

St Columba's Festival and Heritage Day

The annual celebration of Columba, the Patron Saint of our parish church, and the church's amazing heritage will take place on Sunday 7 June.



St Columba's was founded between 635 and 640AD by King, later Saint Oswald, meaning we are moving ever closer to beginning our 1400th anniversary celebrations in just nine years' time.



However, plans for this year's celebration will be somewhat simpler, including the annual village BBQ in the church hall and churchyard, starting at 12.30pm, to which everyone is very warmly invited. Please take with you your preferred wine and soft drinks, though some will be available. And if you would like to take along a salad and/or cake to share that would be most kind and helpful.

Then, from 2pm, why not join one of the groups climbing the church tower to enjoy the magnificent views from the top? The last group will leave at 4pm. For those without a head for heights you might wish to linger over the various display boards in the church, or join a guided tour to discover in more detail the history of the church and its features, some still remaining from the medieval church even after the Victorian rebuild. Or else just enjoy exploring the beautiful churchyard, an important village 'greenspace', which is now emerging thanks to the tireless work and dedication of our team of local volunteers.



The Thomas de Topcliffe Brass

The day concludes at 6.30pm with a festival service of Choral Evensong sung by the full church choir directed by Linda Hewlett. Choral Evensong is said by some to be the jewel in the crown of Anglican church music and we are lucky to have this sung every month throughout the year. So why not come give it a try and end your busy day with some glorious music, followed by a glass of wine?

All events, BBQ included, are completely free, but if you would like to give a donation to help cover a few costs and hopefully also add to our much-needed building repair and maintenance fund, that would be very much appreciated.

The Angel Inn is Yorkshire's top pub

The Angel Inn Topcliffe was crowned Yorkshire Pub of the Year 2026 at the My Local Awards in March. Naturally Dave and Maggie and their team are absolutely over the moon at the achievement. Maggie said: "This award means the world to us and wouldn't be possible without our incredible team and every single one of our amazing customers who support us week in, week out. Thank you for your votes, your visits, and for making The Angel Inn what it is - a proper Yorkshire local."

Ladies Pop-up Shop & Fun Fashion Show

Buy your favourite high street brands at really low prices. Friday 19 June at 7pm - at Dalton Village Hall. To raise funds for new tables and chairs. Tickets £5 include a glass of prosecco if purchased in advance. Call Beckii on 07734 474781.

Saltburn Smugglers

All admission tickets for the show were sold out months ago but raffle tickets are still for sale to anyone whether they are going to the concert on Sunday 28 June or not. Get raffle tickets in advance from Jane Gallon on 07909 614086 or Catherine Catterick on 07709 321048.

The Sunday Email

Next week's Sunday Email will be the 318th edition. It originated during the first days of the Covid pandemic in 2020 and for many residents it continues to be a popular read over Sunday morning breakfast. Anyone who wants to be added to the circulation can register by going to www.dougallan.co.uk

Nya's big steps for charity

Eight-year-old Nya Watson, who lives with her parents Lucy and Mark in Topcliffe, has completed an impressive walking challenge alongside her faithful dog Renley, raising more than £1,600 for charity in the process.



Inspired after watching Crufts, Nya signed up for the Stand Up To Cancer Walkies Challenge, setting herself and Renley the goal of walking 60 miles during April in support of Cancer Research UK. Thanks to their determination - and the generosity of friends, family and local supporters - they successfully reached their target. So far, the pair have raised a fantastic £1,318 in sponsorship, with Gift Aid adding a further £305.75.



Nya's achievement has earned praise across the community, with many admiring her commitment and compassion for a cause that touches so many lives. Although the challenge is now complete, donations are still being accepted. Anyone wishing to support Nya's fundraising efforts can visit:

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/marks-giving-page-272644?nu=1>



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Warm Hub and Soup & Sweet Meals

The team that for seven years or so has organised winter meals under the banner 'Warm Hub' and lighter 'Soup and Sweet' lunches throughout the summer, has reluctantly decided that now is the time to stop these regular events. The small group of volunteers has shown staggering commitment to the community by preparing and serving meals on a fortnightly basis, but the final regular lunches will be on Wednesdays 10 and 24 June.

Richard Byas said: "It is extremely sad that the fortnightly lunch sessions will come to an end, but the very small group of volunteers feel that the amount of work involved has simply become too much. I'm sure that many regulars will really miss the opportunity to meet their friends and neighbours for a bite to eat, but there's a limit to what can be asked of individuals in terms of their dedication, financial contribution and time commitment."

Karen Morley, a key team member who has been responsible for organising and preparing food for the lunches, added: "Running the Warm Hub has been a labour of love but after so many years, the core team of volunteers feel that the event has run its course. We loved helping the community and it's clear that lots of new friendships have been made over lunch during the last seven years. And, remarkably, around £10,000 has been raised and donated to local charities, including the Village Hall."

All is not lost however as the volunteers have indicated that they hope to organise occasional brunches, lunches or teas to specifically support local charities and good causes, such as the senior citizen's Boccia club, the community newsletter, The Tattler, and the Blue Cross animal rescue centre. And, of course, those volunteers who have traditionally helped out at specific events, such as the summer and Christmas fairs, will continue to do so.

Editor's Note: *I am sure that residents of Topcliffe and Asenby, particularly those who were regular customers at the Warm Hub lunches, will wish to join with me in thanking all of the volunteers who have run the regular lunches over the last seven years. Their commitment, dedication and personal generosity has been remarkable. They say 'all good things must come to an end', and the lunches have certainly been provided for much longer than originally anticipated. Nonetheless, it is a shame that the lunches are ending. They will be missed by many, not just for the food, but also for the regular opportunity to get together with friends and neighbours.*

Music and pizza treat at The Angel

There's a treat in store for those visiting The Angel Inn's beer garden for pizzas on Friday 28 August.

Following his amazingly successful visit

last month solo singer and guitarist, Leon Marshall, has been invited back. He will be entertaining the crowd with his extensive repertoire whilst his audience enjoy delicious pizzas. But please remember, outdoor dining is weather dependent.



THE SWAN AT TOPCLIFFE - your local pub



Here comes summer! As the weather improves and we experience warmer days what could be better than a visit to your local pub to quench your thirst and enjoy your favourite food? Here at The Swan, there's a warm welcome for everyone.

The Swan is a traditional hostelry serving good quality food and a wide variety of beers, lagers, wines and spirits...both indoors and out.

We serve a full menu on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. Tuesday evening is 'Basket' meals only. Wednesday is also Pie Night when we offer a selection of pie, chips and peas dishes. On Sunday we serve traditional Sunday lunches plus a range of specials. Please book early to avoid disappointment.



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Rug Mats

The Rugs Mat classes held at the Village Hall on alternate Tuesdays since early May have been a great success...and now the sessions are likely to continue indefinitely.

There are planned classes at 10am on Tuesdays, 16 and 30 June and 14 July. Details of more dates will be released soon.

If you are interested in joining this class, please pop along on any of the dates listed. The class leader is Helen Shakespeare. The cost is just £5 a session per person and initially all equipment and materials will be provided to get people started, but those who catch the rug making bug will be encouraged to purchase their own tools and seek out their own materials.



The Flying Oysters

Top north east band, The Flying Oysters, has been booked for another performance later this year at the Village Hall. It'll be on Saturday 7 November. Organiser Doug Allan promises another fantastic evening of music and dancing, along with an excellent pie and pea supper. Funds raised will help support the Village Hall. More details and ticket sales nearer the date.



Topcliffe Summer Fair

This year's annual summer fair at Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall will be held on Saturday 1 August between 10am and 2pm. Besides a variety of stalls and a raffle, the summer fair will include brunch - bacon sandwiches and veggie option and endless mugs of coffee or tea. Funds raised on the day will help support the Village Hall.

Organiser, Karen Morley says there's still a few stalls available for crafters, groups, charities or other organisations that would like to be involved. They are available at just £10. Please contact Karen on 07736 086369.

Watch out for more details on Top Residents nearer the date.

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Heroes in Harnesses

Two years ago, Asenby couple Amy and Peter Samuels adopted Henry, a former guide dog that had been in service to a blind person in Holmfirth for the previous five and a half years. Here they tell their adoption story and speak of their admiration for guide dogs, which they describe as 'heroes in harnesses'.

Amy and Peter moved to Asenby in June 2022 and were quickly impressed by the wonderful walking opportunities in North Yorkshire's countryside. They decided they should have a dog and whilst looking at how best to proceed were made aware that it was possible to adopt a retired guide dog. After much consideration they put in an application and were advised the process could take at least six months, but if they had heard nothing in that time frame they should assume they had been unsuccessful.



Henry the Ambassador

"The great news was that we were successful and were paired with Henry, a black Labrador", says Amy. "Many residents of Topcliffe and Aseby will have met Henry on his walks around the villages. The funny thing is that most people know Henry's name, but few will know mine or Peter's name. That's just the way it is with us dog walkers."

Raising a puppy to be a guide dog is a long and costly process. Henry was with his Puppy Raiser from around eight weeks until about 14 months. During this time he would have been taught basic obedience, socialisation and been shown new environments. Then he would have progressed to formal, intensive training at a Guide Dog Centre in Leeds - affectionately known as 'Big School'. Part of this six-month training would have involved navigating traffic, avoiding obstacles and learning about 'intelligent disobedience', which importantly involves refusing a command if it is unsafe.

Afterwards, Henry will have attended 'Class Training' at which he'd be paired with a handler and they would have spent time learning how to work together and to complete his training.

"Having adopted Henry, we contacted his Puppy Raiser who lives in Northallerton" says Amy. "She introduced us to the Dales and District Guide Dogs fundraising group and we both became accredited volunteers and Henry became an ambassador. We now give talks and organises events to raise funds and awareness for the charity."

"The cost of raising a guide dog through to their retirement is over £100,000, so finding the money through fundraising for this important activity is essential. The Dales and District group, has a stall at the Thirsk and Sowerby Festival on Sunday 2 August and group members will be there with their working dogs, along with some at the puppy stage of training. We'll be there with Henry, of course.

"If anybody does see us around the villages walking Henry please don't hesitate to stop for a chat and ask any questions about the charity and the dogs...the heroes in harnesses."

Repair Cafe

The next Repair Cafe at Thirsk Library, Meadowfields, will be on Saturday 20 June between 10am and 12.30pm. Be greener by avoiding waste and save money by letting a team of dedicated and talented volunteers try to repair your broken items. Voluntary donations.

Thirsk Farmers' Market

Sunday 7 June between 9am and 2pm on the Market Place, Thirsk. All stallholders are local independent businesses who grow, rear or produce the food or drink on their stall. They're passionate about what they do and it shows.



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Asenby Parish Council

Regular meetings of Asenby Parish Council for the rest of this year:

Wednesdays 3 June
2 September
2 December

All meetings take place at 7pm in the upper committee room in the Village Hall.



Snooker Club

It's not many villages that can boast having its own snooker club. But Topcliffe can and its membership goes from strength to strength.

The club is located on the upper floor of the Toll Booth in the centre of Topcliffe and it has two tables - one full size and one three-quarter size.

The number of members has held up well despite the uncertainty over the club's future caused by the Parish Council's desire to sell the Grade II listed building. Currently there's 32 members, and new players living in Topcliffe and Asenby would be welcome.

Members have their own key so that they can pop in to play at any time. Table lights are controlled by a meter and the cost is just 50p for twenty minutes.

Club membership fees have been held at £30 for 2025/26 and this is the third year in a row there has been no increase. Fees for 2026/27 will be decided by the club committee at its meeting in September. Enquiries about membership should be made to David Bowman on 01845 577843.

Any former members who have not handed back their key are asked to arrange to return them as soon as possible. Getting more keys cut is an expensive business that the club would prefer to avoid. Call David if you have a key to hand in.

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Topcliffe Parish Update

At the May meeting of Topcliffe Parish Council, the Chair Jamie Moores presented his annual report. This article includes the key points:

The Toll Booth: One year ago, I reported that the future of the Toll Booth is a major issue for the village and that the Council has made the whole village aware of the consequences if nothing is done. It was made clear that the Parish Council's view is that the building should be sold to ensure it is preserved and maintained, while the village is protected from the associated costs and risks. At that time a volunteer group indicated that they wished to try to keep the building for community purposes and set about working on a plan for its possible future use and seeking the funds to restore it. Councillors supported their efforts.

Regretfully, one year on the volunteer group has yet to deliver: there is no plan and no fund raising. So again, every household is going to be asked for a view. Should the Toll Booth be sold or kept? The latest structural survey (January 2026) is available on the Topcliffe village website.

If the Toll Booth is to be retained, a key date for the Parish Council is 1 November at which point a decision would need to be made to double the council tax precept for 2027 to raise funds for the necessary refurbishment. It will cost the average Topcliffe household a minimum of £100 per year for three years... but probably much more. The funds would only preserve the structure of the building, not allow for a new use or ongoing maintenance. And importantly, it also does not provide for significant repairs to the beams supporting the floor of the snooker club. The surveyors have expressed a serious concern about this.

The Parish Council survey of residents to find out their views is imminent, and might even have got underway as this edition of The Tattler arrives through letterboxes. Every household will be able to offer one response to the survey.

Traffic: The amount of traffic through our village continues to increase and cause significant issues in our village. The growing developments in and around Topcliffe will mean more traffic, unless controlled. It is also worth noting every village in the area has similar problems. I don't think any of us believed that four years on we would still be arguing with North Yorkshire Council Highways about ANPR cameras and illegal HGV traffic. At a recent meeting with the Highways Director there was support for our plight and an early response was promised.

We need to push for ANPR cameras to control speeding and we will need volunteers to manage the VAS signs in the village. So far no one has volunteered.

Planning and the future:

The latest planning approval for a biomethane plant at Sandhutton is likely to have a significant impact on our



village. The plant is anticipated to have over 200 lorry movements daily once operations are at their peak. Both Highways and Planning departments suggest that all surrounding villages are protected, but they acknowledge that they fail to enforce restrictions. This is well known in the HGV driver community, so obviously they flout the law.

Development of Dalton 49 is progressing, so there are obvious implications on traffic volume in the pipeline.

In the coming years Dishforth airfield will be developed and, although not yet certain, the Alanbrooke Barracks site may be sold by the MOD for development.

The call for land for housebuilding is still current and again, if approved, there could be major changes in our area as there is at least one Topcliffe site on the plan. It is essential that we all keep our eye on developments and make our views known as strongly as possible to the planners at the appropriate time.

Thanks: There are number of people who deserve our thanks for the hard work they do, often unseen and rarely appreciated. Thanks to:

Dan Sladden our North Yorkshire councillor has been very helpful and supportive. Forthcoming boundary changes and North Yorkshire Council elections next year mean Dan will no longer be our councillor.

Parish Clerk Alex Robson is a real asset and works behind the scenes keeping the Parish Council in order and dealing with a myriad of things most villagers never see.

Mark Robson, who cuts the village grass and does an excellent job for Topcliffe.

Councillors, namely Chris Bumby, Andrew Eckersley, Roy Beckwith and Ben Collard. It has been a difficult year and they have faced unwarranted abuse and anger in council meetings. Their ability, honesty and integrity have all been unfairly questioned. They all give their time freely and do not deserve this in anyway.

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Parish Council will be at 7pm on Thursday 2 July in the Village Hall.

Open Day at Parrot Sanctuary

Morndyke Parrot Sanctuary is holding an open day on Sunday 28 June between 10am and 4pm. It's a restricted event with just 36 slots available for visits to the cages and close encounters with the birds. Each slot is 30 minutes inside the aviary. Maximum six people in at any given time.

Morndyke is the only parrot sanctuary in Europe that runs a mixed aviary ecosystem on this scale and with species diversity. Pre-booking required: £18 pp. Must be 8yrs and above.

Email contact@morndykeparrotsanctuary.org.uk to book a slot. First come, first served.

Payment required at the time of booking. Bank Transfer to: Morndyke Parrot Sanctuary Sort Code: 20-59-43 Account Number: 33268462.



A ladies nature evening

Join a 'Curious by Nature' relaxed and welcoming outdoor evening either on your own or with friends. Cook tea over the fire using fresh farm ingredients and practice fire-lighting and outdoor cooking skills. Try your hand at woodcraft or decorate pre-loved glassware with stained glass painting and give it a new life. Or if you prefer, bring a book, unwind, and soak in the peaceful surroundings. Saturday 13 June from 6 to 8pm at Baldersby Park, Topcliffe. All tools and materials for activities provided, including fresh ingredients to cook a delicious shared meal. Hot drinks and juice. £16.50 per adult. Feel free to bring your own drink or tippie to enjoy throughout the evening.

<https://booking.page/en/company/book/curiousbynature?book=1>

Gardeners' Question Time in Sessay

A special Gardeners' Question Time is being held at Sessay Village Hall on Saturday 13 June. Tickets are just £10 online from:

www.sessayvillagehall.co.uk or from Heather Dale on 07467 549302. Best to buy as soon as possible as tickets will be in high demand.

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Great Brunch and Open Day

The annual Brunch and Open Day at the Village Hall held in March was a tremendous success with around 120-130 people attending. The hall has rarely looked so busy and it was obvious that everyone present was enjoying the atmosphere, good food and company of their friends and neighbours.

A huge thank you to Karen and Malcolm Morley, and everyone else who managed the kitchen and provided the excellent catering. The generosity of our community in baking to support events like this is really quite amazing. Thank you one and all.

Thanks too, to Topcliffe and Asenby Parish councillors for taking the time to attend and communicate with residents, and also to the hall users who organised displays and chatted to residents about what they do and what opportunities are open for others to join in.

It was good to see Asenby's North Yorkshire Council representative Nick Brown who congratulated the organisers and the community for getting together to celebrate village halls' week...but more particularly for just enjoying time together.

It's hoped that the activities that go on in the hall every week and which were being promoted at this event will attract more people to take part. The Indoor Carpet Bowls certainly did: there were five new members at their next weekly session!

Food sales, card sales and the raffle together helped raise a massive £512.50 for Village Hall funds. Well done everybody.

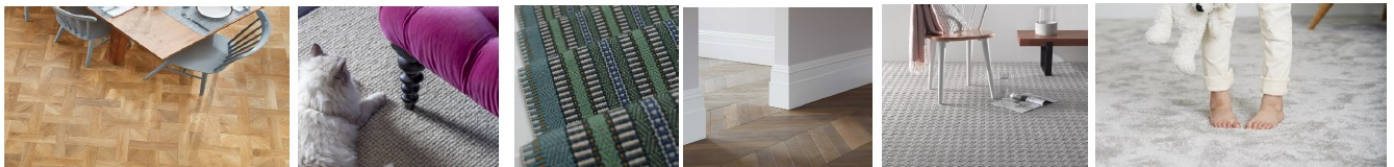


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The Battle of Myton-on-Swale

(An edited version of an article originally published by Richard Byas)

Fulford, Stamford Bridge, Marston Moor and Towton were some of the most infamous and bloodiest battles fought on English soil but many other clashes, often less well known, also helped to shape the region and the nation, including a local battle at Myton-on-Swale, near Boroughbridge.

When Berwick upon Tweed fell to the Scots in 1318, Edward and Thomas of Lancaster attempted to recover the town, which was a significant port as well as the symbol of regional power. During the siege of Berwick, Bruce sent a major raiding party to attack deep into English territory.

The Scottish raiding force of less than 5000 men burnt Beverley and advanced toward York, causing the Archbishop of York to raise a makeshift army of clergy, townsmen and local militia armed largely with farm tools and worn swords. On 30 September 1319, the two armies met at Myton-on-Swale, some three miles east of Boroughbridge.

The Scottish commander originally tried to avoid battle, but when the nature of the rabble facing his troops became clear his army went into action. A detachment of light infantry seems to have cut off the English rear, holding a bridge across the Swale. The Scottish charged and routed the untrained English troops instantly.

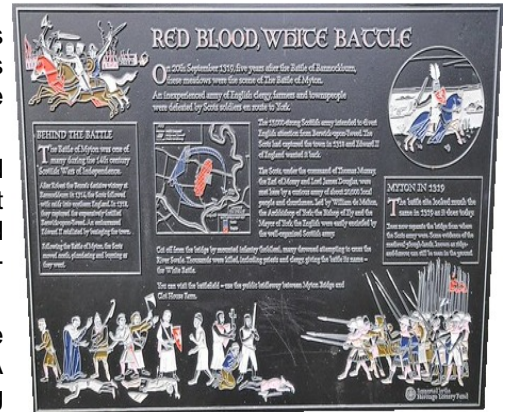
Estimates of English dead vary wildly, but it seems that the Scots put between 1000 and 2000 to the sword, including it is said, 300 priests and friars. Another 1000, including some of the country's wealthiest, may have drowned trying to escape the bloodbath.


The Scots continued raiding before returning north and their actions caused Edward II to abandon the siege of Berwick and a two-year truce was agreed between Scotland and England.

Written details about the Battle of Myton are quite detailed, outlining the preliminaries, the formations adopted by the two sides and the outcome once the fighting started. The involvement and deaths of so many clergy probably accounts for the amount of information now available.

The battlefield now presents little archaeological evidence to help pin down the exact locations of the main events, but a visit is still worthwhile to gain an idea of the scale of the site and the way the rivers Ure and Swale played such an important role.


There is no road bridge across either river at Myton, but there is a 19th century bridge which gives pedestrian access over the Swale from the village itself, enabling access to the battlefield from the east. It is also possible to reach the battlefield on foot from Boroughbridge, but it's a long trek.





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Services at St Columba's Church

Thursday 4 June at 11am - Midweek Morning Prayer.
Thursday 4 June at 7pm - A special Choral Eucharist to celebrate the Feast of Corpus Christi with the choir singing the glorious mass setting by Thomas Tallis. All are warmly invited to join this service of thanksgiving. Wine and pre-supper nibbles will be served afterwards.

Sunday 7 June at 8.30am - Holy Communion.

Sunday 7 June at 6.30pm, Festival Choral Evensong for St Columba's Day, followed by wine and finger food.

Sunday 14 June at 10.45am - Holy Communion.

Thursday 18 June at 11am - Midweek Morning Prayer.

Sunday 21 June at 10.45am - Sung Matins.

Thursday 25 June at 11am - Midweek Morning Prayer.

Sunday 28 June at 10.45am - Holy Communion.

Thursday 2 July at 11am - Midweek Morning Prayer.

Sunday 5 July at 8.30am - Said Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer).

Sunday 5 July at 6.30pm Choral Evensong.

Thursday 9 July at 11am - Midweek Morning Prayer.

Sunday 12 July at 10.45am - Holy Communion.

All services, other than the Said Holy Communion (BCP) at 8.30am on the first Sunday of the month, are followed by refreshments with wine. Following the Choral Evensong on the first Sunday of the month, pre-supper nibbles are served.

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THE ANGEL INN AT TOPCLIFFE



We're back for take two of our annual summer do and this year we've gone bigger, bolder, and twice the size! Expect an all-day summer party packed with multiple live music acts throughout the day, two gardens open in which to roam and relax, and an unbeatable atmosphere from start to finish.

What to expect

- 🎵 Multiple live music acts on all day
- 🍺 Beer pong
- 🌿 Two open gardens
- 🔥 Fire pits & hay bales as the sun goes down
- 🍔 Multiple food vendors
- 🎁 Surprise discounts throughout the day
- 🐎 Bucking bronco and more
- 🍹 Shot girls
- 🍓 Nyetimber, strawberries & cream bar (in honour of the Wimbledon tennis finals)
- ...and plenty more surprises along the way

Your standard ticket, priced £16.96 (which includes a £1.96 booking fee) gives you entry to the event for the full afternoon through into the night. It includes access to all outdoor areas (excluding the VIP area), entertainment throughout the day and evening, and the chance to enjoy food and drink available to purchase on the day.

It's a ticket only event - only 450 tickets available - and bookings should be made online.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-big-yorkshire-do-tickets-1982671571041?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Tickets cannot be purchased on the day, all guests must have a valid ticket in advance.

Please note that the entire venue will be closed on Saturday 11 July for this event.

All VIP tables have now been sold.

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