

Villages campaign to keep HGVs out

Plans for massive new industrial expansion on the Dalton Industrial Estate have spurred our two parish councils and lots of residents into action to fight to protect our villages from increased traffic.

Although the 43-acre development will provide about a thousand new jobs and give a big boost to the local economy, there is much concern that the villages - and Topcliffe in particular - will feel the impact of through traffic unless action is taken to restrict access.

The growth of Dalton Industrial Estate over the years has led to increased heavy lorry and car traffic through Topcliffe and it is clear that many HGVs ignore the weight restrictions that are in place. New large-scale development is bound to lead to more cars and lorries, so demanding that any planning consent includes protection for our villages is the priority.

The local campaign so far

Both parish councils have raised concerns with the planners at Hambleton District Council and the highways experts at North Yorkshire County Council about traffic issues in particular, but also about the risk of other problems such as noise and smells.

Over thirty local people have so far registered their concerns, mainly about existing and future numbers of HGVs and cars passing through the villages and wanting action to control access.

Topcliffe Parish Council, with support from several villagers, has undertaken a review of traffic signs in and around both villages and on the A168. The problems with the signage have been identified and flagged with the authorities. As a result, the developer has undertaken its own review of direction and weight limit signs and offered to fund improvements if the Dalton development is approved.

A review of the developer's Transport and Travel Plan has been carried out by the parish council and villagers and its shortfalls have been pointed out to the planners and highway engineers. The developers are being pressed to put forward proposals that would see the overall number of extra vehicles driving to and from the Dalton site curtailed by introducing ideas such as car share schemes and bus services. In addition, the developers and authorities are being pushed to cut the amount of traffic coming through the villages by routing it to the A168 and by introducing planning conditions to which companies would have to adhere.

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Continued from page 1...

Lorries continue to illegally travel through our villages and photographic evidence is being passed to the county council's trading standards department, which is responsible for the Lorry Watch scheme and for enforcement action. So far over 1,000 HGVs have been reported. Discussions are taking place with highways and trading standards to get some prosecutions underway.

The number of firms based in or near Topcliffe and Asenby have grown over the years and their HGVs travelling through our narrow streets has defeated the purpose of the original weight restriction. In an attempt to deal with this issue, the county council has proposed that the boundaries of the weight restriction will be moved closer to the village itself. It is believed that this will lead to fewer lorries entering the village centres and make it easier to identify those that do so illegally.

Topcliffe Parish Council recently wrote to many local companies requesting that they instruct their drivers to avoid bringing their HGVs into the villages. This appears to be having some success.

Hambleton District Council will be determining the planning application later this month or early in July so any resident who feels strongly about the potential impacts on Topcliffe and Asenby still has time to have their say. It is important for as many people as possible to register a view - it is numbers that will influence the councils and developer's thinking! It's easy to access and add your comments, simply go to the planning website, insert the reference number 21/00331/HYB in the search box and follow the instructions:
<https://planning.hambleton.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Bags 2 School

A massive thank you to everyone who donated to the last Bags2School event held in April at the Village Hall. Through your efforts 510kg of clothes and other items were recycled, raising £153 which has been shared between the Village Hall and 1st Topcliffe Scout Group. There'll be a further recycling event in the late summer or early autumn.

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New café in Topcliffe

Topcliffe has a new place to meet friends and enjoy a drink of tea or coffee. It's the Milking Parlour tea room and it's located at the Milk Churn Farm Shop on Long Street. Besides hot and cold drinks, the café serves homemade cakes, traybakes and scones. Wheelchair access is available at the rear of the property. Customers are still being asked to maintain social distancing in the shop and café and for the time being, masks must be worn until you are seated. Takeaway teas and coffees with cake are also available. Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9-5pm. Thursday and Saturday 9-1pm.

Volunteers Required

The Community Works charity based in Thirsk is looking for volunteer van drivers to pick up furniture. They will be assisted by helpers who would do much of the lifting. Days required are Monday to Thursday, but volunteers can generally choose which day or time suits them best. If you can help, please contact Helen Ashworth Volunteer Co-Ordinator at Community Works on 524494 or e-mail helen@communityworks.uk

Deer Shed - Base Camp Plus

Although the popular Deer Shed Festival at Baldersby Park has had to be cancelled this year because of insurance uncertainties, the organisers have announced that a smaller event, Base Camp Plus, will be staged.

It will be along the lines of last year's hugely successful Base Camp, but with extra bits. The idea is to create a safe camping weekend, with plenty of space and loads of camping extras. This will include your own loo, parking next to your own pitch, plus arrangements so that you can be close to your family's and mates' pitches.

There'll be live music and comedy performances, food, drink, partying, campfires, workshops, theatre, well-being, swing-balls and anything else the organisers dream up. It will be staged over the weekend 30 July to 1 August and you can find out more on the Deer Shed website at www.deershedfestival.com



The Village Hall has reopened

Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall has reopened its doors after a fourteen-month closure due to the pandemic.

It opened for the Crime Commissioner election on 6 May and then, as restrictions eased, several classes started. Initially our two parish councils will hold their meetings in the main hall and two exercise groups, Pammy's Pilates and My Time Yoga, will restart classes on Mondays.

Bookings for new activities and one-off events, such as parties, will be possible from Monday 21 June. Already a Wednesday Lunch club is planning to launch after 21 June. Chairman Andrew Eckersley said: "No one would ever have dreamed that the village hall would be out of commission for well over a year because of Covid. We had little choice about keeping the hall closed but we now look forward to seeing it being used on a regular basis by old and new activities.



"During the pandemic we were fortunate to have some financial protection by way of grants from the government, for which we are very grateful. Whilst closed we had no income at all, but still had the usual bills to pay and to find cash for necessary maintenance including having a complete redecoration and the main hall floor resurfaced.

"We will also be giving some of that cash back to regular users who will have discounted fees for the rest of this calendar year. That should help them get their activities up and running smoothly again.

"I would like to thank my colleagues on the committee for meeting regularly online to maintain the business of running the hall during the closure period. Their commitment has been commendable."

Check out details of Village Hall events on our Facebook page.

Thirsk Food Bank has Topcliffe collection point

The Milk Churn Farm Shop is now a collection point for Thirsk Food Bank. Working in conjunction with Thirsk Rotary and Thirsk Community Works, the farm shop is now accepting donations of foodstuffs including tins, pasta, rice, biscuits, cereals, jars, crisps, juices, bottled products, soups, crisp breads, anything in packets. But please, no fresh products as there's a risk they will go to waste.

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Sir David solves bone mystery

When Church Street resident Mandi Labuschagne found an interesting bone whilst out walking along Catton Lane she wondered what animal or bird it could have come from...and rather than mess about she went straight to the top to find out!

Mandi thought the interestingly shaped bone might be the skull of some mysterious creature, but she and her friends couldn't identify exactly what it was. So, not to beat about the bush, she photographed it and sent it with a letter to the most famous natural historian she could think of, Sir David Attenborough.

Not long afterwards a lovely letter from Sir David popped through Mandi's letterbox in which he gave his thoughts on what the bone might be. He states: "It is certainly not a skull. It has no sockets for teeth, no hinges for a lower jaw and no brain case. I think, almost certainly, it is the breastbone of a bird, a sternum to use the technical name. The central ridge provides an attachment for the wing muscles, the white 'breast' meat that you carve from a chicken, one in each side.



He goes on, "What kind of a bird is a more difficult question. It was certainly a powerful flyer for its flight muscles must have been very large to require such big attachments: and the two holes are an indication that keeping weight to a minimum was important. My guess from that, and from its overall size, is that it belonged to a seagull of some kind."

Dear Mandi,

Thank you for your letter and the photographs of the interesting bone that you found by the roadside.

It is certainly not a skull. It has no sockets for teeth, no hinges for a lower jaw, and no brain case. I think, almost certainly, that it is the breastbone of a bird - a sternum, to use the technical name. The central ridge provides an attachment for the wing muscles, the white 'breast' meat that you carve from a chicken, one in each side

What kind of a bird is a more difficult question. It was certainly a powerful flyer for its flight muscles must have been very large to require such big attachments; and the two holes are an indication that keeping weight to a minimum was an important. My guess from that, and from its overall size, is that it belonged to a seagull of some kind.

Best wishes
David Attenborough

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Garry Key: thanks for your service

The appearance of a notice on the Village hall noticeboard announcing the resignation of Garry Key from the Parish Council marked the end of an era in Topcliffe.

Garry, who has not been in the best of health lately, resigned his seat after serving twenty-three years as a parish councillor and over twenty as its chairman. He was first co-opted on to the council in 1998 when John Graham was in charge. A year later he became vice chairman and the following year he was selected as chairman.

Garry has fond memories of his time in office, but he acknowledges that there were many challenges. He loved liaising with residents, local businesses and local authorities to identify problems and find sensible solutions to sort them out.

Van Chaud supports Air Ambulance

Mother and daughter team Jen and Issy Gould raised £410 for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance when they served Topcliffe and Asenby villagers with coffee and crepes from their new refreshments van during lockdown.

Jen Gould, who lives at The Granary on the Topcliffe Mill site, bought the classic 1969 Citroen van pre-lockdown but her plans to launch her new enterprise, Van Chaud (Hot Van), were thwarted by the pandemic.

But as the lockdown eased, Jen and Issy decided to launch their business by inviting residents to sample the refreshments, with all takings being donated to the Yorkshire Air Ambulance. The 'test run' gave the catering team some excellent practice, experience and feedback that will be invaluable as they launch out to cater at private functions, garden parties, food markets and festivals.



Issy and Jen hand over a huge cheque to Tessa

Tessa Klemz, North Yorkshire Community Fundraiser for Yorkshire Air Ambulance, collected the donation and said: "It has been a challenging year for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance and the support and generosity we receive really is the lifeblood of our charity. Van Chaud's generous donation provides a valuable boost to our funds and will help greatly towards the £12,000 a day it costs to keep both of Yorkshire's air ambulances flying across the region and saving lives."

Topcliffe residents are used to seeing the yellow helicopter flying overhead as one of the Air Support Units is based at RAF Topcliffe.

He remembers the hard work that had to be put in to raise thousands of pounds to get the parish land in front of the Post Office tarmacadamed, only for several utility companies to arrive days later and dig it all up! "That was really frustrating, but we managed to persuade them to properly reinstate the area and pay substantial damages as well", he said.



Over the years considerable time and effort was given over to getting decent play equipment installed on the playing field...and then keeping it properly maintained and suitable for safe use by the children of the village. It took an enormous amount of time and effort but was well worth it, he says.

Garry, who also served as a governor at Topcliffe School for seven or eight years, was always looking for practical solutions to problems. He persuaded a local company to pay for fruit trees to be planted at the school so that children could care for them, use them for nature studies and then pick their own fruit. It was a win-win situation.

Garry refers to the development of the Sheepwash, various projects at the Toll Booth and the parish's backing for the Millennium Book of Topcliffe as projects that took much time and effort, but he particularly remembers the Magna Carta celebrations in 2015 and the pride he took in establishing the links Topcliffe had to that historic event. He managed to get a grant of £4,500 to spend on village activities and lots of events were arranged.

Planning matters have always been interesting and often contentious. Garry says the parish council was consulted on hundreds during his tenure and just a few created real problems for the village.

Being a parish councillor is a voluntary role and it can be very demanding. Being chairman can bring extra pressures but Garry always believed he was serving the village and he carried out his duties with commitment and dedication. He says it was an honour and privilege to lead the parish council for such a long time and he now wants to thank everyone who gave him support and helped him and his colleague councillors get so much done.

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Nursery Class

Nursery children at Topcliffe Academy celebrated World Book Day earlier this year by reading Real Superheroes, a book that recognises all the amazing people who have worked very hard over the last year throughout the pandemic. The children enjoyed a day dressing up as real superheroes, including doctors, police officers, postal workers, chefs and many more characters. They also created a 'gallery of hope and thanks' making rainbows in as many ways they could think of.



Air Ambulance on our doorstep

Everyday, residents of Topcliffe and Asenby see and hear a bright yellow air ambulance flying low over our villages on its way to an emergency somewhere in the county.

There are two state-of-the-art Airbus H145 helicopters in Yorkshire Air Ambulance's fleet - one based here at RAF Topcliffe and the other serving south and west Yorkshire from Nostell, near Wakefield.

Last year Yorkshire Air Ambulance (YAA) responded to 1,365 incidents across Yorkshire and treated 922 patients. These call outs can be to major road accidents or to transport critically ill patients to hospital. The crews provide a life-saving rapid response emergency service to a population of five million people and the service operates seven days a week, 365 days a year and currently attends an average of four incidents every single day.



Each helicopter has a highly trained pilot, and two critical care paramedics. They are dispatched from the charity's own dedicated air desk to ensure they are sent to the most urgent incidents across the county. Night vision equipment enables the air ambulances to fly in darkness, extending operational hours to earlier in the mornings and later in the evenings.

Recently each air ambulance has been equipped to carry blood supplies which means that critically injured patients can receive vital transfusions at the scene of accidents or in the air.

YAA paramedics are seconded from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust and if you think you recognise some of them in the photograph that's probably because you have seen them in action in the Discovery Channel series 'Helicopter ER'.

2020 was a turbulent year for YAA: operating during the Covid pandemic was not without difficulties, but the charity overcame the problems. It was the charity's twentieth year of operations and during that time it has flown more than 8,000 patients to major trauma centres for treatment.

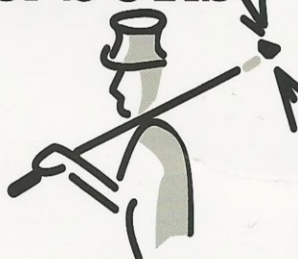
To keep both of air ambulances maintained and in the air costs £12,000 every day, which is the equivalent of £4.4m a year. It's only the generosity of local fundraisers who ensure the costs are met and that the helicopters are there to save lives when they are needed.

To find out how you can donate to the Yorkshire Air Ambulance visit: www.yaa.org.uk

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St Columba News

Plans are being made to celebrate Saint Columba, our church's patron saint. There'll be a special Choral Eucharist on Sunday 13 June at 10.45am led by the Archdeacon of Cleveland, the Venerable Dr Amanda Bloor. St Columba's Choir will sing a favourite setting of the service composed by Kit Norris.

The heritage event normally held in June has had to be postponed until next year, but there will be village picnic in the churchyard from about 12 noon onwards after the Saint Columba Service. Please bring your families and friends, food, drinks, rugs and chairs. Descriptive tours and visits up the tower will be available from time to time during the afternoon. Both these events will be adapted as necessary to keep everyone covid safe.

Various working parties are being organised to tidy up the churchyard. Dates are Saturdays 5 and/or 12 June, 10am to 12noon and 2pm to 4pm. Please do come along: your help will be very much appreciated.

The Attic Auction will be held in the Village Hall is planned for 5th September. Donations from your attics, cupboards, sheds and garages on the day from 8am are welcome. We will confirm nearer the date that this event can still go ahead.

If you have any queries about St Columba's Day, the churchyard Tidy-Up or the Attic Auction, contact John Phillips 577034.

Lunch will be served!

Now that the pandemic is ending, kind-hearted Topcliffe residents Karen Morley and Linda Carver plan to restart the popular soup and sweet lunch in the Village Hall. They'll be held fortnightly starting 12 noon on Wednesday 23 June.

They aim to provide an opportunity for older and younger folk to meet and socialise in a friendly atmosphere whilst enjoying a light lunch. Instead of paying a set price for lunch, customers will be asked to make a small donation according to their means. Any surplus will be donated to a different charity each week.

New Police & Crime Commissioner

Philip Allott has been elected North Yorkshire's new Police & Crime Commissioner. The former pupil of King James' School, Knaresborough and former leader of the Conservatives on Harrogate Borough Council, achieved a significant victory in last month's elections.

Military Challenge

Soldiers of the 4th Regiment Royal Artillery Regiment based at Alanbrooke Barracks have set themselves a target of completing five gruelling endurance challenges this year to raise funds for two charities - The REME Charity and Forever Fourth. Both charities do tremendous work to support military personnel and their families. They aim to raise at least £1,500. The next event is a five-day coastal ride on 28 June. If you would like to give sponsorship, please visit:

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/james-phillips-616



THE MILKING PARLOUR *Tea Room*

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Honey with passion!

It's not often that a hobby morphs into a full time job, but that's exactly what happened when Rachel and Colin Tyreman's passion for bees shifted up a gear and developed into a wonderful small business.

Rachel and Colin - who run Asenbee Honey based, of course, in Asenby - now produce honey on a significant scale and also run a web and social media sites promoting their products.

Asenbee Honey is a local 'small batch' honey producer with several apiaries in and around the village and on local farms, where supportive farmers provide land on which hives can be sited and giving access to some wonderful forage for the bees.

Rachel says that the production of honey will be much later this year because honeybees and other pollinators struggled to cope with cold spring weather. But she adds that we can all do little things to help, such planting up a pot or wall basket with pollen or nectar rich plants. Herbs, such as oregano and thyme, are often overlooked but can be a wonderful source of food for bees.

In addition to honey production, Rachel makes beeswax candles. As they contain no chemicals and produce negative ions, they are renowned for being the cleanest candles you can burn.

You can purchase honey (when it is available), the beeswax candles and some lovely hand carved spoons and oak chopping boards at www.asenbeehoney.co.uk and honey is also stocked locally at The Milk Churn Farm Shop in Topcliffe and The Teatime Café in Thirsk.

You can also get honey updates by checking Asenbee Honey on Instagram and Facebook @asenbeehoney.

Swarming bees

Just a few warm days can encourage bees to swarm and even the presence of other bees in the area can influence their activity. Last year Rachel and Colin were called out to collect a couple of swarms in the Asenby area. She wants villagers to know that if they spot a swarm - possibly hanging in a tree or attached to a wall - it is best left alone as the bees will be mostly docile. Rachel and Colin are happy to offer any advice or help to remove and relocate any bees that are found. The contact number is 07877 343742.



Rachel and Colin looking after their bees

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Topcliffe Parish Update

After 20 years serving on the parish council, Garry Key has decided it is the right time to announce his resignation.

Garry was our longest serving chairman and guided the parish council through many projects over the years. Some examples are the Magna Carta celebrations, upgrading and refurbishment of the children's play area and playing fields and developing the Sheepwash to its current position. Garry also served as our district councillor for a number of years and represented the parish council as a governor at Topcliffe Primary School. You cannot replace the experience and expertise that Garry brought to the parish council and he will be sorely missed.

The parish council is representing the village on a number of fronts, including:



Mill Bank walls repaired

Dalton Industrial Estate development: the proposal is likely to go to the planning committee in June or July. Both parish councils are pushing hard to try to ensure the development does not result in significantly more traffic - HGVs or cars - coming through the village. It is important that individuals register their concerns on the Hambleton planning portal, which so far over 30 residents have done.

Full details of a series of reports submitted to the developers and the planners highlighting the issues, the actions to date, the current situation and how you can help can be found on the village website www.topcliffe.org.uk

Enforcement of HGV weight restriction: lorries continue to illegally drive through the village. Over 1,000 have now been photographed and reported to the Trading Standards Department via the Lorry Watch scheme. Discussions are taking place with the Director of Highways, the Head of Trading Standards and our county councillor about ways to deal with the problem. It has been agreed that Trading Standards will undertake some enforcement action in the villages and prosecute offending HGVs. The village website contains full details of the current situation.

Infrastructure Projects: The repairs to Mill Bank are nearing completion after several months work.

The county council's bridges department commissioned and paid for the work and our sincere thanks go to all concerned for an excellent job. They also repaired the footpath steps while doing the work, which was much appreciated.

Work is due to start on the Toll Booth and Jubilee Gardens wall/railings. The Toll Booth is a listed building and as such it is the village's responsibility to maintain it. A grant of £10,000 has been obtained which will go a long way towards the total cost. The work will be done by a local stone mason, Dave Edwards, of Northern Walls based in Baldersby.

Surgery has a new website

As more people than ever are using smart phones and tablets with internet access on the go, Topcliffe Surgery is following the trend and has re-launched its website in a mobile friendly format.

The all-new site has lots of information, including details of services, patient information, Covid-19 updates and other news. There are also helpful links for patients such as patient online services and self care advice for minor ailments.

The surgery is planning that all future announcements regarding services and will be made on the website, so it's hoped patients will familiarise themselves with its contents and visit it on a regular basis to check for any changes.

This is another tool that the surgery is employing to provide the best possible service to its patients. Please go to: www.topcliffesurgery.co.uk



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1st Topcliffe Scout Group

The 1st Topcliffe Scout group, which covers scouts, cubs and beavers, is desperately seeking more volunteers to act as assistant leaders and give support to the existing leaders.

Scouting remains one of the most popular activities for young people and Topcliffe scout sections are attracting growing numbers of youngsters. The team of leaders is dedicated to providing a quality scouting experience with informative and exciting fun-packed programmes.

Beaver members are aged 6 to 8 and cubs cater for those aged eight to ten and a half years of age. Both meet on Wednesday evenings. Scouts take those aged ten and a half to fourteen and they meet Friday nights.

No experience is necessary and training will be given to provide volunteers with the confidence and knowhow to become part of our caring group.

Anyone interested is asked to call Group Scout Leader, Stuart Carter for a chat on 01765 640360 or email carter-stuart@btconnect.com

www.Topcliffe.org.uk
www.Asenby.net

Keep up to date with Parish information, meeting minutes, the TATtler, pictures of Topcliffe, Asenby and a copy of the Millennium Book of Topcliffe.



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Friends of Topcliffe School

Despite the pandemic, the volunteers who work to support our local school have been very active and have raised a significant amount of cash in the last year. We can't do this unless we get enthusiastic support from teachers and parents, so I would like to offer a huge thank you to everyone who has offered their support in any way

Our group, Friends of Topcliffe Schools - known as FoTs - tried to come up with fund raising ideas that did not involve any social contact...and we were very successful. Among the events held were:

The Easter Trail, organised by Karen Hotham, was enjoyed by many children around Topcliffe and Asenby and it raised £85. Karen's next project will be a fancy dress-themed fundraiser.

Emilia Brierley created Hamma Bead key rings and raised £80. Thank you Emilia.

Our bags to school collection in April raised £102. We will look to organise another collection in September.

Children in the villages had a great time tackling the recent 'Smartie Tube challenge' and they definitely got lots of extra jobs done around their houses...as well as raising £366.

I'd like to mention school lottery and thanks everyone who has supported it over the years. I'd also like remind Tattler readers that they can sign up anytime for as little as £1 per week. There's a cash winner every week and each ticket has a chance to win a jackpot of £25,000. Check it out at www.yourschoollottery.co.uk

For the coming months we are planning a bake sale and, if we get sufficient donations, will hold a preloved uniform sale. Please dig out any unwanted or outgrown uniform items and leave them at the school marked for Lucy Day's attention.

Finally, we are looking for new fun ways to raise money and people to help. If you would like to join FoTs please get in touch with me via our Facebook page or via the school.

Jenny Bumby, Chair of FoTs

Snooker club reopens

The snooker club is now open again and pairs and doubles games are allowed. Responsibility for hygiene and cleanliness rests with snooker players who are advised that there is no system for daily cleaning of the tables and equipment. Players are advised to use hand sanitiser and to clean the table edges, club cues and balls before and after play.

Thanks to all members who have renewed their membership for this year. Membership can still be taken up for the remainder of this year, and fees for the new membership year will be due in September.

The snooker facility is a 'key club' meaning all members have their own key so they can gain access at any time. It's expensive having to continually have more keys cut so could any past members who are still in possession of a key please return it to the Treasurer, Dave Bowman, on 577843.

Old Topcliffe Chapel

One of Topcliffe's most prominent buildings, which has stood empty for seven years, is about to get a new lease of life as a family home.

The Methodist Chapel on the corner of Church Street and Long Street has been bought by Stephen and Eloise Horley and they are planning a sympathetic conversion into a four-bedroomed family home with a new name, Old Topcliffe Chapel

Stephen - a builder with lots of experience of converting old buildings for new uses - believes that his plans will provide a fantastic new property on a prominent corner within the village. He said: "Eloise and I purchased the chapel to convert into our home. We think Topcliffe is a lovely village in which we will be very happy to live... and our family will love to visit."



"We bought the chapel with full planning approval for a four bedroomed home, but we wanted to put our own stamp on the conversion, making better use of the character and features of the building. The

original plans seemed to undervalue the building's history and many of the features were hidden or to be removed. Our plan is to retain and enhance them."

So, the first thing the couple did once the purchase was complete was to bring in Ben Wears Pyramid Designs to prepare fresh plans that would save and present key features and create a new home without destroying an important part of the village's history.

"It's still going to be a four bedroomed home", says Eloise, "but we want to have an open plan design, keeping the main beam and incorporating a new T shaped staircase with view of the archway that houses the magnificent organ. All bedrooms are on the upper floor with a landing going all around with banister rails so you'll be able to see the staircase and open plan ground floor. We also wanted to maintain the vaulted ceilings as they are one of the most impressive features of the 180 year-old building."

The ground floor will be open plan with a living room, dining room and games room. The old vestry and kitchen will be knocked into one to create an ultra-modern kitchen linked to main open plan area.

The pulpit is to be relocated within the building and it's hoped that the decorative organ pipes and surrounding detailed woodwork can be included in the design. Any parts that can't be used will be found a new home where they can be of use.

The original planning approval included the demolition of the old Sunday school building, but we think it would be a shame to lose it and would rather convert it for use as a

garage. The Horleys have submitted new plans that show how they would retain it and install an electric roller shutter door so that it doesn't open up onto the footpath.

Plans have been submitted for a loft conversion to incorporate a games room and cinema.

On the exterior of the huge building, the walls will be renovated and the metal railings will be refurbished. It's even possible that railings will be reinstalled at the front of the chapel as shown in old photographs of the building. All windows and doors will have to be removed as they are rotten and unusable, but all replacement sash windows will be appropriate for a Grade 2 listed building located in a Conservation area.

It's hoped that one of the windows facing Long Street can be opened up to make a doorway into the garden area where the couple have plans to construct a pond to house their prized fish.

What happened to the ball finial?

As this photograph shows, the roof of the Methodist Chapel was originally decorated with a huge ball finial. Does anyone know what happened to it?

A potted history of the Chapel

The original chapel on the site was built around 1802 on land owned by John Plummer of Topcliffe.

The foundation stone for the existing chapel was laid by Mrs Dresser, wife of the owner of Topcliffe Mill, in July 1840 and the opening service took place in October of the same year.

It was said that Topcliffe chapel was heated by "one of the biggest stoves in Methodism".

In the 1950s the numbers attending services started to drop and in 2014, the chapel's closure was announced.

In 2019 plans were submitted to convert the chapel into a four-bedroomed house.

In 2020 the property was purchased, with planning permission, by Stephen and Eloise Horley and they applied for variations to the plans to suit their own requirements.



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