

There's no village hall without volunteers

It's likely that everyone in Topcliffe and Asenby thinks it's great to have a village hall at the centre of our communities. Our hall is an amazing asset that brings people together and provides important support for our two villages.



Right now groups such as scouts, beavers, cubs, squirrels, boccia, knit & natter and Warm Hub organise their activities in the hall...and it also provides space for parish meetings, the weekly village quiz, art classes, private parties, brunches and lots, lots more.

So, it's a busy place with hundreds of people passing through its doors every week and a great deal of fun, learning and enjoyment - as well as serious village business - taking place.

But have you ever given any thought to how it works and what makes it tick? Someone has to take responsibility for managing the village hall and making it work for the wide range of events and experiences that it delivers. Without volunteers it simply wouldn't exist...and the communities in our two villages would be much worse off.

For a few years Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall has had a stable and energetic committee that has managed a major refurbishment, attracted many and varied activities and maintained a financially sound facility. But change is in the wind and this year the village hall committee will lose a number of long-term members, including the chairman, treasurer and several other hard-working committee members.

Now the committee is looking for new members and is hoping that residents of all ages and backgrounds will see merit in volunteering some of their time to ensure that the village hall remains a successful place now and in the future.

In particular, someone who is well organised and comfortable with numbers is needed to take on the job of treasurer - an absolutely crucial role. The current treasurer is happy to provide a six month induction period to guide and support the new person whilst they familiarise themselves with the work.

Will you grasp the nettle and take pride in ensuring that our village hall continues to be an important social centre serving Topcliffe and Asenby? Think about it. And remember that without volunteers to run it, there'll be no village hall.

If you are interested in an initial chat - or better still if you are already persuaded and want to be part of this successful village story - please contact Andrew Eckersley on 07966 619016 or by emailing alieneck4000@gmail.com

Warm Hub lunches

Warm Hub lunches will be held at the Village Hall on the following Wednesdays over the next month or two: 6 and 20 March and 3 and 17 April. Lunches are served from 11.30 to 12.45pm. There's always a great selection of meals followed by delicious cakes and bakes and tea or coffee. Everyone is welcome. There's no set charge, but donations welcome.

Voters need photo ID

If you are intending to vote in May's local election you will need to be able to show photo ID to the polling clerks. A passport, driving licence or bus pass is acceptable.

If you don't have one of these accepted photo IDs, you can apply for a free voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate. You can do this online at www.electoralcommission.org.uk or by getting in touch with the Electoral Services Office at North Yorkshire Council at www.northyorks.gov.uk/your-council/elections-and-voting or by visiting the council's office in Northallerton. You will need a recent digital photograph and your National Insurance number.

The deadline to apply for free voter ID for the election on Thursday 2 May is 5pm on Wednesday 24 April.

Dog and cat foster carers wanted

The Blue Cross animal homing centre in Topcliffe is looking for caring people who might make a difference to the lives of cats and dogs in need. Foster carers for cats and dogs in the centre's care are urgently required.



Every year, thousands of cats and dogs end up in Blue Cross's catteries and kennels and although they receive love and care from dedicated staff, it's not quite the same as being in a real home.



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from illness, or simply need to learn how to behave in a home setting. Fostering is a rewarding experience, but it requires a special kind of person.

If you have a heart for animals and are interested in providing a temporary home for a cat or dog whilst it waits for a forever home, please get in touch with the Blue Cross. They will offer full training and ongoing support. All costs are covered, so you can focus on giving these animals the care and attention they deserve.



To learn more, visit the website at www.bluecross.org.uk/yorkshire-thirsk-rehoming-centre and fill out an application. Alternatively, contact the centre by email at thirsk@bluecross.org.uk

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Northallerton Male Voice Choir in Topcliffe

The Northallerton Male Voice Choir will be performing in St Columba's Church on Saturday 16 March. The choir will give a wide and varied evening of traditional and modern songs. The concert starts at 7pm (doors open from 6pm). Tickets are £10 to include a glass of wine or soft drink and light refreshments at the conclusion. Children £5. All proceeds will go to the fund set up to maintain the fabric of the church building. Tickets available from John Phillips on 01845 577034 or 07831 188819.

Snooker Club

Annual fees for Snooker Club membership are now well overdue. The amount for 2023-24 has been held at £30. Those wishing to remain in membership or join the club, should contact Treasurer Dave Bowman to make payment. If you have been a member and are not intending to renew, please return your door key as soon as possible. David can be contacted on 01845 577843.

Garden Waste Collection Service

This month sees the restart of the garden waste collection service by North Yorkshire Council. It now costs £46.50 for fortnightly collections between March and early December. Customers whose previous licence covered collections to March 2024 will pay a reduced fee of £42.

The licence is for one 240-litre wheelie bin to be emptied fortnightly, though more than one licence can be purchased. Once paid, you will receive a licence pack by post within 14 days. This pack will include a sticker that must be displayed on your bin - and your service will not start until your licence is displayed.

Collections can start as early as 6am on your collection day, so your bin should be at the kerbside or designated collection point, with the licence clearly visible, from the night before.

Only the following garden waste will be accepted - cut flowers, plants and weeds, grass cuttings, hay and straw (no used animal bedding), hedge clippings, leaves and bark, small branches or prunings and windfall fruit from your garden. In January Christmas trees chopped up small will be collected.

The following should not be placed in garden bins - ash, cardboard or paper, disposable nappies, food waste (including fruit and vegetable peelings), general household rubbish, pet waste, plant pots, plastic bags (including compostable or biodegradable bags), rubble, soil, stones, turf or wood.

You can find out more about the service or check your garden waste collection day on the council's website at www.northyorks.gov.uk.

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Churchyard maintenance

It is hoped that the Community Pay Back team will return to help out with churchyard maintenance at St Columba's this spring. A bid has been made for them to work two Sundays a month maintaining the churchyard as they used to before Covid.

Nevertheless, the church wardens would love to welcome local volunteers, as they did so successfully and enjoyably last year, to help with further tidy-up sessions on various Saturdays in May - more information in the Sunday Email and on Top Residents Facebook page in due course.



Harley needs storage space

Topcliffe Mill resident David Black is a keen motorcyclist and his pride and joy is his Harley Davidson. Problem is that living in an apartment means he doesn't have covered storage for his dream machine.

So, David is on the lookout for anyone in Topcliffe who has a garage to rent or space in which the bike can be stored. If you can help, please ring David on 07957 457276.



Easter canal cruises

The 'Pride of Ripon' is offering cruises on the scenic Ripon canal this Easter. They'll run from Friday 29 March to Saturday 6 April from 10.20am every half hour. There'll be bunnies galore and a quiz for everyone to complete, with a prize worth up to £8 for every child under 14 years of age.

Cruises start at Ripon Canal Basin - HG4 1AQ. If you have any queries about accessibility, timings or other issues call 01765 609777 or email: ripon.scenic.cruises@gmail.com

We're getting a Mayor!

The combined council areas of York and North Yorkshire are to get an elected mayor from May this year.

The mayor, who will be elected for a four-year term, will have the power to spend money on local priorities such as transport, education and housing, and will also take on the police and crime commissioner powers and functions. The mayor will work alongside local council leaders to create a long-term vision, secure more money and be a strong voice and champion for the region.

Several candidates have so far announced their interest and have started campaigning. It's expected others will declare their candidacy soon and we'll all hear a lot more before voting day on 2 May.



Jane and George would love to see you at The Swan

There's a warm welcome awaiting you at your local pub. The Swan is a traditional hostelry serving good quality food and a wide variety of beers, lagers, wines and spirits.



Last month The Swan was yet again awarded a five-star food hygiene rating by North Yorkshire Council.

Meals served Wednesday to Saturday between 5 and 8.30pm and Sunday lunch from 12 noon to 4pm. Bookings now being taken for Mother's Day (10 March) and Easter Sunday (31 March).

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Topcliffe Art Classes

Here is a list of upcoming painting workshops that Rebecca Jayne is promoting at Topcliffe & Asenby Village Hall over the next couple of months:

Thursday 21 March, 10.30am to 2.30pm - Learn to draw and sketch with more confidence.

Thursday 11 April, 10.30am to 1.30pm - Paint Beautiful Blooms in Acrylics.



And there's a special one-off class at the Himalayan Gardens at Grewelthorpe on Friday 17 May, 10-4pm on the theme - Paint a Garden Landscape in oils'.

Book online at www.rebeccajayneartist.co.uk/product-category/classes-workshops

Creative Club meetings at Thirsk Library

Chris Geeson Creative Clubs are now a regular Saturday feature at Thirsk Community Library. The club sessions are on from 10 until 11.30am and are suitable for 6 to 13 year olds, though parents and younger members of the family can attend as well. Places are limited, so early booking is advised.

16 March - History-inspired Crafts


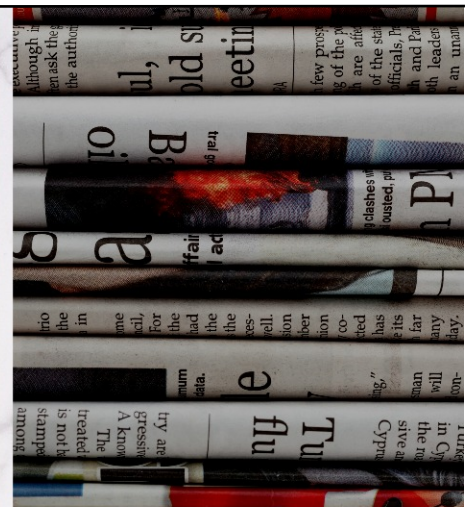
30 March - Junk Robots

Look out for extra club events in the half-term and Easter holidays. To book call 01609 534589 or email library@thirskcommunitylibrary.org.uk

Two options for local yoga

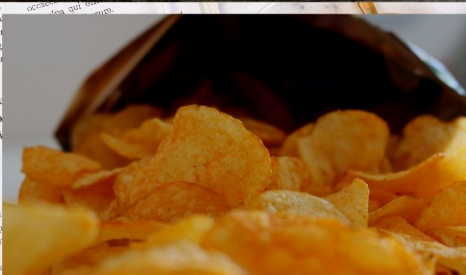
Vinyasa Flow Yoga: Lucy Day is holding Vinyasa Flow yoga sessions at Rainton Village Hall every Saturday morning at 9am. If you are interested in attending, please email lucy@lucyoga.uk or call 07970 049928 for details.

Yoga with Alex: 'Yoga with Alex' classes are held at two locations near Topcliffe - Thirsk Town Hall and Coronation Hall, Boroughbridge. These classes are suitable for anyone wishing to improve or regain their balance, strength and mental well-being. Call 07927 141616 or email Alex on yogawithalex2020@gmail.com



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Topcliffe Parish Council Update

Front Street Sewage Smells: Yorkshire Water has finally accepted responsibility for the problem affecting many residents in Front Street. The company has agreed a temporary solution for the next six months and during that time they will agree and action a permanent solution. So far, the temporary solution appears to be working, but parish councillors will monitor the situation closely over the coming months.

Our MP Kevin Hollinrake and his team along with our new North Yorkshire Councillor Dan Sladden, have provided significant help in achieving this positive result.

Speeding in Topcliffe: Speeding in the village is still a major concern for many residents. Data from the radar speed sign near the school indicates that both traffic volume and speeds are increasing. In the coming weeks we will collect data from Long Street so that we have a full picture from both ends of the village.

Through Councillor Dan Sladden the Parish Council has asked for an increased police speed camera presence in the village. The police have said they are willing to do this but there is insufficient space for parking their van, which means they can only utilise their limited number of police camera bikes (just two for the whole of North Yorks). Councillors are investigating solutions for this.

Once funding can be found, we also intend to purchase and install another radar speed sign for Long Street, so that there's one at each end of the village all the time. Hopefully, this should be before the end of summer.



Winn Lane Cemetery: New gates constructed by Simon Parker of Topcliffe-based, Parker Oak, have recently been installed at the entrance to the cemetery...and several people have commented that they "look fantastic".

A large dead tree at the rear of the cemetery has recently had to be removed for safety reasons.

HGV Traffic: The problem of HGV traffic through Topcliffe and Asenby continues and is slowly increasing as the Dalton 49 development grows. Again, the Parish Council has had significant help and advice from Kevin Hollingrake MP and also from our new North Yorkshire councillor, Dan Sladden, is very much on board.

North Yorkshire Council officers say all the right things, but our feeling is they are doing their best to avoid doing anything at all, other than provide new signage. We know funding is a major issue for the authority but in our case, the Parish Council has secured approximately £125,000 from the Dalton 49 development specifically for mitigating this issue and we intend to make sure the funding is spent on this problem.

Volunteer enforcement teams the Parish Council has set up have submitted over 30 incidents of illegal HGV traffic for prosecution by the Trading Standards Department. Unfortunately, the process has proved to be painfully slow but at a recent meeting officers assured us that they are working on prosecution and/or warnings relating to our submissions. That said, the fact is that so far only one driver has been prosecuted.

The Parish Council will continue to submit evidence from our teams and would welcome any volunteers who have the time to come and help.

Play Park Allotments: There are still a few allotments available so now is the time to contact Parish Council Clerk Alex Robson if you are interested in having one - topcliffeparishcouncil@gmail.com

The Sunday Email

Last week's Sunday Email was the 200th weekly edition. Since its origins nearly four years ago during the Covid pandemic, it has become a regular Sunday breakfast time read and continues to be extremely popular among its 320 recipients, who are mostly in our two villages...though some copies do go much further afield.

Anyone who wants to be added to the circulation can register by going to www.dougallan.co.uk



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Young Voices

Pupils of Topcliffe Academy recently travelled to Sheffield Arena to sing with Young Voices - the world's largest children's choir, which on the night had more than 5,000 members.

The children sang with many special acts, including a rap artist called M.C. Grammar and jazz singer, Natalie Williams. They were also joined on stage by The Urban Strides, a group of professionally trained dancers who were fantastic to watch. By far the best act of the night was a 13-year-old girl called Nandi, who played the drums and the saxophone. She has played on stage with many famous artists, including The Arctic Monkeys and Stormzy.



In the evening the children's parents arrived for the big show, which was led by an amazing conductor, David

Lawrence. He made everything easy and fun for the children. To make this event even more special, lights were turned on to fill the massive arena with different colours and patterns, which moved around to fit the rhythm of the many songs the children performed. The favourites were a Matilda Medley, with all of the popular songs from the musical, and a pop medley.

This truly was a night for the children of Topcliffe Academy to remember. It was also a very late night with buses arriving back at school at 11pm - but it was completely worth it.

Asenby Parish Council updates

Parish Council Meeting: The next meeting will be on Wednesday 20 March at 7pm in Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall upper committee room. All are welcome to attend.

Parish Councillors: If it is to remain viable, the Parish Council must urgently recruit two councillors. If this isn't achieved in the near future, then Parish Council matters and decisions may be taken over by North Yorkshire Council.

If you have any interest in being more involved in Asenby Village and decisions for the future then please email the current Chair, Colin Grimston (colin.grimston@gmail.com) for an informal chat. Please include a contact phone number and an idea of when best to call you.

Contact: For general enquiries please visit the website at www.asenby.org or email asenbypc@gmail.com

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Listening...and staying in touch

Councillor Dan Sladden was elected as Sowerby & Topcliffe's representative on North Yorkshire Council at the election held on 30 November 2023. He will be a regular contributor to *The Tattler* and here is his first report.

Thank you! It's such an honour to have been elected to represent the community I live in, and the many messages of congratulations and support I've received have been heart-warming.

The last three months have been a whirlwind of meetings with residents and community groups, as well as getting to know my new colleagues on North Yorkshire Council.

An unexpected pleasure has been allocating the unspent portion of my Locality Budget and I'm pleased that £800 is going to the Thistle Hill Golf Club, based at Alanbrooke Barracks, to help refurbish its mowers. I have a new budget of £10,000 to allocate over the next year so please get in touch with ideas.

I've already had productive meetings with Topcliffe Parish councillors on various issues affecting the village, including speeding and HGVs. On the former, I'm working with the police to review what can be done and on the latter, I joined a useful meeting with North Yorkshire Council to make sure they and the village's local volunteer enforcers can work together in the best way to see a reduction in the number of weight limit infringements.

I've responded to several complaints from residents about the state of roads and pavements. We all know how bad they are in some places and I want to keep hearing about them. The good news is that the pavements on Long Street are scheduled for maintenance over the coming year, so you should see an improvement there soon.

I intend to stay in touch with you all year round - not just at election time. As I promised during my campaign, I want to be accessible to you and really listen to your concerns and ideas for our community. My email address is cllr.dan.sladden@northyorks.gov.uk and my phone number is 07466 487989 - please do not hesitate to use them.

Topcliffe Academy - dates for your diary

Thursday, 14 March - FOTS Disco, 5.30 - 7pm
Wednesday, 20 March - Easter Service at St Columba's Church, 2pm
Friday, 22 March - Topcliffe's Got Talent, 12.45pm
Friday, 22 March - School closes for Easter holidays, 2pm
Monday, 8 April - Staff Training Day
Tuesday, 9 April - School re-opens for start of Summer Term.



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The Devil's Arrows, Boroughbridge

(Adapted from an article written by Richard Byas and published in the Cross Talk newsletter in February 2024)

We are very fortunate in North Yorkshire to have a number of fascinating ancient monuments, some of which date back to the prehistoric era.

In the Spring 2023 edition of The Tattler there was an article about the Thornborough Henges which are located near West Tanfield. But there's another significant set of ancient stones nearer to Topcliffe and Asenby - at Boroughbridge.

Known as the Devil's Arrows and situated off Roecliffe Lane near where the A1 crosses the River Ure at Boroughbridge, the three huge stones are composed of millstone grit and likely to have originated from Plumpton Rocks, nine miles away near Knaresborough.

The legendary explanation for their existence recounts that the Devil fired arrows from Howe Hill south of Fountains Abbey towards the Christian settlement at

Aldbrough, but the arrows fell short, landing in a line in the Boroughbridge field.

It's believed that originally there were five or more stones dating from the Bronze Age. It's unclear what happened to most stones but in an early sixteenth century publication it was stated that one was lost when it was uprooted by treasure hunters and later used as the base for a nearby bridge over a stream.

The tallest stone stands at 22 feet 6 inches high, making it the tallest menhir in Britain after the Rudston Monolith in the East Riding of Yorkshire which measures 25 feet in height.

The stones are heavily weathered and fluted at their peaks. The outer stones are 200 and 370 feet away from the central stone and form an alignment that is almost straight, running NNW-SSE. It is understood that they may have been arranged to align with the southernmost summer moonrise.

The fair of St. Barnabas was held near the stones on Midsummer's Day until the 18th century.



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Services at St Columba's Church

Here is a list of services to be held at St Columba's Church over the next two months:

Wednesday 6 March at 7pm - Lent Compline
Sunday 10 March at 10.45am - Mothering Sunday Holy Communion
Wednesday 13 March at 7pm - Lent Compline
Saturday 16 March at 7pm - Northallerton Male Voice Choir
Sunday 17 March at 10.45am - Sung Matins
Wednesday 20 March at 7pm - Lent Compline
Sunday 24 March at 10.45am - Palm Sunday Holy Communion
Wednesday 27 March at 7pm - Lent Compline
Friday 29 March at 2pm - Good Friday Reflection with Rev Robert Williamson
Saturday 30 March at 7.30pm - Easter Vigil and Choral Eucharist, Mozart's Coronation Mass, to be followed by wine and food.
Sunday 7 April at 6.30pm - Choral Evensong
Sunday 14 April at 10.45am - Holy Communion
Sunday 21 April at 10.45am - Sung Matins
Sunday 28 April at 10.45am - Holy Communion

The Lent Compline service is a 15-minute evening service, originally used to close the day of monastery or convent life. It consists of reflective prayers and readings.

Refreshments are served after every Sunday morning service.

Nine holes on our doorstep!

Some regular golfers living in our two villages will be aware of Thistle Hill Golf Club...but the name will be new to lots of people, perhaps including a few players who are members of clubs further afield.

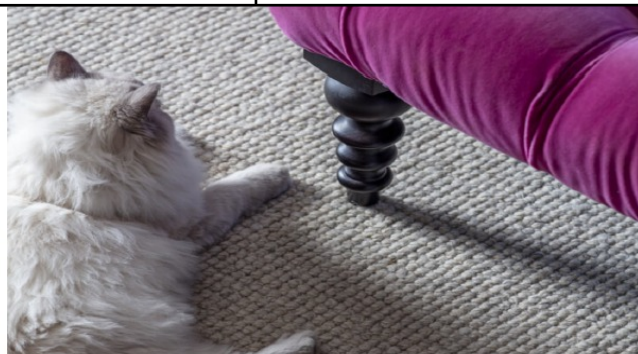
Thistle Hill Golf Club is a nine-hole course on the Alanbrooke Barracks site, just outside Topcliffe on the Busby Stoop road. It's a fabulous,



accessible, informal and friendly club which gives incredible value for money. It is an ideal place for beginners to learn the game and also an ideal feeder club for those who then want to move to 18-hole clubs at some stage. The club offers a quiet place to practice and play on 'real hole' rather than a driving range and is a perfect place for mature golfers who needs a shorter and flatter round. The course is situated in a very safe environment within military site and includes good car parking.

For those who want it, there's access for players to get involved in numerous competitions and also an opportunity to be a volunteer with the club.

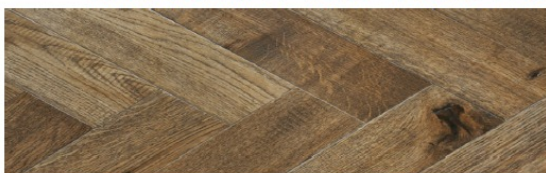
If you want to hear more or arrange a visit, please contact Tony Elgie on 07842 449412 or email him at tony.elgie1@outlook.com



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Check the website for the latest times and prices: www.wensleydale-railway.co.uk/running-days For more information, please contact our office on 01677 425805 or email admin@wensleydalerailway.com

Racing at Thirsk

Here's the year's racing schedule and other events at Thirsk Racecourse.

Saturday 20 April - first racing of 2024
 Saturday 4 May - Thirsk Hunt Cup
 Saturday 11 May - Irish Day
 Friday 7 June - afternoon racing
 Sunday 16 June - Father's Day Skybet Sunday Series
 Monday 24 June - afternoon racing
 Wednesday 3 July - afternoon racing
 Wednesday 17 July - afternoon racing
 Friday 26 July - GRIY Summer Festival
 Saturday 3 August - William Hill Summer Cup
 Friday 9 August - Circus family day
 Friday 16 August - Sausage and Craft Beer Evening
 Friday 30 August - All Creatures Great and Small Family Day
 Saturday 7 September - Ladies Day
 Monday 16 September - Season Finale

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Village Hall Water Leak

Things are now back to normal at Topcliffe and Asenby Village Hall but the first six weeks of 2024 proved to be a bit of a nightmare after a water leak created huge problems.

It all started when close to £7,000 was taken by direct debit from the Village Hall's bank account as the charge for the last quarter of the year. The normal charge is closer to £100, so it was obvious, at least to the committee, that something was dramatically wrong.

Yorkshire Water were asked to visit to help identify the leak but as it was within the boundary of the hall the company said it was not their responsibility. They did arrive early January to check the meter and suggested it was in good working order. That later proved not to be the case.

TWC Drain Care arrived on site and quickly proved that there was a leak somewhere under the terrace at the front of the hall. Exploratory holes were dug but the actual leak continued to be illusive. The committee were faced with the prospect of digging more holes and trenches that would have destroyed the terrace, steps and flower beds.

So, an alternative solution was sought and it was agreed that a completely new water supply system would be installed. This solution simply by-passed the leak, isolating it from any water supply.

The problem at this point was that TWC could not proceed whilst the water supply was still turned on at the meter. Committee members had shown that the stopcock at the meter was broken and the water could not be turned off.

They reported this to Yorkshire Water but initially were rebuffed by arguments that it was not their responsibility. But committee members persisted and over a week four appointments were made and broken, wasting much time of committee members and contractors. After instigating Yorkshire Water's complaints procedure, progress was finally achieved on Friday 26 January when a team arrived and took five minutes to identify that the stopcock on the meter was indeed broken and they replaced it.

That meant the major work to replace the water supply could begin...but in the meanwhile TWC had had to leave the site to fulfil other commitments elsewhere. Work at the Village Hall had to be fitted in to their schedule over the next few weeks. The main works were completed by 9 February, though some cosmetic work took a little longer.

All of this created a major operational difficulty for the Village Hall Committee and the hall's users. The hall could not operate without an effective water supply or whilst contractors were digging holes all over the entrance area. So, weeks of bookings had to be cancelled, creating major difficulties for many of the organisations that regularly use the hall. The committee has been impressed with the patience and understanding all users have shown over this period and wishes to thank them all and hope they will settle back in now that it is service as usual.

Financially it has been a very worrying time for the committee, but it's hoped that the costs associated with the leak - the excess water consumption, repairs, as well as the loss of income - will be recovered from the hall's insurers.



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THE ANGEL INN AT TOPCLIFFE



Throughout the ongoing refurbishment The Angel has been open for business and has hosted a wide variety of events, including weddings, conferences, business meetings, private parties and funeral teas. If you are thinking of organising an event and want to view our conservatory and function room, please contact reception on 01845 578000.



HILARITY BITES COMEDY CLUB

The regular Hilarity Bites Comedy Club is staged on the last Thursday of each month.

The next one will be held on
Thursday 28 March
and after that on
25 April and 30 May

Doors open at 7pm. Show 7.30 to 10.30pm.

Tickets £10 pre-paid or £12 on the night.

More information and tickets from The Angel reception – 01845 578000 or www.hilaritybites.co.uk

SUNDAY LUNCH

Check availability for

Mother's Day on Sunday 10 March

and make sure you book early for

Easter Sunday, 31 March

Lunch served 12 noon to 4pm in the Conservatory and Function Room.

Traditional Sunday roast or a choice of specials available.

We cater for all dietary requirements.

Booking highly recommended
01845 578000



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