

HUDSWELL & DISTRICT MESSENGER



Editor: Claire Swainston, Parish Clerk

Thank you for all your contributions; the information contained is only as good as that supplied so please keep it coming! Deadline for the next issue is 1st March 2027.



We've been working hard to reduce the speed of vehicles travelling through the village for seven years now. During that time we have reported 155 drivers to North Yorkshire Police for speeds in excess of the limit.

It's nice to see drivers slowing down who previously did not.

This Newsletter is published by:

HUDSWELL & DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: John Dixon Tel: 01748 824631

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Paul Chapman Tel: 01748 823909
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Parish Clerk: Claire Swainston Tel: 01748 826989
clerk@hudswell-pc.gov.uk

Minutes of meetings can be found displayed on the main parish notice boards (in Hudswell and Downholme) and on the following website:

<https://hudswell-pc.gov.uk/>

THE LITTLE SHOP, HUDSWELL

Probably the smallest community shop in Britain

The Little Shop has a good range of groceries, sweets and snacks as well as Bracken Hill jams and chutney, Rudgate beers and wine. Also, we now stock a range of frozen goods, including pizzas, ready meals, ice-cream, bread and vegetables. Our milk and butter is from Acorn Organic dairy and our eggs are free range from a local supplier.

Winter opening hours (from Thursday 1st October 2026):

Monday – Friday	9.00am – 11.00am & 5.00pm – 6.00pm
Wednesday	<i>CLOSED ALL DAY</i>
Saturday	10.00am – 11.00am
Sunday	11.00am – 12 noon

Looking for new Volunteers

As always we welcome any new volunteers, whether you want a regular shift or to fill in for holiday cover and sickness. If you are interested please call in at the shop and leave your contact details, or email Heather: h.swettenham@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY ORCHARD

Please can we remind you that you are very welcome to help yourselves to an apple from the community orchard, behind the George & Dragon. However, please encourage your children to respect the food that is grown there and not use the

fruit for throwing games either around the orchard or in front of the pub on the road.

There has been a really good crop this year so please make use of the fruit.

ALLOTMENTS – GROW YOUR OWN!

Bored with the gym? Fed up of sitting on the sofa? Why not try a different way of getting fit.

For those of you who do not know, there are allotments at the back of the pub where you can enjoy the fresh air and the beautiful view while getting fit and growing your own organic vegetables. There is a water supply on tap – literally - a communal shed where you can keep your tools if you wish to and left over tools from previous allotment holders so you don't have to splash out on new ones. We also have a WhatsApp group so we can share tips and excess plants etc. If you, or someone you know, is interested in taking on an allotment - or half a one if you are a beginner – get in touch. Now is the time to be getting ready for Spring planting so why not have a go?

Email Heather: h.swettenham@gmail.com

HUDSWELL VILLAGE HALL – Events and News

Badminton	Mondays 7.00 pm -9.00 pm (September-April only) Enquiries to Martin Booth 01748 451299
Bridge Club – Weekly	Fridays 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm Enquiries to David Basham 07768 266180
Pilates – Weekly	Thursdays 4.00 pm – 5.00 pm <i>and</i> ; Thursdays 5.00 pm – 6.00 pm Enquiries to Joanna Gibson 07572 539213
Yoga – Weekly	Thursdays 7.00 pm - 8.15 pm Enquiries 07982 104144
Radio Club	3 rd Wednesday each month 7.30 pm - 9.30 pm
FREE Coffee Morning	1 st Thursday each month – 10.00 am – 12.00 noon, all welcome

Hudswell Village Hall is **available for hire** for parties, anniversaries, clubs and meetings. To make a booking or for other enquiries contact Sue Rowley – telephone: 07544 239752.

GEORGE AND DRAGON

It is hard to believe that we are already heading into autumn after what has been a very busy first summer for us at the George & Dragon.

The pub has continued to grow in popularity over the past few months, with a particularly strong response to the food and some extremely busy Sundays. We will always do our best to accommodate everyone, but Sunday lunch in particular can now become very busy, so we would strongly recommend booking in advance wherever possible. Our full website is under construction and will be launched shortly, but online booking remains available through the temporary site and is the quickest and easiest way to book.

Our beer festivals have also been a real highlight and have brought a great atmosphere to the pub, with both regulars and visitors coming along to enjoy the range of cask ales, music and the occasion itself.

Food has been one of the biggest successes of the summer, and as the weather starts to turn we are beginning to make some seasonal changes to the menu. Expect a move towards the sort of warming, traditional pub food that suits the George & Dragon particularly well through autumn and winter. We were very pleased recently to receive a food hygiene rating of 5 from North Yorkshire Council, which is a reflection of the standards being maintained by the team behind the scenes.

Another particularly welcome bit of recognition came when the George & Dragon was featured by The Telegraph among its 2026 top 500 pubs in the UK. For a village pub like ours, it is very encouraging to see the George & Dragon gaining recognition further afield while continuing to build its following locally.

Most of all, we would like to thank everyone who has supported the pub over the summer. It has been a very busy few months, and we are looking forward to settling into autumn, getting the fires going again and continuing to build on what has been a very positive first season.

Sam, Becky and the George & Dragon team

ST MICHAEL'S LODGE – A POPULAR PLACE TO STAY!

We have had a very busy summer at St Michael's Lodge with record visitor numbers, occupancy levels and income from June through to September and the bookings for October are also looking very good. Of course, we recognise that these will usually be our best months and that business through the winter will be at a lower level. This was our first full summer as the Lodge had only just opened in June last year and we were advised that it would take at least two years to build up our reputation. On this basis we are ahead of these expectations as occupancy levels of above 60% for these months are more than we had hoped for. The reviews also continue to be effusive in their praise of the facilities, the staff and the

general ambiance. As the risk of being repetitive, as I know I included a number of quotes from reviews in last edition of the Messenger, I will quote a few more of these below.

“Arrived to a tranquil setting and warm welcome. The location is within easy walking distance of the village pub, but remains calm and peaceful. The interior has been finished to a high standard, with original features combining with a great, and sympathetic, modernised restoration. The room I stayed in was comfortable and clean, with abundant hot water in the sizeable en-suite. The firmness of the mattress and pillows, alongside the weight of the duvet, were ideal for myself. The communal areas are adept at accommodating for sociable or private time, whilst the kitchen is extremely well furnished; Wi-Fi remained faultless throughout the building. Additionally, the free tea and coffee is a nice touch. Overall, I will certainly be staying at St Michaels Lodge again, provided it is not booked out of course. As a final note, I normally sleep around 4 hours per night, at St Michaels I had a full 9 hours uninterrupted rest, which speaks volumes.”

Christopher, UK

“Loved the building, the character as well as the small parts of modern incorporated to such a standard! The room and communal areas are exceptionally clean. We loved to shut off the world, be in the quiet village, with time in a real old worldly pub a short walk away (The George & Dragon) the views and the staff. We will definitely be returning at some point. 100% recommend!”

Keeley, UK



"This is not your average B&B, this is something else. Excellent location in the quiet and peaceful countryside, and a quirky, yet very cozy converted church building that'll make you feel home in the minute you step inside. Or probably even before that. The hosts are very friendly and helpful too, and it clearly shows that they take pride in running the place."

Peter, UK

"We had a wonderful stay at St Michaels Lodge. It is a beautifully converted from a former church. Very comfortable and pristine. We walked from Richmond through the lovely Hudswell Woods. Highly recommended."

Justina, Italy

There are many more like these and as well as reassuring us that St Michaels Lodge is providing a good experience for our visitors, is also reminds us how fortunate we are to live in a tranquil village, surrounded by beautiful countryside and with local facilities that visitors to Hudswell wax so lyrical about.



Whilst the majority of visitors are from the UK, as our reputation spreads, we have increasing numbers from Europe, the USA, and Australia. Also, we recently had a guest who was a trustee of the Berard Sunley Foundation, one of the charities that gave us grant aid to convert the building. She emailed afterwards to say that she was:

“thrilled to see the completed project and delighted that it was fully occupied by guests who seemed very pleased with the facilities.” She added her congratulation to the trustees of HCC on **“such a fabulous project”**.

Whilst the reviews and recent visitor numbers are very pleasing, it remains the case that the Lodge is not yet a fully sustainable business. The trustees and our manager have had to learn fast, and adjust the service provided, the marketing initiatives, and the staffing levels to meet changing circumstances. The visitor numbers were much lower in the first few months of 2026 and at that time the trustees took the difficult decision to reduce our staff team from three to two. This meant that, over the busy summer the trustees had to occasionally and in one case regularly step in to help with the cleaning and welcoming the guests. This was a short-term measure and we plan to be in a position to appoint an additional part-time staff member for the summer period next year. We know that many of our guests have been recommended to stay at the Lodge by their friends or relatives in Hudswell and we are very grateful for these recommendations. When you do this please ask your friends to book directly with St Michaels rather than via booking agency, as this means that all of their booking fee comes to the Lodge.

Finally, there will be a repeat of the successful Wreath Making Workshop at the Lodge at 6.30p on the 8th December. If you would like to book a place please contact Melanie at St Michaels on 07521 158338 or 01748 343022.

HCC Trustees

THE BOLTON ARMS, DOWNHOLME

Richmond and Northallerton MP Rishi Sunak has visited one of North Yorkshire's most historic village pubs to meet its new owners and hear about their plans for the future.

Mr Sunak called in at the Bolton Arms in the village of Downholme, near Richmond, after Paul and Toni Foot took over the business earlier this year following the retirement of its previous owners after 27 years.

The couple, who moved from Scotland where they previously ran a pub, purchased the Bolton Arms in April after spending two years searching for a business in the Yorkshire Dales.

Since taking over, they have carried out a programme of refurbishment, including redecorating the premises, replacing flooring and furniture and introducing a new menu. Further improvements, including upgrades to the kitchen, are also planned.

During his visit, Mr Sunak discussed the role village pubs continue to play in bringing rural communities together and supporting local events.

He said: “Village pubs remain an important part of community life across the dales and rural communities, and it was great to meet Paul and Toni and hear about their plans for the Bolton Arms.

“Taking on a pub is a significant commitment and it is encouraging to see new owners investing in a well-known local business and building on what people already value about it.”



Mr Foot said the couple knew immediately that the pub was the right opportunity when it came onto the market.

“We’d been actively searching for a small business to buy in the dales for a couple of years,” he said.

“As soon as The Bolton Arms came onto the market, we didn’t hesitate as it perfectly suited what we were looking for and offered a home as well as a business.

“We’re looking forward to introducing some small enhancements to what was already a thriving community pub.”

The Bolton Arms has a unique place in English pub history. Before being sold into private ownership in 2013, it was the only pub in England owned by the late Queen Elizabeth II because it stood on Ministry of Defence land. Its unusual ownership made it a well-known curiosity, and it has remained a popular destination for both local residents and visitors.

The new owners say they are keen to build on the pub’s strong community reputation while making sympathetic improvements to ensure it continues to thrive for years to come.

Richmondshire TODAY, 1ST July 2026

NEWS FROM THE WOODS

Whilst I like fine, sunny weather my enjoyment is increasingly mixed with a growing sense of unease about the challenges presented by extreme weather and our future climate. This time last year I was writing about a summer of drought and butterflies. A year on and we have again endured drought, although we have been spared the relentless heat that gripped southern England. Admittedly, rain here at the end of August turned grass green again, but before that south facing slopes in the Dales looked more like Africa's Serengeti. Cattle and sheep could be seen huddled under trees for shade or wandering across brown dusty fields searching for something nutritious. For several months, cut fields of grass barely recovered, although thanks to downpours in May the winter feed that was cut was three times more than in 2025.

The drought was also mirrored in our woodland. Large limbs have been dropped from beech, oak and ash, the latter already struggling with dieback. Leaves have been shed early from tree canopies, and soils are heavily cracked. The flowering period of many plants was shortened, and vegetation now looks damaged and tired. It feels like it is going to be a long autumn.

There were however some winners. Some large leaved lime trees have produced huge amounts of seed in response to a run of warm summers. Once a key component of our native woodland the natural regeneration of lime may increase in coming years. Several migrant invertebrates were also abundant. Painted lady butterflies, that migrate over several generations from North Africa, were frequently seen from May onwards. Hummingbird hawkmoths also arrived en masse from the continent, and as I write this several continue to visit the salvias around Hudswell. Wasps have also done very well. There are two common species of social wasp that nest in the ground. They predate on a variety of invertebrates

and are very much part of our healthy woodland ecosystem. They usually keep to themselves unless their nest is disturbed by an inquisitive dog nose or raked out by a badger, searching for a meal of protein rich larvae. Although we often perceive them to be a nuisance (I was stung twice this year), they are a key part of our countryside. Their nests are a true work of art; swirls of wood pulp mixed with saliva create beautiful paper structures in which the queen lays eggs. In turn these larvae are then fed on pulped insects (including those considered to be garden pests), collected and chewed from the surrounding environment by workers. For me a sound of early summer is the delicate rasping noise of wasps stripping wood fibre to build their nests, often gently stripping a garden shed or fence! A concerted act of recycling.

As always, please contact me if you have any questions about our work in the woods, or if you have any suggestions or interesting observations. You can also follow our work across the Dales using Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/YorkshireDalesNT>

Seb Mankelow

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To place an advert in the next issue of the Hudswell & District Messenger please contact the Editor. Your support will help with printing costs, a copy is delivered to each house in Brokes, Downholme, Hudswell, Stainton and Walburn (200 copies in all).

- “Local Services” adverts cost £20 per annum (2 editions).
- Inside Front/Back Cover Full Page: £50 for Black & White / £75 for Colour.