elizabeth II Field as part of the Fields In Trust Diamond Jubilee Programme. This means that the field is now formally protected from being used for any purpose other than as a public playing field and recreation ground.

The large gate placed at the entrance here and also at Mason Field has ensured that we do not have any unwanted caravans and lorries coming onto these sites.

Hudson Park

Drainage has been installed down the side of part of the path as a measure to stop the large puddles forming. In the past these puddles have become frozen turning the path into an unwanted ice skating rink! We do realise that some puddles may remain on the path but this measure has ensured that the vast majority drain away.

Over the year, we have replaced the dog bins in this park and put in an additional one at the top corner. We just wish everyone would use them!

Garden of Rest

I don't know about you but every time I walk past the Garden of Rest I think how colourful and lovely it looks. This must be hard to achieve during the winter months.

The shelter is as popular as ever with the Tuesday and Thursday Group who are a fountain of knowledge which they are happy to share. If you are lucky they will make you welcome with a cuppa and a biscuit! On Yorkshire Day (1st August) expect the unexpected with this group, as they are organising a live band and selling cakes in the Garden of Rest to raise money for a local charity.

Skate Park

For the moment we have no problems with this play equipment! In August last year we spent a thousand pounds in repairs due to extensive vandalism which included putting in side panels, repositioning the ramp and applying specialist paint. We then had a further act of vandalism with graffiti all over the ramps which we removed as quickly as we could, due to its offensive nature.

Jubilee Garden

Many people still keep discovering this small tranquil park which is just a few minutes' walk from the town centre.

The Town Council is very fortunate that a team of volunteers from Wetherby In Bloom do all the landscaping in this park and keep it looking immaculate.

Sorry to have to mention dogs again but do keep your eye on them if you are using this area as we get plenty of deposits left near to the Bath House and this is unpleasant for visitors who come to visit this Wetherby attraction.

WETHERBY COMMUNITY PATHS PARTNERSHIP

Grass Cutting

Spending cuts of £45m at Leeds City Council has had an impact on their operating budget of the Parks and Countryside team and the amount of grant provided for grass cutting of the parish paths.

Due to the generosity of the grass cutting contractor, Sephton Baxter, and also to Paths Partnership reserves, we were still able maintain three cuts in 2014/15.

This year, we have no reserves and have been given funding for just one cut. Sephton has yet again very kindly agreed to support the town by providing a free cut and, without this, the town centre paths would look very overgrown throughout the summer.

Information Board

An information board has been newly positioned at the top Linton Road entrance to Scaur Bank. This board shows the cycle and footpath routes on the Harland Way.

This board has been produced as part of a group effort between Wetherby Community Paths Partnership, Wetherby Footpaths Group and Sustrans (a charity pioneering healthy and cleaner journeys).

Rights of Way

There have been two submissions of claims for Rights of Way. These are:

- a. Footpath through Riverside Car Park
- b. Footpath north of river towards Sewage Works

Harland Way – Fence

The issue with the underpinning on the Harland Way at the Deighton Road entrance that began in July, 2010 is still yet to be sorted. The temporary barrier fencing erected has collapsed in places and we are waiting for action to be taken by Leeds City Council. Unfortunately there are legal issues involved which have, and I expect will still, continue to hold up progress.

TWIN TOWN – PRIVAS

Members of the Wetherby Twinning Association visited Privas in August, 2014 with many staying with host families. The weather was exceptional and they were very well entertained including playing 'Le Boules' and darts. The trip would just not have been complete without a visit to a vineyard and a little tipple!

Elaine McGill, in memory of her husband John McGill, presented a trophy to the winners of a dart competition between Privas and Wetherby and we now have a John McGill Challenge Trophy Board in the Town Hall showing Wetherby winning the award in 2015. There will be another darts challenge match when our friends from Privas come on an exchange visit in 2016.

CEMETERY

Visitors to the cemetery continually comment on how well it is maintained and that the additional sponsored seats are appreciated.

One of these seats, a Bench of Remembrance, has been placed near the memorial wall to commemorate the anniversary of World 1 and this was

unveiled on Tuesday, 11th November. The funding for this was kindly donated by the Leeds City Council Ward Members.

The area in front of the memorial wall is sponsored by our landscape contractor, Pullan Landscape, and this planted triangle of land has been full of colour all year.

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE AWARD

Can you believe that it is three years since the Diamond Jubilee? The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award was launched in order that there is an opportunity for young people in the town to get the recognition that they truly deserved.

This year the top award was given to Michael Dopson who whilst on holiday in Cornwall provided CPR to a young girl who he came across face down in the shallows. There is no doubt that if this kind and unassuming teenager had not acted very bravely the young girl would have drowned.

We must not forget the two wonderful students from Wetherby High School who were the runner ups. Laura Mackintosh who is a dedicated and hardworking student who excels at most sport, in particular karate, and Robert Etherington who is an outstanding athlete who has represented the school in football, athletics and cross country. These two young people were a delight to meet and their parents have good reason to be proud of them.

TOWNSPERSON OF THE YEAR 2014

Joanne Maltby, the person behind the successful network company Wetherby Hour, was chosen as the outright winner for her determination to get the town on the Map.

Perhaps you will have noticed that Jo has now become a town councillor and, in this role, she will be able to raise issues of importance and of general concern in the town at Town Council Meetings.

REMEMBRANCE DAY/POPPY APPEAL

Well done to the Wetherby Branch of the Royal British Legion, who with a small dedicated team raised a total £21,120.00.

Record numbers turned out for the Remembrance Day Parade in Wetherby in solemn tribute during the WW1 centenary year.

Some 30 wreaths were laid this year on the War Memorial and included representatives of Wetherby High School, Deighton Gates School and Crossley Street School.

Peace Garden

There is now a small Peace Garden at the bottom of Caxton Street and, with grants from the Town Council and Ward Councillors, a new bench has been installed together with a Commemorative Plaque.

The garden area is being looked after by some of our dedicated Wetherby in Bloom volunteers.

CHRISTMAS IN WETHERBY

Christmas Light Switch On

What a superb evening when literally 100's turned out to witness the turning on of the Wetherby Christmas Lights.

There were rides for the children, stalls selling a variety of goods a huge variety of food and, with the wonderful smells, you just found you couldn't help but try some.

The Market Place was packed and I heard one resident says that the last time they saw as many people in town it was "VE Day"!

Well done to the dedicated volunteers for making sure all the trees had all the Christmas lights fitted and a huge thanks goes to the many sponsors and the independent retailers for their support.

Carol Concert

Many thanks to Wetherby & District Rotary for once again organising this annual event which for many of us marks the start of the Christmas festivities.

We were very worried that the weather would not cause a cancellation this year and whilst, it was a cold evening, we did not have the driving wind and rain of previous years.

WELCOME TO WETHERBY

This year the remaining monies in the Jubilee Accounts were put to good use, as at last, the final project to mark the Diamond Jubilee was completed.

We have given the town a lasting memorial of the Jubilee by replacing all the location boards in the town. The boards have been replaced with beautiful new ones incorporating a coach and horses showing how important Wetherby as the halfway point on the London to Edinburgh route. The maps themselves have also been updated.

Four boards have already been sited and we have two spares ones. These will be positioned at the Hallfield Lane Car Park and Station Car Park, once the work has been completed and the car parks established.

The Welcome to Wetherby team of volunteers continue to promote the town with the Easter Egg Hunt, Christmas Window Dressing Competition and many more initiatives.

They were responsible for the Tour de France fever that gripped Wetherby with a decorated bike competition, bunting and knitted jerseys on display throughout the town and we also had Welcome to Wetherby Ambassadors greeting and meeting visitors to the town. The events were rounded off with a

Community Day organised by Wetherby High School with screens showing the Tour De France and also the Grand Prix which was on the same day. Many sporting activities were organised, and with live bands and all sorts of other entertainment, there was something of interest for every age range.

Children from all the local schools displayed their decorated bicycles in the Town Hall and were surprised when the Prime Minister, David Cameron paid a visit and chatted to them as part of his Tour De France visit to Yorkshire.

TOWN HALL

The Town Hall is lucky to have a number of regular hirers. Without their support it would be very difficult to keep this wonderful historical building viable and available for the Community to use.

We do try to accommodate every enquiry we get and commercial hirers are a bonus as we do charge them slightly more than we do for a community event.

Every year I continue to say that we are saving towards a new roof and it is no different this year. It will be a while before we have the funds to complete this task, but with the support of all our hirers we are moving a little further forward each year.

Recently we have brightened up some rooms, either decorating or washing down walls. Several people have commented on the colour in the Deighton Room and we plan to get some new contrasting tables cloths when funds run to it.

If you have visited the Town Hall recently, you may have noticed the many old photographs that we now have on display in the downstairs corridor. We have the Historical Trust to thank for kindly providing these and we think these add a bit more interest for people on their way to a cup of coffee or shoe sale in the Deighton Room!