

Newsletter March 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

A warm welcome to the latest newsletter.

The big news is that we face a re-run of the Stockeld Park application of some 5 years ago. That application led to a great deal of concern about the potentially negative impact it would have on Wetherby. It also resulted in the formation of Better Wetherby. Following a considerable amount of hard work by BW volunteers supported by hundreds of local people, the application was refused after a Public Inquiry. The developer, Hallam Land, recently announced plans to make an outline planning application to build 210 homes on this same land in the near future. You will find a summary of the latest situation below.



'I am not one for 'spoilers' but the next phase in the life of BW is looming and myself and the other Directors are actively involved in preparing this for roll-out in late Spring - watch this space!' Those were my comments in the January Newsletter. The Directors continue to work to a late Spring announcement – keep watching!

Thanks for reading.

Roger Owen

Chair: **Better Wetherby Partnership**

STOCKELD PARK / HALLAM LAND – NEW APPLICATION TO BE MADE



Better Wetherby was formed by local residents following concern about an application by Stockeld Park and Hallam Land to build 210 new houses on the North Yorkshire side of the boundary with Wetherby.

Following a [2-year campaign by BW](#), supported by hundreds of local people opposed to the application, this protracted planning saga, involving a 4-day Public Inquiry in Harrogate in December 2019, was finally refused in February 2020. At that time the new Harrogate Local Plan was published and **did not** allocate the Stockeld site for development – a situation that remains today.

Unfortunately, 5 years on, we are on the threshold of an unwelcome sequel! Although no formal application has yet been made, it is just a matter of weeks before one will be. The developer, Hallam Land, held a public consultation at Wetherby

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Town Hall on Monday, 3rd March on proposals to build 210 houses – exactly the same number as in the application that was refused – and on the same land!

Later on Monday 3rd, Hallam representatives gave a presentation about their proposals to the Wetherby Town Council Planning sub-committee which was also attended by representatives of Better Wetherby and other members of the public.

Despite various concerns being expressed about the application it was confirmed that an outline planning application is to be submitted to North Yorkshire Council in late spring.

The proposals can be found at [this link](#):

In advance of the Hallam Land consultation exercise, Wetherby Ward Councillor, Alan Lamb, convened a public meeting on Saturday, 1st March in Wetherby Town Hall. He was accompanied by Spofforth Councillor Andy Paraskos and local MP Sir Alec Shelbrooke.



The well-attended meeting heard from Councillor Lamb about the planning system process and the background to the refusal of the previous Stockeld Park/Hallam application.

He said that Wetherby had already taken its full allocation of houses within the Leeds Development Plan.

Councillor Paraskos advised that North Yorkshire Council was working towards the development of a new Local Plan. It had issued a ‘Call for Sites’ which had led to a number of developers expressing interest in building around the boundary with Wetherby, in addition to the one by Hallam Land. Although the new Plan was not likely to be completed before 2028, he explained that the government had given a target to NYC to build over 4,000 new houses in 2025 and similar numbers annually for the next few years. Councillor Lamb expressed concern about the negative consequences for Wetherby should an eventual application by Hallam Land be successful.

If, as expected, an outline planning application is made over the coming weeks, then the serious concerns expressed by Better Wetherby when opposing the original application remain. It will be transformational and harmful to the landscape, character and local environment. It will contribute to a worsening of Wetherby’s existing highways, congestion and air pollution problems. It will place considerable further pressures on our already overburdened schools, doctors and other local services.

To clarify the position of Better Wetherby. It is not a NIMBY organisation. Our aim is to ensure that development in our historic market town is done in a planned and sustainable way with the right houses in the right places. The fact is that over the last four decades Wetherby has grown considerably, with high levels of house building taking place, arguably more than in many other parts of the Leeds City Council area. Over 1,000 homes have been built in the town during the past 10 years. The work currently underway on Racecourse Approach will add a further 1,000 new homes within the next decade.

So, the prospect of further large developments on the boundary with Wetherby by Hallam Land and other builders is both unnecessary and unwelcome. All pain and no gain springs to mind. We will be closely monitoring the situation.

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MALTKILN DEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION – DEADLINE FOR RESPONSES 24 MARCH

An Inquiry took place over several days last September in Harrogate to examine the Maltkiln Development Plan Document (DPD). Although the full report of the Inspector, Clive Coyne, has not yet been published, he recently wrote to NYC Planning Manager with some comments.

North Yorkshire Council is currently holding a six-week consultation which ends at **midnight Monday 24 March 2025** on the New Settlement (Maltkiln) Development Plan Document, Schedule of Main Modifications. A Coalition of local Parish Councils and Members of NYC have been actively involved in challenging the preliminary comments of the Inspector. BW made representations to be involved in the discussions which have been rejected by NYC despite the long-held argument by BW that the effect of this development will largely fall on our Town.

BW urges you to read the report ([available here](#)) which lists various documents against which representations can be made. Maltkiln is only a 10-minute drive from Wetherby and the Developers marketing documents bill our Town as the 'go to' for services. More pain.

REMINDER - PARKING CHARGES CONSULTATION ENDS ON 14TH MARCH - HAVE YOUR SAY!



[As previously reported](#), a four-week consultation exercise about the Leeds City Council proposals to introduce parking charges in the Wilderness and Old Station car parks concludes on 14th March. Despite considerable local opposition LCC seems determined to press ahead.

BW believe that the introduction of these charges will be damaging for the town. Many high streets throughout the country are suffering substantial shop and business closures. It is not uncommon to see boarded up shop premises in desolate town centres. The introduction of parking charges is likely to discourage people from coming to Wetherby with the consequence that our excellent local shops and businesses will be adversely affected which may lead to closures and loss of jobs.

Apart from having a negative impact on the local economy, it's likely that as people try to avoid charges it will lead to more motorists trying to avoid payment by parking in already congested residential streets.

You can help to prevent the introduction of these damaging charges. To object to, or make any representations concerning the proposed Order, you should write to Parking Services, Leeds City Council, P.O. Box 139, Leeds LS9 1AA;

OR by e-mail districtcarparks@leeds.gov.uk specifying the grounds on which your objection or representation is made, by no later than Friday 14 March 2025.

NORTH YORKSHIRE 'CALL FOR SITES' - MORE BUILDING ON THE WETHERBY BOUNDARY?

In the [last newsletter](#) we reported that North Yorkshire Council (NYC) had announced their Local Plan 'Call for Sites' document. This is the start of a lengthy process which allows developers to identify and register interest in building on specific areas of land. This eventually leads to the

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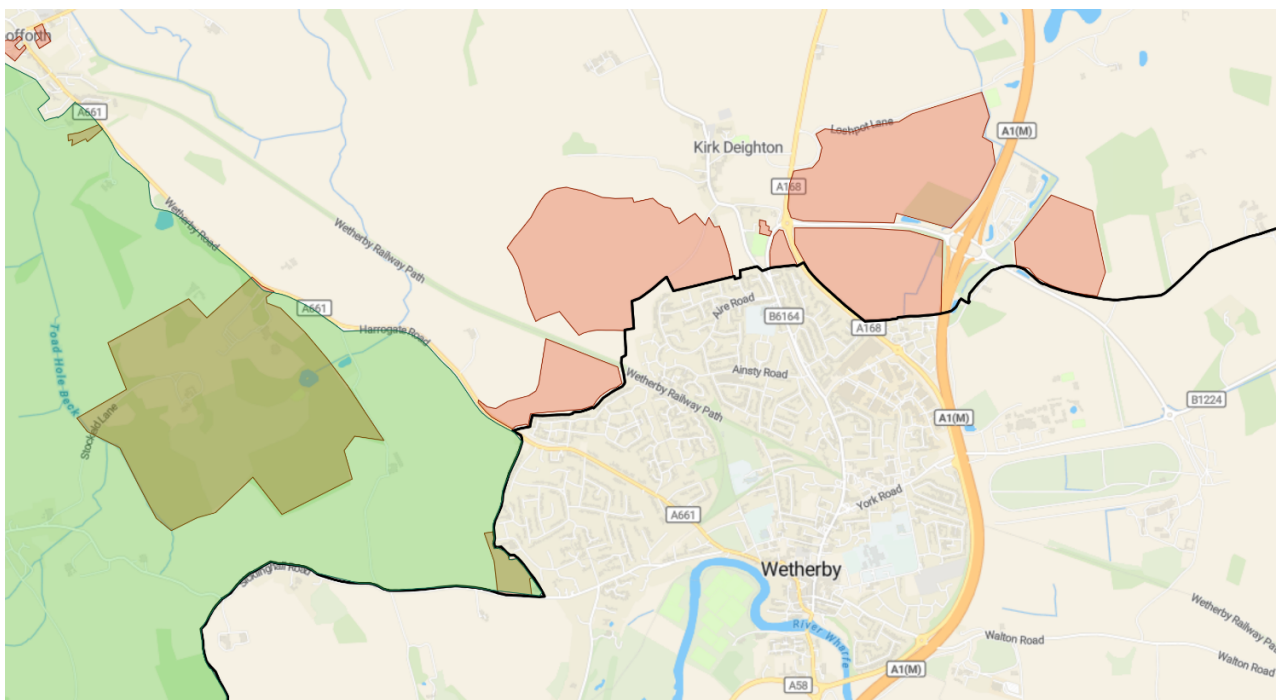
formation of a Local / Structure Plan or Site Allocation Plan which will then be subject to scrutiny in the form of an Inquiry.

The [map made available by NYC](#) shows strong interest in building major developments to the north of Wetherby with a focus on Kirk Deighton and land between Wetherby and Spofforth – again.

Whilst these are early days in the process of developing the NYC Local Plan, if these developments do go ahead then they will clearly have a significant impact on our town.

Wetherby already has serious problems of traffic congestion, lengthy tail backs and delays occurring at peak periods in the morning and late afternoon. The construction of large numbers of new homes in and around Wetherby will inevitably result in further increases in traffic, leading to further congestion and a rise in air and noise pollution.

The principal road infrastructure that exists today was largely designed in an era of horse-drawn vehicles. It was not built to deal with the size, weight, scale and extremely high levels of modern-day traffic. The roads in the town conservation area are narrow, restricting major changes, such as the possibility of road widening or other efforts to relieve the strain of heavy traffic. Car parking in the town centre is also very problematic.



The existing serious highway and parking problems are likely to intensify over the next decade as the town continues to grow. Work is underway by Taylor Wimpey (TW) to build 780 new homes on the Racecourse Approach (RA) development. An application by Persimmon Homes to build a further 130 homes on other parts of the RA site is currently in the planning pipeline. There are also proposals for around 3,000 new homes to be built in the Maltkiln development near Cattal which, being only a short, car journey away, is likely to bring more vehicles and pressure onto the town's road infrastructure. Should the potential interest in building around the boundary with Wetherby take place, then this will result in more traffic, adding to the current problems. The view of BW is that the town cannot take much more.

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HIGHWAY / ROAD SAFETY ISSUES – WIDER 20mph SPEED RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE

In a previous newsletter we provided information about a monthly Highways Group meeting chaired by Ward Councillor, Alan Lamb. It takes place in the **Wetherby Methodist Church at 5.30pm on the first Tuesday of the month**. In addition to the three Wetherby Ward Councillors, the Town Council is represented along with a Leeds City Council Highways official. BW is also represented and members of the public are welcome to attend.

The focus of the meetings is on identifying and addressing specific problems and prioritising action. The recent extension of the town centre 20mph speed limit to Linton Road, Walton Road and Boston Road, has attracted a number of complaints of motorists driving far in excess of the limit giving rise to road safety concerns. Drivers need to be aware of and comply with the speed restrictions. Enforcement action is being taken.

SPOFFORTH PARK: COMMUNITY POWER AND THE ESTATE'S EVOLUTION – TALK ON 10 MARCH

On **Monday, March 10**, Wetherby Civic Society will be holding its AGM followed by a talk by Malcolm Gardner on "Spofforth Park: Community Power and the Estate's Evolution." It will take place at St James' Church Centre at 7:30pm Members £5.00. Non-members £7.00. Pay at the door. In view of the potential large-scale development in and around Wetherby over the next decade the talk about community power is particularly timely.

REMINDER - LECTURE ON BIODIVERSITY – 27TH MARCH

Professor Alastair Fitter, Vice chair of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) is coming to talk to Wetherby U3A Environment Group on the issue of Biodiversity at 2:00pm on **Thursday, 27 March** at St. James Church Hall, Wetherby. He is a renowned expert in Ecology and was instrumental in saving Askham Bog near York, the only surviving Ice Age peatland, from being developed for housing. For his work on the project he was awarded the Christopher Cadbury Medal, for dedication to the advancement of nature Conservation within the British Isles. The £3 cost of entry covers a donation to YWT.

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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