

### **Celebration Bench for Asenby**

A stunning bench commemorating Queen Elizabeth II's seventy-year reign was installed in Asenby last month.

The bench, forged in Asenby by talented blacksmith Louis Sturt, was created after Asenby Institute successfully applied for a grant offered by Harrogate Borough Council under their Queen's Platinum Jubilee Small Grant Awards scheme. The scheme was aimed at villages and societies in the borough wanting to celebrate the momentous Platinum Jubilee with a legacy project.



Blacksmith Louis Sturt



The Queen waves and smiles... with Carole Ford, Romy Gifford, Layla Redfearn, Eve Gifford and Siobhan Gifford enjoying the new bench

The bench has been installed under the historic chestnut tree which was planted by villagers in 1897 following Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and a plaque has been attached to the bench drawing attention to both of these significant celebrations.

Siobhan Gifford, Chair of Asenby Institute, said: "We are hugely grateful to Harrogate Borough Council for their sponsorship and to Louis for his vision and craftsmanship. We believe the bench offers a striking focal point that will be used by people of all ages, and by villagers and visitors, for generations to come."

**Editor's Note:** The craftsmanship of Louis Sturt is unquestionable and his legacy bench is a fine reminder of the Platinum Jubilee. But thanks are also due to Siobhan Gifford who had the vision and took the initiative get the bench designed, constructed and funded. Well done, Siobhan.



The Asenby Plaque

### Yard Sale

There's to be a yard sale in Topcliffe on Sunday 25 September. Sally Machen is behind the idea and she held a ballot on Top Residents to find the preferred date. Anyone can join in and its free to participate. All you have to do is set up a stall outside your home from which you can offer for sale all the bits and pieces that you want to get rid of. It's a great way to raise a bit of extra cash and meet friends and neighbours. There are only a few basic rules: please don't block pavements with stalls, chairs or queues and no selling business products.

## Soup & Sweet lunch

Soup and sweet lunches are held at the Village Hall on alternate Wednesdays at 12 noon. So far, in the two years the lunches have been organised, a total of £2,505 has been raised and shared with a range of local charities. A big thank you is due to organisers Karen and Malc Morley and Linda Carver and to regular helpers Richard Byas and Linda Robinson who have made this regular gathering into a real community event.

### Produce Show a huge success

The annual Produce Show, which was held at the Village Hall on Saturday 3 September, was a huge success with a stunning array of produce across all categories. A large crowd visited the show and mingled among the fantastic exhibits, had a cup of tea and chatted with competitors, friends and neighbours.

The overall winner in the horticultural section was Peter Lowe and he and David Bowman shared the 'Most Firsts' trophy with nine category wins each.

Other trophy winners were: Hobbies - Julie Hunt; Floral - Joan Fothergill and Baking - Karen Morley. There were also some excellent entries from local youngsters.





Horticultural section judge, Graeme Marsden with show winner Peter Lowe

Karen Morley, winner of the baking section, with Show Secretary Judith Lowe



Show Secretary Judith Lowe with floral category winner Joan Fothergill



Hobbies winner Julie Hunt and category judge Pauline Millross



# John hangs up his gavel for the last time

Time has been called on the annual Attic Auction, an event that has been staged at the Village Hall for around 25 years. The decision was taken at the last Parochial Church Council where auctioneer John Phillips reported that it was time for him to retire from the event.

He said. "Unfortunately, despite so much help from people around the village, the principal burden still falls on me and, not being quite as young as I was, my ability to prepare and



Auctioneeer John Phillips in action

catalogue the sale and then conduct it all in the same day is beginning to fade!

"We have had these auctions every year since the mid-1990s, apart from 2020 when it had to be cancelled due to Covid. It has been a great run and always a pleasure for the organisers and villagers alike. I would prefer to step down while that is still the case - things were starting to creak a bit last year!

"So, I shall be hanging up my gavel at long last! I would, though, like to thank my ever enthusiastic and longsuffering team of helpers both from the church and the village, as well as the generous donors providing things to sell, without whom nothing would have happened. It has always been fun and sometimes even hilarious and we have great memories to look back on."

**Editor's Note:** I am sure that everyone in Topcliffe and Asenby will wish to thank John for the many years of service as a brilliant auctioneer and fundraiser. He was always part of a team, but the heaviest burden always fell on his shoulders. It was always a joy to see and hear him in action and his performances and the Attic Auction itself, will be sadly missed.

## New Fitness Class in Village Hall

Lianne Ayling, who currently runs a range of outdoor fitness classes at the Sowerby Sports Village Track, is planning to launch an indoor class at Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall this autumn. From Tuesday 4 October she'll be starting a programme that rotates on a three-weekly basis between Bodyblast (small hand weights), Kettlehiit (using Kettlebells) and Legs, Bums and Tums. These classes are child/buggy friendly so parents can come along with their children.

Contact can be made via her Facebook page. If you would like to join this class or for any others Lianne provides, use the link below and use the code FIRSTCLASS50 for 50% off. https://linktr.ee/lianneayling

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## All change at Village Hall

There has been a number of changes at Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall recently. The retirement of the longserving bookings secretary Judith Lowe and the inability of the committee to find anyone to replace her, resulted in a decision to go 'online' and join the modern world of technology. Here is news of these two linked events.

#### Judith & Peter call it a day

Long-serving Village Hall committee members Judith and Peter Lowe have stepped down from their official duties looking after the hall and organising bookings.



Presentation to Judith & Peter Lowe

Judith has been involved with village hall matters for around 30 years, latterly as bookings secretary, whilst Peter was press-ganged onto the committee back in 2015 to help manage the construction of an extension and major refurbishment.

Their commitment and dedication to the village hall and the two villages generally, was marked at the June meeting of the committee, where chairman, Andrew Eckersley thanked them for their service and presented them with gifts.

#### Village Hall bookings go online

Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall is catching up with the times by introducing an online booking system.

The Village Hall Committee has joined Hallmaster, an electronic booking service. This allows enquiries and bookings to be made directly online. Users and hirers can access Hallmaster via a link on the Topcliffe website, where they'll be able to see calendars and complete their booking.

The preferred method of payment is PayPal, though BACs can still be used if necessary.

The Hallmaster booking pages are on the village website at www.topcliffe.org.uk

Anyone experiencing any difficulty making a booking, should call 07857 836332.



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## **Milk Churn Farm Shop**

It was with heavy hearts that the Roberts family decided they could no longer keep the Milk Churn Farm Shop running as a viable business and had to close the doors for a final time in August.

Opening during the pandemic was always a gamble, but along with austerity, energy tariffs still rising massively, cost of foods at wholesale increasing hugely and also for personal reasons, keeping the shop open was no longer viable.

Debbie Roberts said: "Running a business in times like we are experiencing was a massive challenge, but we found it amazingly rewarding, with just a few disappointments on the journey. We have met some fantastic customers who have become firm friends and so having to make the decision to close has been particularly painful and difficult."

"It has truly been an honour to serve the local community. Our philosophy was to provide fresh food, locallyproduced products and a local shopping opportunity, but as food prices rise people need to search for good deals in order to put food on the table. We simply could not compete with the supermarkets who buy in bulk to offer cheaper prices.

"Since closing I have managed to thank many of our loyal customers for their support over the last few years, but I would like to take this opportunity to offer a huge thank

you to everyone who shopped with us and who have offered their kind comments and best wishes since the closure."

## Race night in Topcliffe

The Topcliffe Big race Night was staged at the Village Hall last Saturday evening (10 September) and unfortunately its timing meant that it was too late to be reported in this edition of The Tattler.

It was no doubt a great success and everyone who attended will have had a great evening's fun and entertainment...as well as enjoying a lovely supper and raising funds to secure the future of the Village Hall.

Events like this take a lot of planning and organisation. A big thank you is offered to all the businesses and individuals who sponsored the bar, races and prizes, to the helpers who worked very hard on the night to make it a success (especially Karen Morley and Linda Carver who cooked and served the tasty supper), and most of all to those who attended and made the whole night so enjoyable.

### **Knit and Natter**

The popular Knit & Natter club meets at 1.30pm on alternate Thursdays in the TV lounge at The Angel. The cost for refreshments remains at £3 and everyone is welcome to attend, whether for a knit, just for a natter or both! The next event is on Thursday 22 September.

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Post office opening times

Open Monday - Friday 7am- 5pm Saturday 9am - 12.30pm

## Garry Key: a fond farewell

On 24 August the funeral of former Topcliffe Parish Council chairman Garry Key took place at Maple Park Crematorium. It was a beautiful service conducted by former Topcliffe vicar Susanne Jukes, who willingly came out of retirement to conduct the ceremony.

Garry was born and educated in Worcestershire. He was the only child of John and Sylvia, who many in Topcliffe will fondly remember. His first job was at the local Co-op

where he eventually became an Assistant Manager. In his early twenties, Garry joined the British Army Air Corps as an Airtrooper: he had pilot's gained his licence a few years earlier whilst serving in the Territorial Army. He won many awards and demonstrated his natural leadership qualities that were going to be important in other activities he



became involved in later in life. He served two back-to back tours in the heat of the Northern Ireland 'Troubles', after which he was recommended for a Commission and subsequently attended Sandhurst.

Garry invited a girl he had recently met to accompany him to his 'passing out' parade and, after a world-wind romance, Nikki became his wife and they went off to Germany where Garry had been posted to serve in the Royal Corp of Transport.

But Garry's love of flying was strong and after two years he transferred back to the Army Air Corps to train as a helicopter pilot. He excelled as a pilot and the family went back to Germany for a thirty-month tour of duty. When the Gulf War started, Garry was seconded to be Liaison Officer to Major General Patrick Cordingly at the 7th Armoured Brigade - the Desert Rats. After leaving the army, Garry continued to work in military circles undertaking consultancy roles with some of the biggest and most important companies in the armaments business.

On moving to Topcliffe, Garry and Nikki, together with their three children - Samantha, Georgina and Edward - settled into the Yorkshire way of life and Garry almost immediately became involved in the community as a governor of Topcliffe School and as a Topcliffe parish councillor. He certainly made his mark in both organisations and his legacy can be found in many areas of village life today. He served twenty-three years as a parish councillor and over twenty as its chairman. The development of the Sheepwash, various projects at the Toll Booth and the parish council's backing for the Millennium Book of Topcliffe, along with the Magna Carta celebrations in 2015, are projects of which he was particularly proud.

Being a parish councillor is a voluntary role and it can be very demanding, but Garry seemed to absorb the pressures and he always had a real sense of duty, believing he was serving the village and giving something back. He always maintained that it was an honour and privilege to lead the parish council and there's no doubt that he managed parish affairs with commitment and dedication.

Topcliffe has lost a real community champion and he will be sorely missed.

### **Topcliffe Bridge repairs promised**

Back in February a request was sent to North Yorkshire County Council's highways department for some action to repair Topcliffe Bridge, which had been damaged at least two years earlier. The initial request was that the repairs might be carried out in time for the bridge's 400th anniversary and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June.

The response was that whilst not promising repairs by the Jubilee, they'd be done around about that time or soon after. But in August, whilst the highways department was still promising the repairs will be done, they state there'll be more delay and the completion is promised this financial year - which means it could take until 31 March 2023.

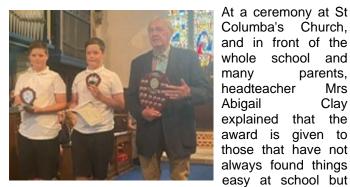
It is certainly good news that some progress is finally been made, but it is very surprising that the preparation of procurement details and documentation has taken so long and we still face potentially months of waiting before the work is tackled.



#### **Helpful Twins**

Asenby twins Josh and Lewis Stephenson were awarded Thirsk Rotary Club's Junior Endeavour Award at an endof-term ceremony at Topcliffe Academy.

They were chosen by school staff to be presented with the award in recognition of the way in which they have always been extremely helpful and have always tried throughout their time at the school.



Twins get award

barriers to get where they are today. She said: "Throughout their time at the school the twins were always there to help in any way and they were a credit to their parents and the school. Their progress this year has been fantastic."

Malcolm Sollitt, who presented the award on behalf of Thirsk Rotary Club, said that for many years the organisation has worked with all the junior schools in the Thirsk area to find a candidate for its annual award. He added: "Usually the award goes to an individual, but this year Topcliffe School asked if they could give it to two children...and naturally Rotary agreed as the recipients are twins."

#### Tree of Hope

Topcliffe Academy's End of Year Celebration Service in July was held at St. Columba's Church. Over a hundred and thirty school children and nearly as many adults were present and the service was led by the headteacher Mrs Abigail Clay. The theme was 'hope' and during the service everyone present was given cards in the shape of doves on



which to write their hopes for the future. These were then hung on a 'Tree of Hope' as can be seen in the photograph. This tree now sits back at school as a reminder of hopeful times ahead.

The service reflected on the challenges of the year gone by and also on the successes for the academy. The year has been a challenge for everyone with Covid being prevalent in the area and the many issues that has presented for everyone. Despite this, the academy has been committed to getting learning 'back to normal' and going out on trips, starting to have families back in school and enjoying some of the annual events such as Topciffe's Got Talent, school disco, Year 6 leavers party and sports day, to name but a few. Mrs Clay said: "We are very grateful for all the support we have had from our families this year and look forward to working more alongside the local community once again next year."



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Mrs

Clay

The TATtler

www.asenby.net

## 70 year-old dolls on display

When Topcliffe resident Georgina Walker heard that the village was to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee she decided that her collection of old 'royal' dolls should be retrieved from a cupboard and put on display.

There were three - a young Elizabeth II, Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, all of which were displayed at the Jubilee Sunday Brunch at the Village Hall on the final day of the celebrations.

These intricate works of art were hand-made and embroidered by Georgina's mother, Ivy Newman, to mark the Queen's coronation seventy years ago. At the time Georgina was just 13 years old and her mother then 51, was an arts and crafts teacher at various schools in the Thornton area of Bradford, where the family then lived.

Georgina said: "My mother's talents in the crafts world were incredible. She was involved in many embroidery projects, including the making of beautiful altar and pulpit hangings in gold and silver thread for the Church of England."

She adds: "My mother's Singer sewing machine, that at some time

was converted from hand to electric, still sits proudly on my bookcase as a constant reminder of the days when all of mine and my sibling's clothes were made on it. In later years I too used the machine to make all of my own children's clothes... and I still keep my hand in with a needle and thread."

## Can you help the scouts?

1st Topcliffe Scouts are urgently looking for more adult helpers. There's an excellent team at the moment but more are needed to help out with full scouting teams and a long waiting list of youngsters wanting to join. If you think you might be able to assist, please get in touch with Donna Flemming on 07591 438766.

## **Churchyard grass-cutting**

Following an appeal in the Sunday Email, several volunteers put their names forward to help with grass cutting in St Columba's churchyard, and someone kindly offered a lawnmower, which will be used until next year, when the church wardens intend to purchase a new one. So, a big thank you to all concerned.

Grass-cutting in the churchyard is being limiting to certain paths and open areas, with the rest being left in a 'wild' state with meadow flowers. This means that mowing now takes not much more than an hour to complete. So, if anyone else would like to get involved, even in a very limited way, please do get in touch with John Phillips (johnphillips05@gmail.com).





### Happy 1st anniversary Catton Kitchen

The Catton Kitchen recently celebrated its first anniversary with a special party to mark the occasion. Owners Amy and Hugo held a garden party and BBQ, with music provided by a very capable soloist/guitarist, Topcliffe resident Daniel Burdett, who entertained the crowd with popular songs for all age groups and some he had even written himself. The day was a wonderful success.



Great performance by Daniel Burdett



Relaxed atmosphere on a lovely sunny day

### **Helperby Beer Festival**

It's been three years since the last beer festival in Helperby...but it's back on Saturday 17 September starting 12.30pm. It'll be better than ever with a huge choice of amazing and cool beers and lagers, wine bar, prosecco & gin bar, and food. There'll be a great music line up including Rory Hoy, Chu Ma Shu, The Bootleggers, Borderline, All the King's Men, The Feds, What the Duck and Mark Stevenson.

Tickets and vouchers for food and drink are available online now. Check out the festival Facebook page for more details:

https://www.facebook.com/HelperbyBeerFest/



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## **Hambleton Council**

From Mark Robson, Leader of the Council

Throughout North Yorkshire significant amounts of time and energy is being directed at putting in place the arrangements for the new North Yorkshire Council, which formally takes over all local government activities in the county on 1 April 2023.

But my priority as Leader of Hambleton Council until that date is to ensure that the reorganisation planning does not get in the way of us delivering high quality services to the community right up to the end. I am confident that residents will not have seen any deterioration in local services despite the needs of the review and more relevant social pressures such as the energy and cost of living crisis. Whilst I am Leader, I will ensure that residents continue to get best value, despite ever increasing costs.

Many of you will have seen the construction activity on the site close to Aldi in Sowerby. It's where Hambleton Council is building a two-changing room pavilion as part of the Sowerby Sports Village. The pavilion is part of a £1.3m investment that includes a full size 3G all-weather football pitch and the development of several grass football pitches. The council was able to secure contributions of over £500k of funding from the Football Foundation, as well as a developer contribution and use of the authority's capital. The football facilities are the cornerstone of the Sports Village development and will provide high quality facilities for the community to enjoy

for many years to come. The pavilion is set to be completed in early 2023.

The council has also invested a further  $\pounds 250,000$  into the existing all-weather pitch on the Thirsk School and Sixth Form College site. New LED lighting to reduce the carbon footprint has been installed and works to replace the playing pitch surface



will be complete by the end of August.

On completion, both these facilities will give all local residents access to top class sports facilities on their doorstep.

A few weeks ago I attended the funeral of Topcliffe resident Garry Key, a man who I much admired and who has played an important role in Topcliffe and Hambleton more generally. The tribute elsewhere in this newsletter says everything that needs to be said about Garry, so I won't repeat the details here. But I would like to extend my condolences to Garry's family and friends.

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## **Topcliffe Parish Council Report**

**HGV Traffic:** The County Highways Department finally replied to the Parish Council's letter 27 April after nearly four months! It has, after consultation with local business, decided not to change the Traffic Weight Restriction Zone in Topcliffe. The department did not include the Parish Council in the consultation to be sure of a balanced view, but councillors will contest the decision because the limited notes we have from the consultation show blatant misinformation and the most basic lack of understanding about local roads/conditions. The Parish Council's view is that it was far from balanced despite assertions to the contrary.

The department has however agreed that there is £95k available for new signage and further enforcement action, which is something. But they have failed to indicate when either action will actually happen. The Parish Council helped secure £50k of this money from the Dalton Industrial Estate Development Companies, so councillors will press for deadlines on seeing the cash spent.

Villagers can read the highway department's response and our reply on the village website (www.topcliffe.org.uk). It feels very much as if business interests take priority in their minds, as opposed to local safety and quality of life...and ultimately upholding the law. This is very concerning when you consider the effect of developments on Dalton Industrial Estate on our community.

The Parish Council has asked the highways department to hold a public meeting here in Topcliffe and if their agreement can be achieved, councillors will ensure villagers are aware of it so that they can attend and have their say. It may also be helpful if as many as possible MP could write to the department, our (kevin.hollinrake.mp@parliament.uk) and to our new unitary authority representative (Cllr.Dave.Whitfield@northyorks.gov.uk) to express their concerns. Asenby residents could also write to their unitary authority representative. Email addresses can be provided.

The Trading Standards Department has been helpful in conducting several more enforcement days. It has caught around a dozen HGV transgressors using our village as a "rat run" short cut to Dalton and the A1(M). In June, one driver was fined £272 with costs at York Magistrates' Court. The other cases are still progressing and they'll be closely monitored so that prosecution details can be publicised as a deterrent to other potential HGV offenders. The majority of HGV passages, however, start or finish at the industrial units along the A167 from Busby Stoop to the village - which is guite legal and within the current weight restriction zone signs. Until these signs are moved to the edge of the village, as outlined in our case for altering the weight restriction zone, locals cannot expect to see a drastic reduction in HGVs travelling through our village.

**The Sheepwash:** Recently a number of residents visiting the Sheepwash with children and dogs have reported they have had abuse from fishermen complaining that their fishing is being disturbed. Local resident fishermen also report these anglers are also casting their lines across village fishing pegs making it difficult, if not impossible, to fish at the Sheepwash. Leeds Amalgamated Club fishing rights end approximately 50 metres upstream of the Sheepwash, so if they are fishing from land immediately adjacent to the Sheepwash they have no rights at all as far as can be determined. If they stick to their agreed water-space they'd be far enough away for all to enjoy their various activites on the Swale without any friction. The matter will be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

**Dog Fouling:** A number of residents have reported a significant increase in dog owners not clearing up after their pets. This seems to be the case in several areas of the village. It's suspected that these owners believe the risk of being caught and therefore incurring a fine is very low. It's intended that several wildlife cameras will be installed and if necessary the photographic evidence will be used to secure prosecutions.

Alanbrooke Barracks: The regiment at Alanbrooke Barracks has offered army personnel to help with significant tasks in the village, such as grass cutting in the churchyard, tree cutting in the cemetery and help with projects on the playing field. This support is welcomed by the Parish Council and it should bring the barracks and village closer together (the barracks is in Topcliffe parish!). This will not happen immediately though as the regiment is away at present somewhere in Europe.

### St Columba's services

Sunday Services continue the usual four weekly cycle of:

1st Sunday at 6.30pm Choral Evensong 2nd Sunday at 10.45am Holy Communion 3rd Sunday at 10.45am Sung Matins 4th Sunday at 10.45am Holy Communion 5th Sunday (when applicable) - No Service

All morning services are followed by refreshments and a chat in the Percy Chapel

Autumn Services of particular note include:

2 October at 6.30pm - Choral Evensong will be combined with a celebration Harvest Festival, followed by supper. A special service to give thanks for all the great benefits that we have received, even in these difficult times.

9 October at 10.45am - Holy Communion. This service will include our annual Act of Remembrance for the crew of RAF Neptune WX545 that flew out of Topcliffe on 10 October 1956 and crashed on the Mull of Kintyre whilst on training exercises.

13 November at 10.30am/10.45am (tbc) Remembrance Sunday Service, with Act of Remembrance at 11am. There will be a separate service of Holy Communion with Baptism to follow at 11.45am.

## **Asenby Parish Council**

At the third attempt, sufficient residents of Asenby finally put themselves forward to stand as parish councillors and ensured local democracy is alive and well in the village.

The five Asenby Parish councillors are Tanyka Rawden (chair), David Cockburn, Nikki Fox, Jane Gallon and Malcolm Sollitt. Former Chairman, Peter Palmer has agreed to act as Clerk to the Council on a temporary basis. The newly elected council met for the first time in July and a wide range of issues were raised, which councillors agreed they would better understand if they visited various locations in the village. So they went 'walkabout' in August and checked out the Bank Top footpath; playing field, security and potential future uses; village green, jubilee commemoration and unauthorised parking; general village tidy-up, provision of litter bins, maintenance of protected trees; and ongoing problems with HGV traffic through the village.

They will again discuss these matters when the council next meets at 7pm on Monday 12 September at Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall.

Asenby village's new Facebook group is https://www.facebook.com/groups/45701689926342 0/?ref=share\_group\_link

The Parish Council can be contacted on asenbypc@gmail.com or via the Facebook page.

Following the resignation through ill-health of Bernard Bateman, the village's new councillor on Harrogate Borough Council is Cllr Sam Green. Asenby is part of the Wathvale Division on the new North Yorkshire Council, and Nick Brown has been elected to represent the ward.

## **Summer and Christmas Fayres**

The Summer Fayre & Afternoon Tea held at Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall in August was an amazing success and raised over £300 for village hall funds.

Organiser Karen Morley said "We managed to attract a wide range of organisations to take a table to sell their products or promote their good causes and we had stalls for crafts, hobbies, books, cakes and many more. The raffles and tombolas were well supported.

This year the Christmas Fayre will be held at the Village Hall on Saturday 12 November. Bookings for stalls are now being taken. They're just £5 each - that's much cheaper than the price stall holders have to pay at other Christmas events in our area. To book a stall please contact Karen Morley on 577426.

### **Snooker Club**

Membership subscriptions for the snooker club are now due. The fee for the coming year has increased to £30 because of increasing energy costs. Existing and new members should arrange payment to David Bowman as soon as possible. Members who do not plan to remain in the club are asked to return their door key to David Bowman. He can be contacted on 577843.

## The Sunday Email

Next week's Sunday Email will be the 126th edition and it continues to go from strength to strength. Anyone who wants to be added to the circulation can register by going to dougallan.co.uk



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