



Wetherby Civic Society

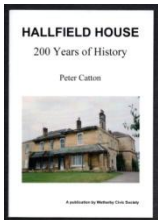
SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

Dear Member(s),

In March, we held our AGM in St James' Church Hall. As usual, the meeting was well attended and members heard of another successful year. The most significant event was the receipt of assets from the now defunct Wetherby Historical Trust and as a result a significant financial surplus was achieved. The previous Executive Committee was re-elected with the addition of Kathryn Taylor. Roger Taylor stood down as Vice Chairman due to ill health and Malcolm Gardner was elected in his place. Our many thanks to Roger for his years of work as Chairman and Vice Chairman and he remains as a committee member.

More recently, our secretary, Jean Chapman, has reluctantly resigned from her post, as she and her husband will shortly be moving out to one of the outlying villages. Jean has completed over 25 years in the position and we give our heartfelt thanks for all her efforts over all this time. We would welcome a volunteer for the post, which is not very time consuming, but does require attendance at Committee meetings every six weeks. If you would be interested in volunteering or discussing the secretary post, please contact Chairman Peter Catton on p.g.catton@gmail.com or telephone 01937 585293.

VISITS AND TALKS



After the formal AGM, Peter Catton gave a talk entitled "Hallfield House – 200 years of History", known to many as Hallfield Mansions. Built in 1808, the house was demolished in 2006 to make way for the New Medical Centre. The story of this house, its owners and its residents is told in a new booklet, published by Wetherby Civic Society, which is now available at Castlegate Stationers and Kemps bookshop.

Our first visit of the year was in March to Wentworth Woodhouse, where we saw the impressive Grade 1 listed building, which is gradually being restored to its former glory. One can only be amazed that such beautiful buildings were constructed, at enormous cost, to impress neighbours and acquaintances. It seems to be a "Forth Bridge" job to repair the building, as the rear has barely been started and much remains to be done at the front.



In April, we visited the Leeds Energy from Waste Plant where we saw what happens to our black bin waste to generate scrap metal and generate electricity. Over 3.5% of the UK's electricity is generated by such plants of which over 50% is categorized as "biogenic", i.e. "Green". Another useful visit to see how our services are provided.



Our next event is a visit to Markenfield Hall, near Ripon, on Wednesday 24 June. The house is a grade 1 listed 14th century moated manor house with late C16 additions and alterations, whose original owners were on the losing side of many of England's civil wars.

On Thursday, 23 July, we shall be taken on a guided afternoon tour of East Keswick. Our Summer Talk, "Privas – Wetherby's Twin French Town since 1992" will be given by Cindy Bentley, Chairman of the Twinning Association, on Wednesday, 12 August, in the Council Chamber of the Wetherby Civic Offices on Westgate. As previously the talk will be followed by cakes and cold drinks.

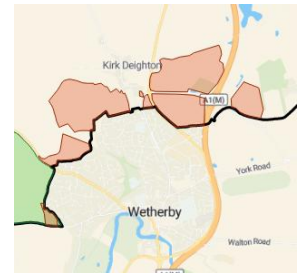
Details of each event and invitations to attend will be emailed to ALL MEMBERS about 3 weeks before the event.

BALSAM BASHING

It will soon be Balsam Bashing season again. This year we shall be having two attempts at curbing this pest. The first we plan to have mid July in the evening and then another in August in the afternoon. More details nearer the date.

PLANNING

Many of you will have attended the recent public meeting to publicise the proposals to build housing adjoining Wetherby in North Yorkshire. The map on the right shows sites which have been put forward for North Yorkshire's future Local Plan. Of these sites, Hudson Approach and Sicklinghall Road (a total of 693 houses) have been out for "consultation" but not submitted for approval, whilst the Harrogate Road application for 210 houses was submitted in June 2025.



With existing and approved development in Wetherby, the town will have grown by 25% since 2017. Leeds City Council has stated that Wetherby does not need more housing until the 2040s. If these applications were approved the growth would be 40%, excluding the sites shown who have not yet begun "consultation"! If any of these are approved the rest will follow, causing Wetherby to grow even more!

Everyone (except developers and land owners) think these locations are terrible sites for development, but the problem is that North Yorkshire does not have a 5 year land supply, which makes it difficult for them to refuse the planning applications. The real answer is for the government to amend the rules on cross boundary applications like these to take account of situations like ours, but do they know of the problem? We are therefore recommending that members should email those with access to the decision makers pointing out the problem and how it would affect Wetherby. The people to contact are:

- West Yorkshire Mayor Tracy Brabin – mayoral.enquiries@westyorks-ca.gov.uk
- North Yorkshire Mayor David Skaith – mayor@northyorks-ca.gov.uk
- Leader of Leeds City Council – james.lewis@leeds.gov.uk

We await the date of the planning committee meeting for Harrogate Road, which it is anticipated will be soon.

RACECOURSE APPROACH

We have managed to achieve one success; Taylor Wimpey's application, to allow houses on Racecourse Approach to be occupied before agreements had been reached on the funding of pavements and crossings alongside Racecourse Approach and York Road, was refused. Leeds City Council agreed that safety came before cash flow!

Incidentally, we have heard that houses on this site are selling slowly, partly because they cannot be occupied and partly because this is not a good location to live for access to schools and services.

WALKS

If you see us leading a guided tour of Wetherby in June, don't worry, you have not missed our normal free Wetherby Festival tour, which will take place in the autumn. We shall be leading a guided tour for visitors from our twin town of Privas. Say "Bonjour" when they pass by.

MEMBERSHIP

We are striving to maintain Wetherby as a pleasant place to visit and live. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who wishes to play a more active part in our work and anyone who wishes to join the Society. You can contact our treasurer by email at angela.winterbottom@hotmail.co.uk and can find out more at our website at www.wetherbycivicsociety.org.uk. Note that as an introductory offer, new members joining now will receive their 2026 membership included in this year's fee.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to others.