

NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2020

Welcome to the **Better Wetherby Partnership Newsletter**. The organisation is a consortium of local people from a variety of organisations who contribute to initiatives designed to help make Wetherby and the surrounding villages better for the community of both present and future generations.

SPOFFORTH HILL/STOCKELD PARK – PUBLIC INQUIRY ANNOUNCEMENT

As supporters will know, Stockeld Park and Hallam Land Management have been pursuing an application to build 210 new houses on the North Yorkshire side of the boundary with Wetherby for the past two years. This contentious and unwelcome application has attracted several hundred objections and been the subject of four separate hearings by the Harrogate Planning Committee over a period of almost two years, culminating in a Public Inquiry in Harrogate in December 2019.

The Public Inquiry was necessary as Stockeld Park and Hallam appealed against the rejection of their application by Harrogate Planning Committee in September 2019. Better Wetherby representatives played a major part over the four days of the Public Inquiry, presenting evidence and arguing that the Appeal should be dismissed. The Government Inspector, Mr. Bryn Bowker's, Report was released on 13th February 2020. In dismissing the Appeal, the Inspector upheld the decision made by the Harrogate planning authorities to refuse the application, and highlighted the following issues (amongst others!):

- *the character and appearance of the surrounding area*
- *highway safety and the road network, including whether future occupants of the proposed development would be dependent on private vehicular modes of transport.*

More details, including the full Inspector's Report can be found on our [website](#), together with further information about the efforts and activities of **Better Wetherby**

Peter Swales, Acting Chair of Better Wetherby commented: ***“We are immensely grateful that the Inspector has dismissed the Appeal. It has been evident for some considerable time that Harrogate Borough Council had an emerging local plan which fully met their housing needs until 2035. The fact is that the Stockeld Park development is not in that plan and is simply not needed by Harrogate to fulfil their housing needs – as was stated by Harrogate Borough Council themselves at the Public Inquiry last December. It is disappointing, to say the least, that the owners of Stockeld Park, appear to have little regard whatsoever to the serious and genuine concerns regarding the negative impact this development would have had on their neighbours in Wetherby and Spofforth”.***

Paul Crossan, who headed representations for Better Wetherby at the Public Inquiry said: ***“The Inspector's decision to reject the Appeal is extremely welcome. Better Wetherby has always maintained that it would be transformational and harmful to the landscape, character and local environment, contributing to a worsening of Wetherby's existing highways, congestion and air pollution problems. Moreover, it would have placed considerable further pressures on our already overburdened schools, doctors and other local services. With this decision, the dreadfully adverse impact on Wetherby and our neighbours in surrounding villages has now been avoided. I wish to express my sincere thanks to all the local people who supported Better Wetherby in our efforts at the Public Inquiry.”***

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.

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.