

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

A very warm welcome to our latest BW Newsletter.

I hope you're enjoying what is called 'summer' in some parts. BW took a short break last month and another break from meetings until September when hopefully we are all refreshed.

Well, after the political tsunami in the general election of 4th July there will be major changes in various policy areas. BW is keeping a particularly close eye on what the new government intends to do in respect of house building and planning, so it was interesting that the new Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, was quick off the mark with a speech on 8th

July in which she said that the government was committed to deliver 1.5 million homes over 5 years. She also stated that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) would be reformed, and mandatory housing targets would be introduced. These policies were also highlighted in the recent King's Speech; we look forward to hearing more detail in the coming months.

As we have [flagged previously](#), Lidl and their partners have appealed their Planning refusal and more of that below.

Following our "Conversations" event in April I am delighted to welcome new Secretary, Jacquie Clarke who joins us with a wealth of experience in absolutely the right areas and I'm sure will make a huge contribution going forward, not just in organising the Chair, but also with her general experience of business. We also have a further two potential members who have attended recent Steering Group meetings, but we look for more and I welcome anyone who thinks they could spare even short periods of time for specific issues, even if they feel full time membership may be too demanding although it really isn't.

Enjoy the next few weeks, keep dry!!

Thanks for reading.

Roger Owen

Chair: **Better Wetherby Partnership**

LIDL PLANNING APPEAL UPDATE

In the [May newsletter](#) we reported that Lidl has appealed against the decision made by the Leeds City Council's North and East Plans Panel last October to refuse their application ([Ref 23/01507FU](#)) to demolish the Mercure Hotel and build a Lidl store and adjoining retirement accommodation. The current hotel has now been closed for several months and it is listed at the Land Registry as being sold for almost £7 million.

As a result of Lidl's appeal there will now be a Public Inquiry. It will start on Tuesday 22nd October 2024, with the venue yet to be confirmed by the Council. Leeds Planning officials made [a compelling case](#) for the Lidl application to be refused and 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.



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We feel it is important to provide some context and additional background information to help people understand why the initial application was opposed by BW and why we maintain that position.

The Planning regime in this country is closely regulated - subject to any changes mooted by the new Government. There is a rigid hierarchy governing all development which starts with the National Planning Policy Framework, then goes down to more local plans and policy such as the Leeds Site Allocation Plan, Leeds Local Plan and finally the Wetherby Neighbourhood Plan. These are the key components to 'determine what use goes where' after public scrutiny, usually through Public Inquiry. In the case of the Leeds and Wetherby process applicable to the Mercure site, all scrutiny supported no retail development. Indeed, when the draft Wetherby Neighbourhood Plan was published for Public Consultation some 86% were in favour of the 'No Retail' on this site proposal with a further 5-6% having expressed no firm view.

In the case of the refusal of the Lidl Application, the same planning constraints were applied and will remain in place until the next Plan Review takes place in Leeds. Curiously Lidl appear to have missed the LCC deadline to register this site as one for retail consideration under the forthcoming Plan Review.

The Lidl situation is not a case of BW 'nimbyism' but based on playing by the rules. BW is far from being a Nimby organisation, in fact quite the opposite. We can demonstrate this with our long-term work with Taylor Wimpey on their large, Racecourse Approach housing scheme which led to our efforts being nominated for National Award for Community Involvement. BW is proud of the part we have played to date in achieving what is described as 'an exemplar scheme' and we continue to work constructively with Persimmon Homes to get the best possible outcome for Wetherby in respect of their specific application for further house building on Racecourse Approach.

MALTKILN UPDATE – PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON 7TH MAY

Representatives of BW attended a public consultation in Kirk Hammerton on 7th May 2024 regarding this proposed major housing development. There are still many questions and concerns that remain unresolved. Despite BW registering a number of queries and concerns at the event, and subsequently by completing the Developer's survey and requesting contact for discussion, we have yet to receive a response or acknowledgement.

According to the [website for the new settlement](#), comments and feedback left during the consultation period will be assessed prior to the submission of an updated planning application.

The latest plans for the building of at least 3,000 new homes can be viewed on the [North Yorkshire Council's website](#):



LOCAL BIKE RECYCLING PROGRAMME UNDER THREAT – CAN YOU HELP?

The Boston Spa, Wetherby and Villages Big Bike Fix is a successful bicycle recycling scheme run locally from Boston Spa which has repaired and donated over 700 second-hand bikes in the last three years. You can find details [on this link](#).

“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 scheme is run and coordinated on a voluntary basis, and demand continues to grow. To continue to offer this service to our local communities (and keep unnecessary waste from landfill), additional volunteers are needed to help with the administrative, as well as the bike fixing elements.

This initiative truly benefits our local communities and puts to good use unused bikes. It's important to continue with this valuable service. If you can help in making a difference (with admin, fixing, grant application etc), please contact adrian.balcombe@bostongreengroup.co.uk

WETHERBY FESTIVAL – PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATES!



A wonderful programme has been organised for the 2024 Festival. It starts on Friday, 4th October and runs to Saturday 12th October. It includes comedy, theatre, musical events, craft, art and poetry, along with several film screenings at the superb Wetherby Cinema. An added bonus on the final day is a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Great Sale of Wetherby, organised by the local Civic Society.

As always, the festival programme has been designed so there is something for everyone, so please make a note of the dates. Further information will be circulated over the coming months and details of the programme will be available soon

on the [festival website](#) and [Facebook page](#):

KIRK DEIGHTON COMMUNITY HUB

Great work by community volunteers in Kirk Deighton who have adopted and transformed a piece of local history thanks to hundreds of pounds in generous donations from supporters. The K6 (short for Kiosk 6) phone box which proudly sits outside Kirk Deighton's Bay Horse pub, was stripped back to the original metal frame, given a fresh pink undercoat, and a glossy red finish as well as brand new glass windows.

First installed after the coronation in 1953, when the St Edwards Crown was used, the kiosk was in use with the telephone number 01937 582723, until decommissioned and left to fall into disrepair. It has now been restored to its former glory using BT approved materials. It has a custom KIRK DEIGHTON COMMUNITY HUB sign and is a focal point after dusk when it illuminates. It is currently acting as a book exchange.



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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