

# The WEST PARK CHRONICLE

The Community Newspaper for West Park November 2011

[www.westparkresidents.org.uk](http://www.westparkresidents.org.uk)

**Thanks to all our members for their continued support and for helping WPRRA to provide a voice for the local community**

## **Blue Plaque for Tolkien**

A Blue Plaque in memory of J.R.R. Tolkien will soon grace a house in Darnley Road. The Tolkien family lived there for part of the period from 1920 to 1925 when he was Reader in English Language and then Professor at the University of Leeds.



Donations from The Tolkien Society, Leeds University, and a number of other sources have so far brought funds to within £100 of the £750 required for the Plaque. If you'd like to contribute, please contact WPRRA, who will be happy to pass on your offering to the Civic Trust.

There are plans to have a launch event for the Tolkien Blue Plaque in early 2012 and to link it to events involving Lawnswood school and St. Chad's school.

## **North West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateway Project**



A project is underway to preserve existing green space, while improving its quality and making it more accessible to public recreation. The project will establish a green Trail or corridor from the city centre to the wider countryside in the north-western parts of the city boundary.

The green corridor will include the fields in Beckett Park (*pictured*), West Park, and Butcher Hill, among others. It will also help to ensure that all the local public footpaths are properly defined and protected.

WPRRA is part of the project membership and attended a meeting in October with a host of other local community groups. The project extends over three years and is intended to improve access to green spaces, while helping to preserve and manage these green areas. WPRRA will keep you updated on its progress.



Foorpaths in Beckett Park

## **Footpaths**



Although footpaths will form part of the Green Gateway Project, WPRRA has been investigating the Registered Public Rights of Way for the West Park area. The Council's legal record of public rights of way includes definitive maps and claims which recognise unrecorded rights of way can also be considered for inclusion.

## Lawnswood School

Mr. Simon White, took over in September as the head teacher of Lawnswood School. He made prior contact with WPRAs in August and at his request attended the WPRAs committee meeting on 19-09-2011. Previously head teacher at St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College in Sunderland, he brings with him an impressive record in running and raising school standards.

It was clear from the frank and open discussion which took place at the meeting that he is not afraid to tackle any problems or issues head on.

He is giving a very clear message to his staff and students about what he wants to happen. This will include reorganising some key aspects of the school and generally raising expectations, especially regarding achievements at GCSE. He is adamant that any problems coming from a small minority of pupils will be addressed.

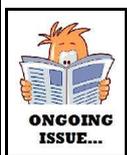
The new Head is keen to build a strong relationship with the local community, and has asked to attend the next WPRAs committee meeting, which as a result we are pleased to open to all residents. If you would like to meet, hear, and question him on Wednesday 23rd November please come along. The meeting starts at 7:15 pm in the West Park Centre and room details will be available in the foyer.

Simon White comes over as a determined Head who wants to make a real difference. WPRAs is pleased to assist in any way it can, and although not all issues will necessarily be quick and easy to resolve, WPRAs sees the future for Lawnswood as a very positive one.



**Wednesday 23rd November at 7.15 in the West Park Centre.**

## Far Headingley, Weetwood & West Park Neighbourhood Design Statement (NDS)



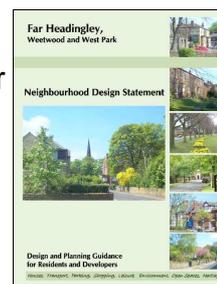
A review of the existing NDS is taking place and those involved agreed that the boundary of the West Park 'character area' should be extended across Spen Lane to include Moor Grange Drive and View, the Butcher Hill shops and the houses on Spen Lane which face the fields (down to Spen Croft).

In addition a new character area is to include the West Park Fields, Beckett's Park and the Leeds Met Campus.

When completed the new document will become a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and as such will be used to guide the determination of planning applications.

There has already been one meeting of local residents to discuss how the area has changed since the original NDS, to reconsider the positive characteristics, and to suggest improvements for the area.

Once a draft has been prepared for the new NDS, it will be available on the WPRAs web-site.



## West Park Centre



In April this year, WPRA led a deputation to the Council asking for "a sensible, realistic appraisal of the future of the West Park Centre". As a result an appraisal process has begun to examine options for the future of the centre. (It was actually supposed to begin back in 2009).

A public consultation meeting was called on Monday 24-10-2011 and was attended by council officers and the six local councillors from Kirkstall and Weetwood.

It gave residents an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the various options, and ensured that the Council are now fully aware of the issues associated with the

use of Centre, which is one of the most well-used facilities that the Council owns.

WPRA committee are grateful to everyone who supported this early evening session and made it so well-attended. WPRA has



requested a further public event so that the issues, costs and opportunities associated with the Centre can be fully explained. A decision on the future of the Centre is expected in January 2012.

## West Park Fields - Village Green Status



Applications for village green status for West Park fields, Butcher Hill fields and green space adjacent to Old Farm Close were submitted by Councillor Bernard Atha in December 2010. Further to a Council objection, a rebuttal submission by Councillor Atha was prepared and submitted in May 2011.

The next step would normally be for some form of public examination or inquiry, but recent changes by central Government in relation to village greens may confuse and hinder this process.

The designation *village green* was seen as providing additional protection against development for local green amenity spaces but recent government papers appear to place more importance on development than on conservation and protection of the environment.



Part of West Park Fields

## Stepping Out With STEP...

Earlier this year STEP, the local charity for helping the elderly, played host to Lynda Bellingham. Lynda was appearing in Calendar Girls at the Grand theatre at the time.

The visit followed a grant from Comic Relief to STEP to support its work in the West Park area.

With winter approaching, please let Wendy at STEP know if you have concerns about any of the older residents in the area who might benefit from contact with her organisation. The number to ring is 0113 2757988.



## Grass Verges

This is the time of year when grass verges are especially vulnerable to damage from vehicles parked on them, and in February this year we circulated a leaflet that residents could print out and perhaps hand to the drivers of offending vehicles.

As before, the idea is to try to educate in a friendly way those doing the damage, bearing in mind that many visitors to the area will be unaware how important the verges are to the look of our neighbourhood.



If you'd like more supplies you can download the leaflet from the WPRA website. Go to the *Association* page, then the *Handouts* page, and then click on *Verges Leaflet.pdf* to open the file in your browser. You can then choose either to save it or print it.

## News From Around the Area

**Leeds City College** want to move into part of the Headingley Office Park next September on a ten year lease and to wind down the Thomas Danby site. This would bring about 600 16-18 year-old students into Headingley at peak times, and there will also be some evening classes. This raises important issues about change of use from offices to educational activities, and about the impact on nearby residents. There's to be a consultation event on-site prior to a planning application, probably on the evening of Wednesday 23-11-2011. (Source: *Councillor Martin Hamilton, Headingley*).

**The University of Leeds** is proposing to sell for housing the land occupied by student accommodation at the Bodington Hall site. This is yet another large and important planning application for our ward. They are consulting on an outline planning application to get permission in principle for the development. Later there'll be a detailed planning application about the number and type of houses, etc.. (Source: *Councillor Sue Bentley, Weetwood*).

**Queens Wood:** Residents may have noticed tree felling in the wooded area bordering on Becketts Park. This is part of a five year woodland management plan at the Headingley campus and involves thinning the existing woodland and removing invasive species throughout Queens Wood. Work should be completed by the end of the year.



## New Residents to West Park — Why not join the Association?

Please send this form with your remittance to: WPRA, 26 Ring Road, West Park, Leeds, LS16 6EJ. The fee is just £3.00 per household. The subscription runs from one AGM to the next (April to April).

*Please make cheques payable to: Spen Lane and West Park Residents Association. If you need a receipt, please enclose SAE.*

I/We enclose £3, to cover my/our subscription to WPRA until April 2011.

**NAME:**

**PHONE:**

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**

**POSTCODE :**