

Newsletter March 2022

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Welcome to our latest newsletter where the main focus is on the huge Taylor Wimpey (TW) Racecourse Approach development.

Since Planning Permission to build up to 800 new homes was granted by Leeds City Council (LCC) in August 2020, representatives of BW have been in regular dialogue with TW. Last month, together with other colleagues from BW, I met with TW officials to discuss the planning conditions that need to be met before building work can start. The meeting preceded an exhibition about the development organised by TW at Wetherby Town Hall.

Many local people visiting the well-attended exhibition expressed concerns about the sheer scale of the development and the negative impact and serious consequences it will undoubtedly have on Wetherby. However, what surprised me was that many

people had previously been unaware of the sheer scale of the development and the impact it will have on our lovely town. The likelihood is that many other local people do not appreciate the implications and how additional demands will place further strain on our already overburdened schools, doctors and local services, not to mention an inevitable impact on the air quality on our town centre streets arising from the expected influx of some 1500 additional motor vehicles the new development will generate.

On Thursday, 10th March I represented BW at a meeting of the North and East Leeds Plans Panel convened for Councillors to receive an update about the planning conditions. It was a useful meeting but there are a number of matters still to be resolved. You will find more details below.

We continue our search for a volunteer to take over the role of Treasurer. Our former Treasurer, Mike McKinley, is currently helping out – much appreciated, Mike - but we really do need to fill this position as soon as possible. I encourage people to consider volunteering for this role.

Staying on the issue of volunteering, I know there are many people in the Wetherby area who have the skills and experience to help our efforts, so please do think about getting involved. If you would care to contact me by phone on 07973 805055 or by email at roger.owen.3@btopenworld.com I will be pleased to provide more information.

Many thanks for reading.

Roger Owen

Chair: **Better Wetherby Partnership**

RACECOURSE APPROACH DEVELOPMENT – SWINNOW PARK

Since Planning Permission was granted to TW 18 months ago to build this massive development on land north of [Wetherby Racecourse](#), east of the A1 (M), BW has been meeting with the developers and LCC Planning Officers in efforts towards ensuring that the outcome will be an attractive and indeed, an exemplar development.

During these meetings, BW highlighted the serious concerns about climate change and proposed the installation of solar panels and electric vehicle chargers. However, at that time none of us could have envisaged the tragic situation we have today with war in Europe. Already high and rising energy costs before the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine are forecast to increase dramatically over the coming months. As we face up to an energy crisis as well as a climate emergency, it is pleasing that TW has listened to BW and recently announced that solar panels and EV chargers will be fitted in every home. This is a welcome and positive step in the right direction.

BW will continue to encourage TW to ensure that these new homes are fit for purpose in this era of uncertainty and climate change. By ensuring that the new homes are well insulated, sustainable, well designed and built to high standards, in the long term it will be a win, win situation for both the builder and the home buyer.

However, it will be some months yet before we will see any house building on the site. Outline Planning consent for the development is subject to around 50 planning conditions in such matters as Layout, Scale, Appearance and Landscaping. This will require planning approval from LCC Planning Department.

On 10th March 2020 Councillors on the North and East Leeds Plans Panel met to receive an update and progress report from LCC Planning Officers in respect of the conditions imposed on the developers. Addressing the Plans Panel, Chair of BW, Roger Owen, highlighted a number of issues.

After the meeting Mr Owen said, ***‘There are a number of contentious points that still need to be addressed. In the limited time available to me I pointed out a number of issues and some inaccuracies in the planning report that require further work. For example, I raised our serious concerns about highways and road safety issues, particularly on York Road where there was a recent fatality. Flood risk management is another area of concern, as are the problems of noise and air pollution from the A1 (M) that will particularly affect those living near the border with the motorway. This new development has such serious implications for Wetherby that we need to get it right. I believe the Councillors share that view and was pleased that they took serious account of my comments. Having recently written a lengthy letter to LCC planning officials detailing a number of points I have yet to receive satisfactory answers. I will now be writing again on behalf of BW with further comments. My original letter can be viewed on the LCC Planning Portal under reference [21/08506/RM](#).***

Information, documents and plans can all be viewed on the Leeds Planning portal, our website provides direct links to the appropriate areas of the portal, and also to a video recording of the meeting (www.betterwetherby.com/racecourse-approach).

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.