

### Milk Churn farm shop opens for business

There can't have been a worse time to plan, design, equip and open a new business. The pandemic was just taking hold as Debbie Roberts, her daughter Hannah and business partner Kerry Parker, were putting forward their idea to convert a house in Long Street, Topcliffe into a farm shop.

But perseverance and hard work has seen the intrepid trio through the lockdown and as Covid-19 restrictions begin to ease, they have overcome the many problems put in their way and now their dream project has come to fruition.



*Debbie Roberts, Kerry Parker and Hannah Alderson*

The Milk Churn farm shop opened for business a week ago and already it's proving to be a runaway success with locals.

"Running a farm shop has always been a dream of ours and now it's reality - a dream come true", said Debbie.

Initially only the grocery and fresh food shop is open but in the near future there'll also be a gift shop on the first floor and a café in the conservatory.

Food provenance is extremely important to Debbie, Hannah and Kerry. They pride themselves on having sourced the majority of their stock within Yorkshire and often from just a few miles away from Topcliffe.

They are selling fresh meat, fish, fruit and vegetables, along with a large range of specialty cheeses, breads, cakes and chocolates, plus frozen meals and a selection of alcoholic beverages. There'll also be homemade soups and quiches, ready-to-go lunch boxes and drinks fresh every day.

Customers will be able to order vegetable and meat boxes that can be collected or that can be delivered to local homes. They will also provide weekend boxes for a

full English and/or Sunday lunch box with a nice bottle of wine.

Debbie added: "Ours is a community shop and we aim to provide quality, affordable products that we believe locals want to be able to buy on their doorstep. The business will be run with an eye to good environmental practice - avoiding one use plastics where we can, using paper bags where necessary and encouraging customers to bring their own containers and bags for life! And we'll be happy to listen to our customers to try and supply the products they want."

*continued on page 2...*

### Oliver edits Asenby's Happy News

There's a budding journalist in Asenby who might be vying for Doug Allan's job. Oliver Robertson, age 7, who attends Topcliffe Academy school, has published two village newsletters during lockdown. The second edition of 'Asenby's Happy News' was recently hand delivered to villagers by Oliver and his younger sister Evelyn and was also shared on social media.



*Oliver and his sisters Connie and Evelyn*

Oliver was enthused by the positive response from his first newsletter which was born out of a wish to reach out to fellow neighbours in isolation and nurture the growing community spirit in the village. Lockdown has seen him spending much of his time at home which somewhat hampered his inspiration for the second edition but he got to work nonetheless, to bring a smile to his neighbours and friends.

Oliver said: "It's fun. I like thinking of all the bits to write about and adding my own pictures. I delivered around 60 newsletters and was very pleased to receive several thank you notes. I am planning another newsletter for the October half-term and I'm already on the lookout for inspiring stories to publish."

## Topcliffe Parish Council Update

This Parish Council report for the Autumn Tattler is a bit of a mixed bag. It's a reminder of the few things that we have been able to do during the Covid-19 pandemic, but also lists the things that we've been unable to do or progress.

As most of you will have noticed, the mobile vehicle activated speed sign has now been erected just after the 30mph sign on the A167 entry to the village. The sign is portable, and we will periodically switch it to a site on Long Street near the A168 slip road. We hope this will help reduce the age-old problem of speeding traffic through the village and we will be monitoring the effect the sign has over the coming months.



*The speed checker*

The problem of unauthorised HGV traffic passing through our village continues. We have encouraged parish residents to write letters of complaint to the Highways Department and Police. A template letter, which can be used, plus with contact details, is posted on the Village Hall notice board, or a copy can be obtained from the Parish Council. In the meantime, we continue to explore other ways of tackling the problem, through the Trading Standards Lorry Watch Scheme.

The Parish Council has worked with Hambleton Council's Waste and Street Scene Department who have now replaced five of the 17 village waste bins which were in a state of disrepair. They intend replacing a further five bins in the near future.

We have replaced the dilapidated and rotting wooden barrier at the entrance to the Sheep Wash with a new metal five bar gate.

Many planned activities have had to be delayed because of the lockdown and other restrictions caused by the

### **Milk Churn farm shop opens for business**

*continued from page 1...*

The farm shop is operating under strict Covid rules and all customers will be asked to sanitise their hands as they enter, wear a mask and follow the social distancing guidance in place. All products are clearly marked with the price so customers do not need to handle the item unless purchasing.

Opening times - Monday to Saturday, 9am to 5.30pm, Sunday, 10am to 4pm.

Covid-19 pandemic. These will be completed as soon as possible after we get back to some sort of normality.

Wildflower seeds, kindly funded by North Yorkshire County Council, will be sown at the Sheep Wash in autumn for flowering in spring 2021.

Crushed stone, again kindly funded by the county council, for resurfacing the public footpath between Deans Court and Back Lane has now been acquired and is ready to be laid.

The county council's public rights of way office has agreed to replace three fallen or missing public footpath signs in the village and agreed to monitor the condition of the other six signs in the parish. However, this is not scheduled until the first quarter of 2021.

The village tidy day scheduled for 29 March had to be postponed but will be rescheduled for a later date.

Parish Council meetings were another casualty of the pandemic and our last meeting was in April. At the time of writing, we have been unable to find a suitable meeting venue which can provide safe social distancing. Once we can reconvene, a new date and agenda will be available on the Topcliffe Parish Council website ([www.topcliffe.org.uk](http://www.topcliffe.org.uk)) and on the Village Hall notice board. Members of the public will be able to attend as usual, with appropriate safe social distancing as required at the time. In the meantime, you can contact the Council via the website with any questions, complaints, or comments, or approach any of your Parish Councillors.

*Roy Beckwith - Vice Chair, Topcliffe Parish Council*

## Art Connections

We are now running our art classes from Helmsley Town Hall every Tuesday starting 13 October 2020. Classes are 10am to 1pm, 1pm to 4pm or all day, 10am to 4pm.

We would like to thank all of you who joined our art classes in Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall. It was a pleasure to get to know you all. If you fancy joining a class in Helmsley please feel free to visit us when a class is on, or alternatively contact me for more information.

**Barry and Vivien Wilton-Middlemass**

**Ring: 07909 690543**

**Email: [jbm.lockwoodbeck@bopenworld.com](mailto:jbm.lockwoodbeck@bopenworld.com)**





## Hambleton keeps going through pandemic

This last six months has been the strangest of times to be the leader of a council.

Like all local councils, Hambleton District Council had to act quickly to put in place processes to maintain frontline services, such as refuse collection, environmental health, planning and licensing services, and providing much needed support to vulnerable members of the community and to the many organisations helping them.



We did this at a time when hundreds of our workforce were working from home and only a few staff were allowed into the Civic Centre. Throughout the pandemic I was the only elected member allowed in the building and most meetings and discussions had to take place online.

But I am happy to say the workforce have been fantastic and the council has maintained 100% of its frontline services.

One really good example of how we adapted to keep things going is that leisure centre staff eagerly retrained to help deal with the increased demand for refuse collection, partly created when North Yorkshire County Council closed its civic amenity sites.

The pandemic crisis created significant and urgent problems for businesses and the council acted swiftly to manage government grants, awarding well over £30 million to 2,800 companies of all sorts and sizes. On the community side we administered grants for community buildings, including a grant of £10,000 to Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall. This was the sort of support required so that the committee could pay the bills at a time when there was no income being generated.

Several important local development issues have progressed through the system during the lockdown period. I am pleased to say that the proposed crematorium on land near Busby Stoop received full planning permission and construction is expected to start early in November.

Further works are scheduled to start about now on a stretch of road near Dalton Bridge to alleviate the drainage issues that were experienced during the heavy rains last February. They should be complete by end of October. Also at Dalton Bridge, the new l'Anson Brother's feed mill - costing £12 million and the most technically advanced mill of its type in Europe - will get underway later this month.

I'm happy to report that all leisure facilities have now reopened with Covid-safe procedures in place. A £3.8 million upgrade to Thirsk and Sowerby leisure centre has been approved. The work includes some essential refurbishment, including replacing the roof and plant room, plus a new 24/7 state of the art gym facility will be added.

*Cllr Mark Robson, Leader of Hambleton Council*

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## Feoffees are part of our history...but still relevant today

The word feoffee is a historical term relating to the law of trusts and equity. The modern-day equivalent is trustee.

Feoffees were first appointed locally to govern the Consolidated Charities of Topcliffe, a body established in 1674 by the 'Commissioners of Charitable Uses' for the management of the affairs of Topcliffe Grammar School and for the administration of Topcliffe Parochial Charities.

The ancient ecclesiastical parish of Topcliffe covering Asenby, Baldersby, Crakehill, Dalton, Dishforth, Eldmire, Marton-le-Moor, Rainton, Skipton-on-Swale, as well as Topcliffe itself, remains the geographical area of the charity.

Each of the villages has its own nominated feoffees, approved by their own parish councils. Anne-Marie Barningham and Amanda Jameson-Allen represent Topcliffe and Carole Ford represents Asenby. Collectively the feoffees meet to decide the distribution of charitable monies.

There are now two main funds which come under the direction of the Charities of Topcliffe:

The Topcliffe Poor Fund which gives grants to each village in relation to their population. This fund derives its income from the rent on two pieces of land owned by the charity, one in Topcliffe and the other in Firby, near Bedale. Each village is allocated a proportion of funds according to population.

The Topcliffe Educational Fund offers grants to further education students to purchase study books or other

educational aids agreed by the feoffees. This fund derives its income from the interest on capital investments, but as interest rates at present are very low, the amount that is available is quite limited. The value of any single grant depends not only on the funds available to distribute but also on the number of successful applications. This fund is not allocated according to the applicant's financial position.

Applications can be submitted at any time but the feoffees only meet annually, this year in late November, to approve grants. Anyone seeking further information or wishing to apply should contact the Secretary Mrs Rosemary Hart at [hartjre@hotmail.com](mailto:hartjre@hotmail.com)

### Carole's walking challenge

You may be seeing Asenby resident, Carole Ford, walking around our two villages more than usual. Carole has joined the 'Walk 30 miles in September Challenge' to raise money for Dementia UK.

Carole said "Having been shielding for five months during lockdown my fitness level is zero. In order to get myself moving again whilst waiting for a knee operation, I decided to take on this challenge because of its very personal meaning for me. I would like to thank all those who have sponsored me via my Facebook page. You have inspired me to take on the task".



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[lizanddave@the-elm-gallery.co.uk](mailto:lizanddave@the-elm-gallery.co.uk)





## Paws for Tea

Our local Blue Cross animal welfare centre is promoting a new way of raising funds for sick, injured and homeless pets...and it's a great way for humans to have some fun at the same time.



'Paws for Tea' is all about getting together with friends for a cup of tea but also making it a special event for your pets by giving them a party treat - maybe cut cake for cats or dunk digestives for dogs! There's no limit to what you might try, just let your imagination run riot.

Charlotte Waite, who lives in Topcliffe and works at the Blue Cross centre, says; "Pets are at the heart of everything Blue Cross does and we rely on the public's support to help us handle over 30,000 pets every year.

"That's why we're hoping Topcliffe and Asenby residents will Paws for Tea and help us raise much needed cash to give more pets the chance of a healthy life in a happy home.

"It's a simple idea that sees a pet owner, their family and friends, getting together over a cuppa and raising a few pounds at the same time. You can Paws for Tea whenever and wherever you like. If the weather's looking good organise a Paws for Tea BBQ or how about a spooky Halloween event? In the run up to Christmas maybe consider a mince pie party."

Whatever you choose to do, our fundraising pack includes all you need to get organised. To order your pack go to [www.bluecross.org.uk/paws-tea](http://www.bluecross.org.uk/paws-tea)

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## Return to school

As we return to school (we started on 8 September), we prepare for a start to the academic year like no other. All the staff are working hard to ensure we get off to a flying start, conscious of any 'lost time' in terms of education. However, we are also aware that some children have not set foot inside a school for six months and that could be a very daunting prospect for some. With this in mind, our curriculums have been adapted to cater for all the varying needs and experiences of pupils. Nationally, this is known as 'The Recovery Curriculum'.

Alongside this, we need to ensure that our school is a safe place in which to learn and work and that brings a lot of rules and procedures to ensure safety for all. There'll be lots of hand washing and observation of social distancing measures, despite the fact that we are a small school, with small facilities.

Supporting everyone's wellbeing is another important factor that we are considering, whether for pupils, staff or parents. Everyone is returning having been through different experiences - some being aware of what has happened via the news and some with personal experiences of tragedy and loss.

We also know that our nineteen new reception children's first experiences of school will not be quite how it has been in years gone by, with these young children being very aware of phrases like 'don't get too close', 'we must socially distance', 'lockdown', 'masks' and many more that have become part of our everyday vocabulary.



Finally, we still have many questions that are yet to be answered by the government and we look forward to a time when we can welcome our wider community back into school. There are so many activities that we love to do: having local volunteers in school, our bible groups, visits to the church, walks out in the village, putting on performances at the church or school, going on trips and residential visits (even going abroad sometimes). We really look forward to soon being able to do all of these things, once again.

Until this time though, we are extremely excited to be back open for all of our children.

*Mrs Abigail Clay  
Headteacher of Topcliffe CofE Academy*

## Village Hall Remains Closed

Although the current guidelines allow village halls to reopen, the risks and requirement to mitigate against the Covid-19 threat continues to be extremely complex, demanding, difficult to administer and places significant additional responsibilities on the Village Hall trustees and committee members.

Having examined the government and local council Covid-19 Risk Assessments, which detail the requirements for both committee and hall hirers to follow prior to any activity in the village hall, it was very clear that there would be considerable risk in allowing activities to take place whilst the incidence of the virus is still relatively high.

After consulting regular hall hirers, it was clear that the majority had no plans to make use of the hall until at least early in the New Year, it would seem a reasonable decision to remain closed until these priority hirers were ready to resume operations. As the majority of priority hirers have little appetite for commencing the reopening process it would be perverse for the committee to facilitate casual use at this time.



The Village Hall Committee agreed to keep the village hall closed to all users for the remainder of 2020, though this position will be reviewed in mid-October, or at any time the government guidelines are changed significantly to allow a re-opening with less complex and arduous requirements.

### Re-scheduled events

The Challenge Quiz & Curry Night and The Topcliffe Big Race Night, both of which were postponed due to the pandemic, will be rescheduled as soon as possible once the pandemic is over or the committee believes it is safe to stage them.

## Big thank you

The Village Hall Committee received a £10k 'survival' grant from the government via Hambleton Council to help it ride out the Coronavirus pandemic. The grant was very much welcomed and has helped to pay regular bills at a time when there has been little income.

## Bags 2 School recycling event

The next Bags 2 School recycling event will be held between 8.30am and noon on Monday 21 September. It will be held in the grounds of Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall and the proceeds will be shared between the Village Hall and Topcliffe Scout groups.

The last collection day in June was a great success with over 100 bags of textiles being collected, which weighed in at a tonne and raised £400 to be shared between the two organisations.

As a reminder, any of the following items are welcomed: men's, lady's and children's clothing - paired shoes (tied together or elastic band around) - handbags - hats - bags - scarves and ties - jewellery - lingerie - socks - belts - soft toys - household linen - household curtains - household towels - household bedding (bed sheets, pillow cases and duvet covers). Please note that we are unable to accept duvets and blankets, pillows and cushions, carpets, rugs and mats (including bath, shower and toilet mats), soiled, painted, ripped or wet clothing, school uniforms with and without logo, corporate clothing and workwear or textile off cuts, yarns or threaded material.

## Report from Asenby Parish Council

Asenby Parish Council has not met officially since the January meeting although its members have kept in touch regularly by phone and email.

When the lockdown was introduced in March the Parish Council, in conjunction with Asenby Institute Community Space, prepared a list of residents willing to help others with tasks such as shopping and collecting prescriptions. We then advertised the list of over twenty helpers, with two central contact numbers, throughout the village and very quickly the scheme was running smoothly.

At the end of March, in line with government policy, the decision was taken to close the playground and then in mid-August when restrictions began to relax, the facility was reopened, with users being responsible for ensuring that they abide by all the hygiene and social distancing requirements. The annual ROSPA inspection of the playground equipment is scheduled for mid-September.

At the village bus shelter, the Parish Council continues to monitor and maintain the defibrillator and during lockdown Heather Allon organised an excellent "lockdown library" scheme (there's more about this elsewhere in The Tattler).

The village continues to be indebted to John Slater for his regular litter patrols, to John Blair for mowing the grass verges at the southern end of the village and to David Stringer for maintaining the website.

On the planning front, there has been the usual trickle of small development schemes for consideration and in relation to highways, the Parish Council has liaised with North Yorkshire County Council to minimise disruption during various road projects.

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## Dr Charles Parker to retire

As many of you will know, Dr Charles Parker will be retiring as a GP Partner from Topcliffe Surgery at the end of September after 28 years in the post.



Charles has lived and worked in Hambleton for 30 years. Having trained in London, he moved up to work in Northallerton for a year or two and stayed. He trained to be a GP in Northallerton working at the Friarage Hospital, where his two sons were born.

Charles joined Topcliffe Surgery as a partner in 1992. The priority for the practice has been accessible, evidence-based care. For 16 years he also worked as a civilian medical practitioner for the local army barracks at Topcliffe.

He joined NHS Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby CCG as a Lead GP and when it was fully established, was appointed as a GP member of the Governing Body. He was appointed as Clinical Chair in December 2015, a role he now has with NHS North Yorkshire CCG.

We will be sad to see Charles leave and wish him every happiness in his retirement from the surgery.

Topcliffe Surgery is delighted to announce that it has appointed a new GP to start in October. Dr Alison Latin is currently based at Mowbray Surgery in Northallerton and

### Share your experiences of health and social care

Healthwatch North Yorkshire, the independent public voice for people using local health and social care services across the county, is urging people to share their experiences of health and social care to help services recover from the Covid-19.

While NHS and social care services are doing everything that they can to support us all, they need our help to know how they can improve. Healthwatch North Yorkshire listens to what people like about services and what could be improved. It shares the public's views with those with the power to make change happen. It can also signpost people to local services and support.

The charity's new campaign aims to help services identify and, more importantly, address issues people are experiencing with their care. To take a survey and read more, visit [www.healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk) or call 01904 552687.

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## The Flu Vaccine

In England about 30 million people are to be offered a free flu vaccine this year. It is to prepare for a winter that could see the annual flu season coincide with a surge in Coronavirus.

Flu, which can be deadly or need hospital treatment, poses additional threats during the pandemic. There is some evidence that a double infection with Coronavirus and flu could be more deadly than either alone and a big flu season combined with Coronavirus could overwhelm hospitals. If lots of NHS or care-home staff are sick with flu, then it may not be possible to respond to Covid-19 in the same way as during the peak in spring. But it is impossible to predict how big a flu season we will have. Social-distancing and hygiene measures in place to stop Coronavirus should, in theory, also have an impact on the amount of flu going around.

Those who will be offered a vaccine include people who were required to shield from Coronavirus and anyone they live with; people with some medical conditions including diabetes, heart failure and asthma; pregnant women; pre-school children over the age of two; all primary school children, as last year, and, for the first time, Year 7 pupils and initially all people over 65, before the programme is extended to the over-50s.

The NHS will get in contact with those who are eligible. It wants to ensure the highest risk patients are at the front of the queue when the immunisation programme starts this month. Last year around 15 million people in England were vaccinated as part of the NHS campaign, though 25 million doses were available. This year more than 30 million doses have been ordered. The vaccine will also be available privately in pharmacies and some supermarkets to adults who are not eligible for an NHS jab. It usually costs around £20.

### Make a Will Month and support hospice charity

Herriot Hospice Homecare is again organising a special Make a Will event in October.

The initiative sees participating solicitors across Hambleton and Richmondshire kindly waive their usual fees for writing or updating a will, which can normally cost between £190-£350.

Instead of the usual fee, those using the service are invited to make a donation to Herriot Hospice Homecare, a charity supporting local people across the community who are living with terminal illness and bereavement.

To register your interest, visit [www.bit.ly/hhhmawm](http://www.bit.ly/hhhmawm) and complete the form or call 01609 777413, and Herriot Hospice Homecare will send you your free email pack to get you started.

Herriot Hospice Homecare provides free personalised care to enable people to live comfortably and with dignity in their own home during the last weeks of their life. Each year, the charity supports almost 600 people in the Hambleton and Richmondshire areas.

## The good old days of Sunday Schools

Recently several local residents started a conversation on Facebook about this very old photograph of a Sunday School play staged in Topcliffe sometime in the 1950s. Vona Parker, who lives in Asenby and Wendy Jeffries, of Topcliffe, tried to put names to everyone who performed in the unnamed play at The Methodist Chapel...but there are a few names they don't know. Can you add names where the question marks are?



Front row kneeling from left to right - Ann Collison, ?, May Brewer, ?, Mrs Fraser, Joyce Rayner. Next row seated from l to r - Ralph Lawley, Gladys Barningham, Wendy Bumby, ?, Margery Earle (seated on the floor 2nd row, who wrote and directed the play), Jack Robinson, ?, Doris Bumby, Mildred Jackson, Mrs Robinson, Thelma Lawley. Back row l to r - Wilf Barningham, Rita Yeadon, ?, ?, Frances Brockhill, Derick Weighell, Mary Jacques.

If you can fill in any of the gaps get in touch with the editor - see contact details on back page.



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## Swale Navigation

### Gordon Hatton reports on "the canal that never was".

Many readers will be familiar with the ruined canal lock at Topcliffe Mill. This structure baffled me when I first moved to the village more than 25 years ago.

During the 'canal mania' period of the late 18th century the Ouse/Ure system from York to Boroughbridge and Ripon was developed, but the Swale was initially ignored.

In the 1760s a scheme was put forward by an engineer called John Grundy to make the Swale navigable from the junction with the Ure below Myton to Bedale. Work began on the construction in 1767 with plans for locks between Myton and Gatenby and two further locks on Bedale Beck.

The lock at Topcliffe was the only one ever completed (in 1769) and the others were either abandoned during construction or not built at all. The whole scheme failed through lack of money and by the end of 1769 work on the project stopped.

Lots of the canal project can still be seen today, some 250 years later. Just under a mile downstream from the A168 road bridge over the Swale there are earthworks which indicate the site of a lock that was never completed. The site is on private land below Sheephill Farm and almost opposite the narrow neck of land close to where Cod Beck joins the Swale.



*The channel and pit at the proposed lock site downstream from Topcliffe*

I visited this site in 2019 after spotting 'Old excavations for locks' printed on a 1913 edition of an Ordnance Survey map. There is a wide and shallow depression here with a deeper pit in the centre indicating where the proposed canal would have cut a corner and used a lock. Cod Beck was also to be canalised, so one has to guess that a new



*Lock Bridge at Sowerby*

cut right across the Cock Lodge/Motte and Bailey site would have been necessary to join that watercourse. This might seem like vandalism of a historic site these days, but at that time developers appear to have had free rein to do whatever they liked, so long as they did not upset major landowners.



*Mooring rings on Cod Beck in Thirsk*

Cod Beck is still a winding stream, but the section just below Thirsk does appear to have been straightened, whilst there is also the Lock Bridge just east of Sowerby main street. In Thirsk there is still a wall with mooring rings at the beck side just off Finkle Street.

Upstream from Topcliffe Mill there is little evidence of any improvement works until one reaches the confluence with Bedale Beck which is on the north-east side of Leeming Airfield.

The current Ordnance Survey map reveals that Bedale Beck has the usual twists and turns, but also some relatively straight sections where the watercourse had already been adapted for use by barges.

A short way upstream from Leeming Bridge, which is on the original route of the A1, there is an old beck-side mill building and just west of that there are the high walls of a part constructed lock.



*Bedale Harbour*

Anyone entering Bedale from the Exelby direction might be surprised to see a residential road on the right called 'Harbour View'. If you wander down to the end of this road you will come to Bedale 'harbour' where there is a wharf with mooring rings and a weir where the canal would have finished. This is perhaps the most obvious and interesting of the few remains of the failed Swale Navigation Scheme.

For a more detailed account of the scheme and particularly developments locally, I can recommend John Graham's excellent Millennium Book of Topcliffe.

## St Columba's

At the much-delayed annual church meeting held on 17 August a new Parochial Church Council (PCC) was elected comprising Joan Blair, Richard Byas, Liz Green (Treasurer), Kit Norris, Chris Hewlett and John Phillips (Vice-Chair). Roz Norris was co-opted as Secretary.

The election of Chris Hewlett as the new Churchwarden was confirmed and warm and heartfelt thanks were expressed to retiring Churchwardens Linda Carver and Liz Marsh, and also to Dave Marsh who retired from the PCC. Linda Carver's connection with the church is long and distinguished. She first joined the PCC in 1986, has served as a Churchwarden a number of times, acted as Sacristan in recent years and also done lots behind the scenes, including cleaning, gardening and providing refreshments. Liz Marsh has been instrumental in pushing for a 'level access' path to church and it is hoped that this project can still be brought to a successful conclusion.

More recently, the PCC met to consider if and how the church should be reopened for services and prayers. Bearing in mind the PCC has been reduced by more than a third and that only one member lives in Topcliffe, it was decided to concentrate limited resources available on just opening for Sunday services for the foreseeable future. The possibility of opening during the week for private visits will be considered at a later date.

The PCC is hopeful that communion services will take place every other Sunday, coordinated so as not to clash with those at Baldersby. Dates will be announced fairly soon.

If anyone from Topcliffe would be prepared to volunteer to open and close the church one day a week, that would help tremendously when consideration is given to a weekday opening. If you can help call John Phillips on 577034.

## Railings fixed at last

A long running saga in Topcliffe finally appears to have ended. Last December's edition of The Tattler reported that necessary repairs to the safety barrier along the top of Mill Bank and Station Road had been reported many times and over several years, but it was proving extremely difficult to get things put right. Well, last month North Yorkshire County Council contractors were on site and the repair job has now been completed. All's well that ends well.



The TATtler

## Asenby Bus Stop Library

Throughout lockdown residents of Asenby were able to make use of an unusual library service, based in the one and only bus shelter in the village.

Local resident Heather Allon came up with the idea as a way of giving villagers access to a wide range of reading



material and games. Heather said: I am a volunteer at Topcliffe Academy, where I help children with their reading, so I know how important it is for the children to have access to books.

"I had a surplus of books at home which I put in the bus stop and it was instantly popular as public libraries were closed due to the pandemic. The stock was constantly added to and we even had to add extra bookcases, which were donated and refurbished by local volunteers.

"After the lockdown was eased, we had to return the bus stop to its designated use, but we are continuing the library on a smaller scale."

Many thanks to Claire Phillips, Geoff Varley, Siobhan Gifford and David Allon for their support of this valuable community service.

  
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## Help a hedgehog

When was the last time you saw a hedgehog in your garden? If it's recently you are lucky. There are fewer than one million of these prickly creatures left in the UK - down 30% since 2002, which is a rate of loss similar to that of tigers globally.

Life could be much easier though... hedgehogs just need access to lots of our green spaces to survive. Yet the more we develop our gardens and community areas, the more we potentially push out this sort of natural wildlife.

All the humble hedgehog needs is for us to make a few really simple changes which could make all the difference.

You have an opportunity to help a hedgehog get ready for winter as well as improve its life when it emerges again next spring.



*Hedgehogs...in decline*

Dubbed the gardener's best friend because it eats unwelcome species, a healthy hedgehog can travel up to 2km every night and cover 20 hectares looking for food and shelter. However, it cannot get through fences and walls without help. So perhaps the easiest way to do this is to give it access in and out of your garden on all sides of your boundary.

Hedgehogs need quiet and safe places to shelter - an undisturbed dry spot against a fence or wall is good and it's simple to create the right environment with what's lying around in your garden already. Rake together a pile of dry leaves against a wall or pile up some logs or branches to provide a home.

At times when other food is scarce hedgehogs appreciate extra rations. Bread has little nutritional value for them and they are lactose intolerant so avoid bread and milk. Instead put out shallow saucers of wet dog or cat food in the evenings.

Just a little help is all that's needed...and if you're lucky you'll have hedgehogs running through your garden on a regular basis.

## Methodist Chapel Sold

The 'sold' sign has gone up at the Methodist Chapel in Topcliffe. It's understood a builder from Thirsk has purchased this important village building and intends to convert it into two apartments.

## 2020 GP Patient Survey

The results of the 2020 National GP Patient Survey, which included Topcliffe Surgery, have now been released. Topcliffe Surgery was delighted to see that it scored higher than the local and national average in every question. The surgery administrator said she and all her colleagues at the surgery would like to say a big thank you to all of their patients who responded to the survey.

SURVEY QUESTION	TOPCLIFFE SURGERY %	LOCAL CCG AVERAGE %	NATIONAL AVERAGE %
% of respondents who usually get to see or speak to their preferred GP when they would like to	87	52	45
% of respondents who were offered a choice of appointment when they last tried to make a general practice appointment	91	68	60
% of respondents who describe their experience of making an appointment good	97	75	65

**TOPCLIFFE SURGERY HAS SCORED HIGHER THAN THEIR CCG AVERAGE IN EVERY QUESTION**

For full details of the results please see: [www.gp-patient.co.uk](http://www.gp-patient.co.uk)

## Snooker Club

Fees for annual membership of Topcliffe's popular snooker club have again been held at £25 and are due now. Past members and those not planning to rejoin this year (September onwards) are asked to return their door key to David Bowman (577843).

The club, which is located on the upper floor of the Toll Booth, is always welcoming to new members. It has two tables - one full size and the other three-quarter size. Members hold their own key so can gain entry at any time to the heated accommodation. Under 18s can play but must be accompanied by an adult.



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**IT'S SO GOOD TO BE BACK!**  
From the team at The Angel we'd like to thank you for your loyal support during these difficult times

*Angel*  
**STEAK & SHIRAZ NIGHT**  
3rd THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

**STEAK FOR 2 WITH A BOTTLE OF SHIRAZ £39.95**





**Choose any 2 Steaks**  
6oz FILLET  
8oz SIRLOIN  
10oz RIB-EYE

**Choose a Sauce to Share**  
BLUE CHEESE  
PEPPERCORN  
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GARLIC BUTTER

*Served with Chips, Mushrooms, Tomato, Rocket & Parmesan Salad*

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*Angel*  
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**Steak for 2 with Wine**  
2 SUCCULENT 8oz SIRLOIN STEAKS  
Fries, Slow Roast Tomatoes  
Flat Cap Mushrooms & Choice of Sauce  
Peppercorn | Béarnaise | Garlic Butter

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**Fish for 2 with Wine**  
2 BEER BATTERED HADDOCK  
Hand Cut Chips, Mushy Peas & Tartare Sauce

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