

# The WEST PARK CHRONICLE

The Community Newspaper for West Park September 2012

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

## **Village Green Project—Good News!**

The Council has agreed to progress QEII applications for West Park and Butcher Hill playing fields. They have also agreed that the village green application for Old Farm Drive will proceed without objection from the Council.

A 'QEII application' refers to the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Fields scheme run by the charity Fields in Trust (FIT) and which was set up to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee. It registers green spaces which are used by the general populace as fields for recreation of all kinds.

FIT was founded in 1925 as the National Playing Fields Association with the object of ensuring that every one should have free access to green spaces for sport, recreation, or play. If an application is successful, a Deed of Declaration approved by the Charity Commission will protect a freehold site in perpetuity.

Because this should give the fields the same degree of protection as that of a village green, the village green applications for West Park



Fields and Butcher Hill Fields will be held in abeyance, and will be withdrawn if the QEII applications are successful.

This successful outcome is largely due to the tenacious efforts of Councillor Bernard Atha, to whom the WPRC committee extend sincere thanks on behalf of members.

## **NGT—New Generation Transport**

### **DfT to Fund NGT in Leeds**

On 5th July this year the Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed that the government will fund up to £173.5m for the £250m Leeds NGT scheme. However, the funding applies only to a trolley bus scheme, and depends on meeting 'business case objectives' which are mainly related to reducing journey times.

The plan is for trolley buses to run every 6 minutes and journey times from a new park-and-ride facility at Bodington to the city centre are estimated to reduce by 4-9 minutes. (As a comparison it's estimated that 2-3 minutes would be saved just by adding a swipe card system, such as the Oyster card, to existing buses).

Even with the Government providing the lion's share of the money, Leeds Council will still have to find at least £78m. The scheme is ex-



pected to provide 4,000 extra jobs in Leeds, which equates to £60,000 per job.

### **WPRC and the NGT**

The WPRC committee is very sceptical of the ability of the NGT scheme to deliver significant journey savings. We are even more concerned about the adverse impact on the whole A660

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environment. The area is attractive and densely populated, and is highly valued by those who live along the route, including of course, we who live in West Park.

Better public transport for those who live outside the city is a laudable aim, but not if it severely damages the environment of those who live along the route.

Prior to the submission of the NGT bid, WPRA organised meetings at which local residents could see the plans for the West Park area and question the planners. This raised a host of issues that seemingly had not been addressed. We plan to arrange a similar series of meetings once the NGT team has been re-established.

## Timetable

The proposed timetable is as follows:

- Nov-Dec 2012 - Consultation on proposals after which the design will be frozen to prepare a Traffic Works Order (TWO). A TWO is basically a large planning application which will be submitted in April 2013 to the Secretary of State.
- Public Enquiry - Autumn 2013. The secretary of state decides whether or not to have an inquiry, but objections and comments resulting from the TWO make it very likely that there will be one. If the consultation and public enquiry alter details of the scheme to the extent that journey times and value for money are affected too much, the DfT could withdraw funding.
- 2014-2016 - Detailed planning work and procurement and residual compulsory works orders. (Most of this is in place. For example, Metro already own the shops that will be demolished as part of the scheme at Hyde Park Corner).

### NGT - What Next?

- We'll circulate news of meetings about the NGT by email and, when possible, by leaflet to residents without email.
- Please ensure that we have your up-to-date email address. (For example, if you received this on paper but were expecting it by email, please email to [westpra@btinternet.com](mailto:westpra@btinternet.com) .
- WPRA will probably join other resident groups as part of an overall lobby group. If you are prepared to attend meetings and generally assist please email us at [nqt@westparkresidents.org.uk](mailto:nqt@westparkresidents.org.uk).

- Late 2016 - Work begins, to be completed in two years

## Consultation

The consultation will look at the proposals and essentially will try to address objections so that the TWO process and subsequent inquiry goes more smoothly.



WPRA has requested that special presentations be made available for local residents during the autumn consultation process. There will also be more formal, set piece events advertised by the Council together with leafleting and letters.

We expect that the NGT team will, in effect, re-run the consultation that led to the most recent submission to government, meaning that similar arguments and objections will be covered again.

## Possible Results From the Consultation

For DfT the key consideration is 'value for money', which in their view is mainly related to journey times and the extent of 'modal shift' (i.e., the shift from private to public transport).

Government funding will not be allocated if DfT considers that recommended changes to the scheme are unacceptable, and the Government have emphasised that DfT are unlikely to support any scheme that doesn't include the trolley bus as the mode of transport, or that changes the route.

## Make Your Voice Heard

It's vital that local residents attend the consultation events and give their views on NGT. The proposed scheme will dramatically affect the A660 and the character of the Otley Road into the city centre. Here are some of the aspects that we need to consider carefully in West Park:

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- Residential properties on Otley Road will lose some of their front gardens through road widening, and commercial properties on Otley Road will lose parts of their forecourts
- Residents in the Ancaster Road and Kepstorn Rad area will have their access limited by new traffic lights.
- The mature trees adjacent to Lawnswood school and beyond will probably be removed.
- Overhead cabling systems are not compatible with tree branches, so it may well be 'goodbye' to most of the trees on the route—the greenery on the street scene all the way into the city will be decimated.
- Rat runs will increase traffic down Spen Lane and the Wynfords to escape signalling prioritised for trolley buses on Otley Road.
- Unofficial on-street parking will increase as commuters park there instead of in the Park and Ride at Bodington. There's a vague reference in the scheme for measures 'to control NGT-related parking in inappropriate areas'

but it states only that these 'will be considered'.

- Other parts of the A660 route will lose houses,
- The route will encroach on Monument Moor (part of Woodhouse Moor).
- Dedicated cycling lanes will be affected.
- There will be massive disruption during construction.
- How will normal buses coexist with the NGT? If they share the same road, the NGT will be no faster. If not, the buses will be impeded.
- The twice-a-day benefit to long distance commuters will come at the expense of damaging the quality of life of all those living on the route.
- Will Otley Road become like York Road, where one half of the community became cut off from the other half?



## Some Food for Thought...

### 'New Era Hi-tech Buses'

We shouldn't argue from ignorance, so have a look at <http://citytransport.info/Buses03.htm>. It's a well-researched internet article "dedicated to the new breed of hi-tech buses currently being introduced into towns and cities as part of high-profile upgrades to existing bus services and as part of new "Bus Rapid Transit" (BRT) systems." Read this to learn about case histories world-wide, the pros and cons of the various technology options, and why passengers prefer electric to diesel. And then be sure to go on and read <http://citytransport.info/Electbus.htm> which deals specifically with electric buses.

### Hybrid Bus Cuts Emissions in London

London is already trialling [Hybrid buses](#) (pictured) and buses powered by [hydrogen](#) in fuel cells. Both are quieter, cleaner and more fuel-efficient than standard diesel buses. Apparently the hybrids claim at least 30 per cent reduction in fuel use, 30 per cent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>, and 3db(A) reduction in perceived sound levels.



### Why Do Our Buses Waste So Much Time on Ticketing?

Read this BBC article '[The man on the Leeds omnibus...](#)' to find out what users think of Leeds buses. For example 'John' says (heavily paraphrased): "I travel to Leeds City Centre from the Arndale Centre in Headingley 5 days a week. It's cheaper to share a car than to use the bus. Major gripe: all tickets have to be bought from the driver while he waits at the stop. Most of a journey can be spent sat at stops while passengers board and buy their tickets. The management teams who put such systems in place must surely feel ashamed."

## **Progress at Lawnswood School**

WPRA continues to meet regularly with Lawnswood School, and there will soon be more opportunities for residents to become involved with school initiatives.

News from the school is that there's been a steady improvement in attendance rate, and that students in Year 10 now remain on site at lunchtime.

Next year only sixth formers will be allowed off-site at lunchtime. To make this feasible, the school has converted a ground floor room into a diner for Years 10 and 11. The diner looks great, with modern styling and a bright, warm and comfortable atmosphere proving hot snacks, sandwiches and drinks.

Good academic results in the summer and a general improvement in behaviour bear



testament to the changes being introduced at Lawnswood. Educating the young in today's society is no small challenge, but Lawnswood is fortunate in having a Head, Simon White, who is prepared to tackle issues head-on and who has a robust view of what is in the best educational interests of his pupils.

WPRA applauds and supports the work of the school, and congratulates the Head and all his staff for their progress in restoring Lawnswood to its former level of excellence.

## **The Olympic torch in West Park**

Although missing the media coverage of the other national event, STEP recently hosted a Summer Indoors Games event. Over 50 of the local 'older athletes' had a great social get-together, joining in a range of games yet to be given Olympic status such as The Domino Marathon, The Long Pea Jump, and The Cube (a cross between tossing the caber and the Shot Put).

The highlight of the day, however, was the surprise guest appearance of Ashpal Bhogal and the Olympic torch. Ashpal, who is a member of the England junior hockey squad, carried the torch in Monk Fryston as part of the 70-day

torch relay across the UK, despite currently recuperating from an injured knee.

Seeing and holding the torch was a great thrill for all present, and made the day for all.



If you feel that you match the fitness and age criteria to join in the excitement of future "games events" at STEP, then please get in touch with Wendy Moore on 2757988.

## **How to Join or Renew WPRA For 2013**

If you didn't re-subscribe at the AGM in April this year, then you might like to send this form or equivalent with your £3 subscription, to: WPRA, 26 Ring Road, West Park, Leeds, LS16 6EJ. The yearly subscription is 'per household' and 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, as my / our subscription to WPRA for the year 2013.

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