

Newsletter June 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Welcome to the latest edition of the Better Wetherby (BW) Newsletter. As the vaccination programme continues to be rolled out at pace, and the country makes a slow and careful return to normality, BW continues to be very active.

Since our last newsletter, I along with other BW representatives have been involved in the latest round of Design Workshops about the massive development that will be built on Racecourse Approach over the coming years. Building has yet to start as BW continues to try to get the best possible outcome for the residents of Wetherby and surrounding villages. But it is pleasing to report that discussions with the house builders,

Taylor Wimpey and Leeds City Council planners, have been useful and carried out in a good way. You will find more in the piece below.

Next month we are holding our long delayed Strategy Workshop to map out the future plans of BW. I have to say it will be rather nice to meet face-to-face instead of on a computer screen using Zoom! We will give you an update on our discussions in the next newsletter.

I am delighted to welcome Barbara Harris as the new Secretary of BW. Barbara is a great addition to our team. However, we still need someone to take over the role of Treasurer. So please, dear reader, think about volunteering. I will be pleased to provide further information and can be contacted on 07973 805055 or by email at roger.owen.3@btopenworld.com

Finally, congratulations to my BW colleague and our Deputy Chair, Norma Harrington, on her recent award of 'Township-person of the Year', run by Wetherby Lions. Norma is a great worker across our community. In addition to her duties as a Ward Councillor, she is a great networker and 'bringer together of organisations in the Town'. Well done, Norma!

Enjoy the summer months and the improving weather. Thanks for reading.

Roger Owen

Chair: **Better Wetherby Partnership**

SWINNOW PARK / RACECOURSE APPROACH UPDATE

Supporters will be aware from previous newsletters that despite strong opposition from Better Wetherby and hundreds of individual objectors, approval was given by Leeds City Council (LCC) Planning Committee for 800 new homes to be built on land off York Road opposite Wetherby Racecourse by Taylor Wimpey (TW).

Since planning approval was given in August 2019, representatives of BW have continued engagement with TW and LCC planning officials, mainly through a series of Design Workshops. In addition to trying to mitigate the problems likely to impact negatively on our town from such a massive development, the aim of BW in these Workshops has been to try to ensure that the outcome is an exemplar development in terms of design, character, standards and construction: a development that is a good place for people to live and one that is not out of keeping with our attractive town.

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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Despite the difficulties of COVID and lockdown, the Design Workshops have continued via Zoom. After an initial series of meetings there was a break of a few months, with the Workshops resuming in May. There has been positive engagement throughout the consultation process, with a spirit of compromise and understanding from all involved.

It is likely to be several months yet before plans for the Swinnow Park development are finalised. BW still has a number of concerns, including:

- The carbon footprint / sustainability of the site, particularly given the current 'climate emergency'.
- Road Safety and impact of extra traffic throughout Wetherby.
- Footpaths, Cycleways and Public Transport, both within the site and connecting to Wetherby Town centre.
- The potential for flooding of properties and the proposed Sand Beck nature reserve.
- Air and Noise Pollution.

We will continue to pursue and resolve all outstanding issues with TW and LCC planners and will keep you updated of progress in future newsletters and via our [website page](#).

BELLWAYS' SPOFFORTH PARK ESTATE - TREE BELT.

Supporters may recall that we reported in our last issue that there was evidence that work was finally underway on a tree belt screening the estate from the western open countryside. An outer protective stock fence has been implemented, apparently by Stockeld Park Estates, which defines the north western edge of this tree belt.

BW are still awaiting commencement of the **actual** tree belt planting by Bellway, as mandated by LCC planning conditions. We have also been pressing Bellway for some time to remove their large "temporary" access way off Harrogate Road and have recently discussed this with Harrogate Borough Council (HBC). A local councillor has agreed to seek Harrogate's support to serve an enforcement notice to remove the access road. BW are disappointed that it has been necessary to take this action, this may not have been required had LCC included the removal of this access as part of the planning consent. BW are also disappointed that the original planning consent did not include strengthening of the tree belt at the Harrogate Road end of the site.

BW have also appealed to Bellway to improve the Bridleway on the northern edge of the site; they did resurface this some years ago, but winter weather has resulted in this becoming impassible to wheel chair users and [extremely flood prone](#). We continue to press for action and are hoping to see full resurfacing of this bridleway in the near future.

BW have also been in discussions with various local authorities regarding the maintenance of Harland Way and other associated footpaths, we will hopefully have a better update in our next newsletter

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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