

The WEST PARK CHRONICLE

The Community Newspaper for West Park

Spring 2014

www.westparkresidents.org.uk

Annual General Meeting

Monday 31st March — 7:00 pm — Lawnswood School

Same starting time and venue as last year

The West Park Centre is no more, so WPRA have again accepted the kind offer from the staff and pupils at Lawnswood to hold the AGM in the school hall.

There's plenty of parking space—please use the access from Otley Road just before the roundabout (heading North).

If you can't be there but want to make a comment, please contact WPRA Chair, Doug Kemp, on 2758808 or by email to westpark.residents@ntlworld.com.

- **Main agenda item: update on the Trolleybus Scheme, or NGT (New Generation Transport).**
- **Local councillors have been invited.**
- **This is an excellent opportunity to meet your neighbours, influence local affairs, endorse the committee, and to pay your subscription.**
- **Hoping to see you there...**



The Leeds Trolleybus Scheme

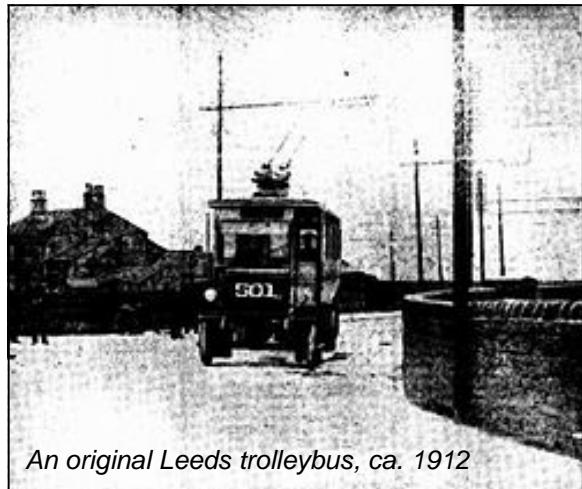
At the AGM last year, members voted for WPRA to continue its opposition to the NGT scheme.

Many letters of objection have been sent in from local residents and resident associations, plus local businesses, councillors and schools, and as a consequence a Public Enquiry will commence on 29-04-2014, with a preliminary meeting on 4th March.

The latter should give a clearer picture of the public enquiry time scale and process. At the AGM we'll give an update on the recently released documents from NGT and an assessment of the "worth" of the scheme.

Why are WPRA against NGT?

- The scheme claims to provide an integrated transport system, but actually it doesn't. The



An original Leeds trolleybus, ca. 1912

line from Holt Park to the city centre will compete with existing bus services and even runs from a different set of stops.

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- It looks as if the trolleybus will have seating for less than half its passengers.
- Its success depends on diverting commuters from bus services, thereby threatening the existence of services like the Number 6.
- Better journey times and improved service reliability can be achieved at lower cost and with less disruption, *without* a trolleybus, as shown by NWLTF (see below) in their objection letter.
- It uses expensive bespoke vehicles and dead-end technology that Leeds will be stuck with forever after.
- The job creation claims are highly speculative and ignore the adverse impact of NGT on local businesses and their customers.
- NGT, and its power station, will be no kinder to the street environment or the atmosphere as a whole than buses. This is because, by the time it comes into service, diesel emissions from buses will have been reduced to much lower levels than now due to forthcoming mandatory emission regulations.

Major Impact on Council Taxes

There's potential for major future financial impact on council tax payers for three reasons:

- Only 69% (£173.5 million) of the NGT costs are being provided by the Government. The remaining £77.5 million has to be funded locally (your money).
- Documents from NGT (Jan 2014) talk of 'prudential borrowing', but this does not in-



Another Leeds trolleybus, ca. 1912

- clude costs over and above those estimated. These will have to be funded through local authority contribution (your money again).
• If the scheme goes ahead and the forecast revenues fall short of the operating costs, guess who's responsible for making up the shortfall? Yes, Leeds ratepayers.

And there's a lot more...

As well as all the above, there are many other environmental, conservation, and heritage issues which have not been given adequate weighting.

Yes, we need to improve the transport infrastructure, but in a way that enhances the surrounding communities rather than despoiling them.

This scheme seems to be based on the belief that Leeds traffic will improve only if something is done on the A660. However we think that the claimed benefits of NGT are mostly illusory and that a trolley bus system is the wrong solution.

On-going Trolleybus Poll in The Yorkshire Evening Post

The Yorkshire Evening Post has been running a poll about the trolleybus scheme on its website. To see it, go to <http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/> and click on the Campaigns tab. If you've not already done so, you can then cast your vote one way or the other.

The screenshot here shows the cumulative totals as they were on 19-02-2014. For every person who thinks it's a good idea, almost three others think it's a bad idea

These figures are similar to the results of a survey by the Federation of Small Businesses published in October 2013, which found that 70% of businesses who responded do not believe the trolleybus was the right solution. Even more striking, the NWLTF survey (see YEP, p12, 02-11-2013) found that 95% of the 3450 replies were 'opposed' or 'strongly opposed' to the scheme.



The North West Leeds Transport Forum (NWLTF)

The NWLTF was formed last Summer by a group of concerned West Park and Weetwood Residents who wanted to provide a forum for the constructive analysis of the proposed NGT scheme, and to lobby for an effective and appropriate transport plan for North West Leeds.

The group has grown and now draws on the professional expertise of many local residents, including experts on transport studies, planning, road safety, and air pollution and diesel engine emissions.

NWLTF now has the support of the Headingley Business Forum and other local businesses, together with six local resident groups. The group has submitted an objection and Statement of Case, which can be seen at www.nwltf.org.uk and has requested to speak at the Public Enquiry.

Gales—Trees—NGT

The recent gales raised yet further questions about the wisdom of erecting trolleybus wires along our tree-lined roads.

Chris Webb took this picture of a tree brought down by the gales of 12/13th February lying across Otley Road outside the former WIRA building near Hyde Park .

He comments: "imagine the chaos if it had brought down trolleybus lines - they'd not be able to divert down Victoria road, and several would be marooned wherever they were when the tree fell (blocking traffic elsewhere)".



West Park Centre

As residents will be aware the Council decided to demolish the West Park Centre despite efforts to retain and develop the centre by the many music groups that used it.

The site was previously "flagged" by the Council as a potential location for 69 residential properties. As yet no plans for developing the site have been proposed. Local councillors have promised to alert WPRA if any further information becomes known to the Council.

The picture here is from a YEP article on 21-01-2014 which reported that 'Up to £800,000 will



Going, Going, Gone....

be made available to create a new community facility on the same site'.

Back on the Big Screen—Billy Liar

Jason Cullen's Facebook group *Leeds Back In The Day* has arranged for another in a series of cult classic films, *Billy Liar*, to be brought back to the big screen. This Yorkshire classic will have a special one-performance showing at the Cottage Road Cinema at 8:15 pm on Tuesday, 11th March, and advance booking is advisable if you want to go. The film has been digitally restored with excellent sound quality and there will be a special vintage programme before the film.

Written by Hunslet-born novelist Keith Waterhouse and set in his homeland, *Billy Liar* is a comical story about a working-class 19-year-old living with his parents in the fictional town of Stradborough-

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ton in Yorkshire. Bored by his job at the undertakers, Billy spends his time indulging in fantasies and dreams of life in the big city.

This is a rare opportunity to see this Northern favourite, and in a very appropriate setting. Cottage Road cinema is the oldest running cinema in Leeds and one of the longest continually operating cinemas in the world. This year will be its 102nd year of operation.

'The Cottage' still retains many original features and audiences thrill at the 'Intermissions' just as they did '*back in the day*'.



Leeds Town Hall in the film

Good Neighbours (STEP)

WPRA are happy to support the work of STEP, the registered charity that provides support for local over-sixties.

Volunteers are always most welcome. If you want to get involved with social activities, or even run activities, then 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 email her at step.2.step@btconnect.com. All referrals are treated in total confidence.

The West Park Fields Annual Litter Pick

Yet again, intrepid local worthies led by Tony Ray plan to venture onto West Park Fields to clear rubbish that's accumulated since the litter pick in March 2013.

This year volunteers are asked to meet at **10am on Saturday 5th April**. The meeting point is by the Football Changing Rooms (behind where the West Park Centre was) and can be accessed by road from the bottom end of North Parade.

Litter picking tools and bags will be provided but please remember to bring your own protective gloves. The picture shows the rubbish collected last year.



How to Join or Renew WPRA For 2014/15

Please note—the subscription is now £5 per household

The yearly subscription is 'per household' and runs from one AGM to the next (e.g., April 2014 to April 2015). **You can pay at the AGM on 31st March 2014**, or by sending this form or equivalent with your 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 £5, as my/our subscription to WPRA for the period April 2014 to April 2015.

NAME:

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