

# The WEST PARK CHRONICLE

The Community Newspaper for West Park Spring 2013

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

## Annual General Meeting

**Wednesday 17th April — 7.00 pm — Lawnswood School**

***Please note the new venue and new starting time***

Since the West Park Centre is closed, we have accepted the kind offer from the staff and pupils of Lawnswood School to hold our AGM in the school hall. There's plenty of parking space—please use the access from Otley Road (just before the roundabout heading out of town).

**If you can't attend but would like to make a comment, please contact WPRC Chair, Doug Kemp, on 2758808 or by email to [westparkresidents@ntlworld.com](mailto:westparkresidents@ntlworld.com).**

Agenda items will include: The Old Centralians AFC, the Neighbourhood Design Statement, West Park fields, the future of the West Park Centre, and NGT (New Generation Transport). Local councillors have been invited.

### **Why WPRC is Opposing NGT on the A660**



The NGT trolleybus scheme is intended to be a further step towards an integrated transport system for Leeds, calling on £170 million of government funding towards a total estimated cost of £250 million.

#### **Benefits Claimed by the Promoters**

1. It will provide a quicker, more reliable, and more attractive alternative to bus services.
2. There will be a big improvement in air quality along the route.

3. It will entice many commuters out of their cars onto public transport leading to further reductions in congestion and air pollution.

#### **Obvious Disbenefits for Local Residents**

1. Overhead wires on pylons are unsightly and intrusive, especially on a route that involves five Conservation Areas.
2. Running large trolleybuses through Headingley and Hyde Park will require considerable modifications to a valuable streetscape, such as narrowing of pavements, road widening, land appropriation, and tree felling.
3. The loss of mature trees is an especially sensitive issue in an area where even the local names Meanwood and Weetwood indicate the importance of trees to the locality.



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## WPRA's Assessment of the Promoters Claims

We've dealt with this in detail already in our document 'Critique by WPRA of NGT Trolleybus Proposals for the A660' which can be read or downloaded from Ref 1. The essence of our argument is:

1. Most of the predicted improvements in journey times derive from these measures that could equally well be applied to buses but with less environmental impact, i.e., fewer stops, a conductor on board for ticketing (or something like Oyster cards), more segregation of the route from other traffic.
2. Many people will have to walk further to reach the stops, and there will be fewer of them.
3. Bus operators are likely to withdraw some services that are no longer economic to run once the NGT has creamed off the main profit-making sections of the route.
4. NGT will reduce the extent of cycling and walking on the route by about 7%. (NGT data in tables 8.3 and 8.4 in Ref. 2).
5. The predictions of how many car drivers will switch to the trolleybus are over-optimistic guesses because there are no other UK trolleybuses to compare with.
6. The priority given to the trolleybus will make congestion worse for other road users forcing them to use rat-runs. The promoters even predict that the additional mileage that this entails will consume extra fuel to the extent that £1.3 million in extra fuel duty will be collected – see last line in the table in Ref. 3. This wasted fuel will make air quality worse on the rat-run streets.
7. By the time the NGT is operating (estimated to be 2019) electric buses will be available that will make overhead power lines unnecessary.

## Conclusion - The Drawbacks Outweigh the Benefits

Yes, by all means improve the transport infrastructure, but let's do it using the most appropriate modern systems that are suitable for the roads on which they will operate.

Members of the WPRA committee think that the claimed benefits are mostly illusory and that a trolley bus system is not appropriate for this route because:

- For most of those living along the A660 route the scheme will actually result in a worse transport service than they have now.
- It will increase congestion for all non-NGT buses and vehicles so that many will be forced to rat-run on other roads such as Spen Lane and Weetwood Lane.

As a result we have decided to campaign against the NGT in its present form and to join the [A660 Joint Council](#), an alliance of other local organisations that have also decided that 'the emperor has no clothes'.

We cannot support a scheme which will not deliver value for money, and does not respect or benefit the homes, businesses, and communities along the A660.

## References

1. 'Critique by WPRA of NGT Trolleybus Proposals for the A660', [http://www.westparkresidents.org.uk/docs/misc/WPRA\\_Assessment\\_of\\_NGT\\_17-01-2013.pdf](http://www.westparkresidents.org.uk/docs/misc/WPRA_Assessment_of_NGT_17-01-2013.pdf).
2. 'NGT-New Generation Transport, Programme Entry Business Case Submission', <http://www.ngtmetro.com/NR/rdonlyres/8FAE7136-6988-44D8-85B9-ADA0806D79E8/0/NGTProgrammeEntryBusinessCasesubmissionMarch2012.pdf>.
3. NGT 'Appraisal Summary Table', dated 30-03-2012, available at <http://www.ngtmetro.com/NR/rdonlyres/7301209C-0C54-4107-8A0DA0CF81CFF535/0/Appendix16NGTMarch2012ASTv2.pdf>.

## What Happens Next?

The plans seen at the drop-in sessions, and other NGT documents, are currently being worked on, and will probably be changed, perhaps as a result of the comments and objections sent into NGT.

The Promoters of the NGT trolleybus system (Metro & Leeds City Council) will submit the revised plans, drawings, and documents to the Secretary of State



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for Transport (SoS) in support of an application for a Transport & Works Act Order (TWAO).

This Order gives the Promoters the specific powers necessary to construct, operate, and maintain the trolleybus system. It includes powers to acquire land, and rights over land, to take temporary possession of land (e.g. during construction), and to divert streets.



When the application is made, all documentation relating to the application will be made publicly available (including detailed plans and environmental impact assessments). Also news-

paper announcements, formal notification letters and site notices will be issued and displayed.

The TWAO submission is expected to happen in June / July of 2013. People will then have six weeks to submit their comments or objections.

This is a tight deadline with gives little time for examination of the new documentation and plans, or to assemble reasoned arguments for objections.



It is vital that residents and residents' associations make their voices heard at this stage.

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## West Park Centre

As many residents will be aware, West Park Centre is currently out of use completely and has been 'moth-balled' while the Council decide on its future.

Actually a decision about its future was originally promised in 2009, after a deputation from local groups to the Full Council, and then again in 2011. But despite support for the centre from local councillors of all parties, it seems that council officers would be happy to let the Centre die from lack of action and neglect.

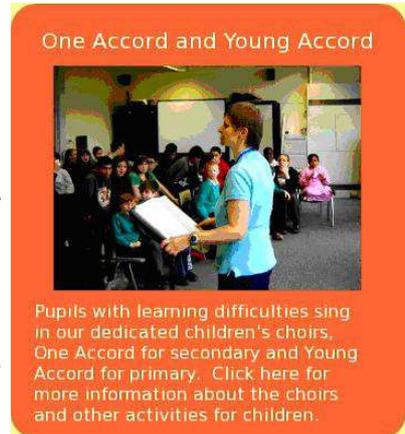
The centre was closed 'temporarily' in November 2012 pending further investigation after an inspection revealed that the electrical installation was unsafe.

The unsatisfactory way in which the whole issue of the Centre's future has been addressed has been brought before the Council's Scrutiny Committee, and is to be considered by the Lo-

cal Authority Ombudsman. Meanwhile the Executive Board has postponed any decision about whether to carry out the necessary electrical work and re-open the Centre.

All this leaves the many groups and hundreds of users struggling to carry on their work bereft of the facilities previously provided by West Park

Centre. This is particularly affecting the charity group, YAMSEN (the [Yorkshire Association for Music and Special Educational Needs](#)). Councillors and user groups are still campaigning for the Centre and the facilities provided by this ugly duck of a building.



One Accord and Young Accord

Pupils with learning difficulties sing in our dedicated children's choirs, One Accord for secondary and Young Accord for primary. Click here for more information about the choirs and other activities for children.

## The Old Centralians AFC

Many residents will have seen the Old Centralians playing in their distinctive red and white striped shirts on Saturday afternoons on West Park Fields. They have contacted WPRA to join in the Annual Litter Pick and are hoping for greater involvement with the West Park community.

The Old Centralians AFC is one of the oldest amateur football clubs in Leeds and the team are proud to call West Park their home. The club began in 1925 as a founder member of the Yorkshire Amateur League. Also known as the

'Cents', they run four adult teams at varying levels, with the first team playing in the West Yorkshire League Division One.

The players appreciate any support they can get so if you are looking for some free entertainment on a Saturday please go down and watch from the side lines. Alternatively if you are looking for a local team to play for, please contact Robbie Campbell on 07842 602892 or [oldcentralians@hotmail.com](mailto:oldcentralians@hotmail.com).



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WPRA will be issuing further information regarding public meetings and possible grounds for comment once the revised documents are released.

Following the submission a Public Inquiry is likely, chaired by an independent Inspector appointed by the SoS. Assuming this happens it will probably be in early 2014.

At the Inquiry, the case for the scheme and the objections raised will be heard in public. Anybody wishing to take part in the Inquiry will need to submit a request beforehand.

After the Inquiry the Inspector will write a report for the SoS who will then decide whether to grant the TWAO and give the NGT the go-ahead.

### **Good Neighbours (STEP)**

It's been a long cold winter and therefore WPRA are very happy to support the work of the registered charity STEP, which provides support for local residents who are over 60.

Although STEP is based in offices at St Andrew's church on Butcher Hill, it is a non-religious organisation and open to anyone who is over sixty. If you want to get involved with

social activities, or even run an activity, please get in touch.

If you think one of your neighbours could benefit with assistance of any kind, then please give Wendy Moore a call on 275 7988, or send her an email via [step.2.step@btconnect.com](mailto:step.2.step@btconnect.com). All referrals are treated in total confidence.



### **The West Park Fields Annual Litter Pick**

For many years local resident Tony Ray has organised a Litter Pick to clear rubbish from the West Park Fields. Last year his band of intrepid volunteers collected no less than 32 bags of rubbish including polythene bags, crisp packets, paper, bottles, cans, and even little knotted bags of dog poo (the dogs in West Park are quite clever).

This year will be no exception and the event is scheduled for **Saturday 23rd March at 10.00 am**. If you'd like to join in and help, please meet in the front car park of the West Park Centre. This year members of the Old Centralians football club have also volunteered to join in the clean-up.

Litter pickers and bags will be provided but volunteers should bring their own gloves.



Litter from West Park Fields, 31-03-2012

### **How to Join or Renew WPRA For 2013/14**

The yearly subscription is 'per household' and runs from one AGM to the next (e.g., April 2013 to April 2014). You can pay at the AGM on 17th April 2013, or by sending this form or equivalent with your £3 subscription, to WPRA, 26 Ring Road, West Park, Leeds, LS16 6EJ.

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



I/We enclose £3, as my/our subscription to WPRA for the period April 2013 to April 2014.

**NAME:**

**PHONE:**

**POSTAL ADDRESS:**

**POSTCODE :**

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

*...please make sure we have your up-to-date email address*