



Wetherby Civic Society

SPRING 24 NEWSLETTER

Dear Member(s),

In our 2023 Spring newsletter, we set our aspirations for 2024 - so how have we done?

We wanted to organise suitable celebrations in 2024 of the 200th anniversary of the Great Sale of Wetherby, in association with other groups in Wetherby. This is progressing well. The programme for the day will include guided tours to see some of the buildings included in the auction, a talk on the great sale, an exhibition of photos of "then and now", the Wetherby Silver Band playing and unveiling of the plaque commemorating the anniversary by the King's representative, the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire.

We wanted to restore the former Wetherby Rural District Council Offices to their former glory. On this we have been less successful. We have managed to ensure that it remained in Leeds property portfolio and was not put up for sale, but it seems likely that the money needed for restoration will not be available until payments from the Racecourse Approach development starts accruing, which will be some time yet.

AGM

We would welcome your attendance at our AGM on Monday 11 March, which will be held at St James Church Centre at 7-30p.m. We shall present our annual report, approve the 2022/3 accounts and answer any queries from the floor. Hopefully, this should not take long. The talk immediately after the AGM is entitled "Hall Orchards – A Victorian Mansion" and is a result of our investigation into this mansion which was demolished in the 1960's. Visitors would also be welcome to attend this meeting, but of course cannot vote in the AGM. As usual, the entrance fee is members - £5, non members - £7. Pay at the door.

VISITS AND TALKS

We have now put together details of our programme of events for 2024, which you should have just received.

The next event after the AGM is a visit in April to Ogden Jewellers in Harrogate for a talk on the origins of the business. This is followed in May with a guided tour of Hovingham Hall, an attractive Palladian mansion, designed and built by Thomas Worsley c1760 and the childhood home of Katherine Worsley, Duchess of Kent.



Hovingham Hall

In June, we visit the Kadampa Meditation Centre in Leeds which is housed in the restored Third White Cloth Hall. Built in 1775, this building was lost until rediscovered in the 1990s. Following the success of our evening walk in Tadcaster last year we are having a tour of historic Knaresborough in July. Our Summer Talk this year is, appropriately, "Buildings in the Great Sale of Wetherby" which will be given by Victor Hawkins in Council Chamber of the Wetherby Municipal Offices. As usual this will be accompanied by cake and cold drinks.

Our final visit of the year is to Sunnybank Mills in Farsley for a tour of their archive which the Daily Telegraph recently described as "...one of the most significant woven textile archives in Britain". We shall not be having an Autumn Talk this year, as all our efforts shall go into making a success of the celebration of the Great Sale of Wetherby which will be held on 12 October, exactly 200 years after the second day of the auction.

As previously explained you shall be receiving your programme of events soon along with information on the AGM in March. In the past we asked you to register your interest at the beginning of the year and then only notified the details to those expressing interest. This saved the cost of posting details to everyone. ***In the coming year, we shall email application forms and details of each event to ALL MEMBERS about 3 weeks before the event.***

RACECOURSE APPROACH

Persimmon have now submitted their planning application for 125 houses on their part of the Racecourse Approach site. These can be inspected and comments submitted on the Leeds Planning portal. Details of the application can be found on the Leeds Plans Portal - Application 23/07190/FU. We have discovered that not only are your comments no longer published on the planning portal, but they are not passed on to the developer. We therefore suggest that you should also send your comments to adam.jackson@persimmonhomes.com in order that they may have your comments directly.

We recently attended a meeting with Persimmon, Better Wetherby and ward councillors (but not Leeds Planners, it being an evening meeting and no Wetherby Town Councillors) to discuss the comments made on their plans. Some changes have been made to the plans and they will be resubmitted. The number of dwellings has decreased by one, there will be only one block of flats and there is now a single token bungalow.

WEIR SIDE

Following our intervention with Persimmon, they have now cleared the weir pit beside the weir (see photo) and have stated that “We will ensure this is completed at regular intervals throughout the year to keep it looking as tidy as possible.” Now that we have a direct contact we will ensure that this happens.



Cleared weir pit

LIDL

Nothing further has been heard from Lidl after the rejection of their plans for the Mercure hotel site. They have until April to lodge an appeal.

PARKING CHARGES

We understand that following their “consultation”, Leeds City Council will indeed be implementing charges for parking at the Wilderness, the Station and the Municipal Offices car parks for longer stays. (Why do they have these pretend “consultations” – they are like “democratic” Russian Presidential elections.) To make them really customer unfriendly they will not accept cash payments, only card.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership organisations, such as ours, face a Sisyphean task of replacing the departing membership at renewal time every year. As usual with our new year, numbers have fallen with members moving or no longer able to be active. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who wishes to join our Society in order to maintain Wetherby as a pleasant place to visit and live. You can contact us by email at secretary@wetherbycivicsociety.co.uk and can find out more at our website at www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk.



Sisyphus at work

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.