

# DARLEY & MENWITH 2024/25

## A year in the life of our community

### In-Harmony Community Choir

It has been another successful year for the Choir with plenty of fun and quite a lot of change.

In May we were successful in being awarded a grant from the Nidderdale Plus fund for which we are very grateful.

Our performances have kept us in the public eye and, for the first time in recent history, we ran our own concert called "In Harmony and friends" which was a fantastic success. We also helped to celebrate Dacre & Hartwith Village Hall's 100th birthday and had a busy Christmas including Carols by candlelight at Dacre.

We cannot discuss this last year without noting our change of musical director and accompanist. We are incredibly lucky to have found such amazing talents to work together. Our accompanist, Iain Jennings, brings a sense of humour and patience and laid-back approach which just shows what an anti-dote community choir must be for his hectic rockstar lifestyle. Our fantastic new Musical Director, Daphne West, has brought her energy, verve for life, and dedication to local music with her from the South West to benefit Nidderdale.

We have much to look forward to this year. Our dementia forward concert for this summer is in the planning stage but should be something quite special. Our long-standing connection with dementia forward makes this the perfect beneficiary of our talents.

### Darley Cricket Club

Darley CC once again had two Saturday teams in the Nidderdale Amateur Cricket League, in Division 2 and Division 5.

The 1st team finished fifth in Division 2. The 2nd team finished second in Division 5 and gained promotion to Division 4. They also won the knockout competition.

We also had an evening league team.

We have been running a junior session of coaching on a Friday night with around 30 children. This has proven to be very popular.

With the future in mind, last winter we have put an extension on the pavilion to upgrade the facilities. It has been a major job but hopefully worthwhile.

We continue to have financial support from local businesses and grants, for which we are hugely grateful.

### The Charity of Isabel Day

This small charity owns and manages a number of small parcels of land in Darley and Thornthwaite that were bequeathed many years ago.

The Trustees are drawn from the two parishes and are able to use the income from the land or investments to award small grants to local organisations within these parishes. If your organisation has a project that needs some support, please contact Sue Welch, one of the Trustees.

### Darley Playing Fields Association

The past twelve months have seen further developments from the DPFA. Another Boules competition was held, with many more teams participating, and entries are now in for what will hopefully be an even bigger tournament this year. The courts have also been updated with a new wooden surround and additional seating installed with a memorial bench for long-term residents Brian & Rosemary Mathers.

We were able to add a bonfire to the firework display this year after commissioning a very large modular fire pit. The event was well attended once again and supported by local sponsors to whom we are very grateful.

The playing fields hosted a village get together in September and, whilst a little cold, was enjoyed by all. The event will be repeated this year as a Focus on Darley venture & will be hosted by the DPFA on 13 July.

The children's playground has continued to be our focus and, in addition to regular maintenance, we have added, and are planning to add, further equipment.

The Trustees have started to share our plans for a new Multi-user Games Area with village organisations. The plans also include new changing facilities, which will allow the shop to expand into the existing changing rooms, creating more space for a café area inside the shop. The Trustees are planning to talk to more organisations and hold a public consultation meeting this year.

### Christ Church Darley

We have three services each month at Christ Church and can assure you of a warm welcome. These are:

- the first Sunday in each month: Holy Communion at 9.30am;
- the second Sunday in each month: a quiet, reflective Holy Communion at 6.30pm; and
- the third Sunday in each month: an all-age Family Service at 9.30am.

The fourth Sunday in each month gives us an opportunity to visit the other churches in the parish

In addition, for families, we have Messy Church on Saturday tea-time and Forest Church in the grounds of Holy Trinity Church, Dacre. Dates of these will be in our Link magazine and on the Facebook page (where many of our morning services are live-streamed):

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1384504615160118>

During the last year the project to make a smooth entrance to the church was completed. This was in conjunction with Christ Church Community Centre (CCCC) and thanks to the support of the Parish Council and other grants.

Church members continue to take an active part in promoting, attending, and leading a range of activities in the village and in particular in CCCC.

## Darley Heritage Group

Over the past sixteen years, the group has compiled the leaflet "Darley Heritage Trail" and three books full of old photos and memories of Darley. Copies are all available at the village shop, or from Sue Welch on 01423 780970. So, if you are new to the village, make sure you get hold of them to learn about its history.

The group is not currently involved in a project, but continues to collect old photos and reminiscences, so if you are a long-standing resident and have anything to add to the village archive, please contact Sue.

## Darley Community Library

The library is based in the meeting room in Christ Church Community Centre (CCCC) and is staffed by volunteers. It is stocked with books from the North Yorkshire Council (NYC) library which are changed three times each year.

The library opened in 2012 when we lost the service of the mobile library which used to visit Darley. Our stock includes fiction and non-fiction, for both adults and children, along with large print books and jigsaws (on loan from Nidderdale Plus).

Our opening hours each week are:

Monday 5.30pm to 6.30pm during school terms (to coincide with Beavers and Cubs in CCCC).

Tuesday 10.45am to 12.15pm (for the benefit of Little Fishes and Meet and Eat in particular).

Saturdays 10am to 12pm (very useful for those attending the CCCC Coffee Mornings).

We must account for our stock to NYC so books borrowed from Darley must be returned to Darley and we are unable to accept donations of books.

The book exchange is entirely separate from the library, and meets on the first Friday of each month in CCCC from 10.30am to 12pm. We share coffee and biscuits and bring and exchange paperback books.

## Darley in Bloom

The group has continued to plant and maintain the many flowerboxes throughout the village, to keep the village looking good.

If you would like to help, then please contact Helen Simpson, the new Chairman of the group. There are regular monthly working parties, along with occasional special sessions to get the boxes planted, emptied, or maintained.

The group also arranges fund-raising events in order to be able to buy the plants and arrange watering, so during 2024/25 it held coffee mornings, a Quiz at The Wellington and a Gardeners' Question Time Evening. There is no automatic funding from Darley and Menwith Parish Council or North Yorkshire Council and so profits from these events, along with other donations, are essential. Thanks to all who help or attend.

Many thanks also to those villagers who contribute regularly by purchasing Local Lotto tickets each week. The Local Lotto is operated by North Yorkshire Council and 50p out of every £1 goes directly to your selected 'good cause'. Do search for this on the internet and

select Darley in Bloom as your target. You have the chance of winning a cash prize, and Darley in Bloom receives enough money to pay for a good proportion of the summer plants.

The village entered the inaugural Yorkshire Rose Competition organised by Yorkshire in Bloom. The village was judged on its tidiness, floral displays, facilities and community activities and we were delighted to receive 5 Roses – the highest possible award. Proof that Darley really is a village to be proud of!

## Darley and Summerbridge Primary School Federation

Darley and Summerbridge Primary School Federation (part of Yorkshire Collaborative Academy Trust) continues to thrive with healthy numbers in both schools.

Our schools cater for pupils from 2 years old and, from the day they start with us until the day they leave, they benefit from the loving, nurturing approach that makes our schools so special.

Our spiral curriculum ensures that all children learn age-appropriate range of skills and knowledge to equip them with the next steps in their education.

The provision of before and after school care enhances the core offer that is available, not to mention the wonderful grounds that we are fortunate enough to benefit from.

For more information about either school please contact [ncoates.darley@ycatschools.co.uk](mailto:ncoates.darley@ycatschools.co.uk).

## Darley Village Website

The village website at [www.darleyvillage.info](http://www.darleyvillage.info) shows all the details of the village facilities, organisations and projects and has contact details for all those responsible. It is managed by Darley and Menwith Parish Council and holds details of all Council members and the agendas and minutes for all its meetings.

Regular activities are listed, and one-off events, such as Film Nights and major fund-raisers, are found here too, as well as on the village calendar. Local news covers upcoming roadworks, information from North Yorkshire Council and other items of local interest, so check on the website to keep up-to-date.

If any organisation has information that needs posting, please contact [clerk@darleyparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@darleyparishcouncil.org.uk).

## Hookstone Memorial Hall

[www.h-m-h.co.uk](http://www.h-m-h.co.uk)

Hookstone Memorial Hall is in need of new volunteers. If you feel you can offer some free time in becoming a supporter please speak with Alastair Procter: email [aprocter321@btinternet.com](mailto:aprocter321@btinternet.com)/ telephone 01423 780115.

Enquiries regarding booking the hall for your event, Diane Rawnsley can give you more details ([rawnsleysroost@aol.com](mailto:rawnsleysroost@aol.com) or telephone 07887 357437).

The Honorary Secretary is Suzie Field ([field.bents@btinternet.com](mailto:field.bents@btinternet.com) and telephone 07843 058110). Information regarding the Billiard & Snooker club are available from Martin Smith on 01423 780519.

## **Christ Church Community Centre (CCCC)**

The committee at CCCC continue to make every effort to manage a centre that is a safe, welcoming, clean, and comfortable facility.

In the summer our project to improve the access on the West of CCCC and Christ Church was finally completed. We are grateful to North Yorks Council, with support from Councillor Andrew Murday and a Commuted Sums grant, Darley with Menwith Parish Council, The Knabs Ridge Wind Farm Community Fund, The Isabel Day Charity, Christ Church, and local donors who helped us to fund the £24,000 project. Sam Hesselden Ltd completed a superior project that has not only improved our access but has also completed the offroad parking improvement that we started in 2019 with grass guard area over the ditch.

In September one of our main hirers, Harrogate Dance Company moved into their own premises which is wonderful news for the company. Unfortunately for CCCC, their hire was important sustainable income which will be difficult to replace.

We continue to house the community library which relies on a band of loyal volunteers.

We are helped by several groups in the village to run regular monthly Saturday Butties, Bakes and Brew coffee mornings which are a regular meeting point for many.

We worked with Darley Playing Fields Association to run the Village Day Get Together on the playing fields in September. Despite damp weather the afternoon was a success, we hope to grow this into a regular event on the village calendar.

We are grateful to the many volunteers who help organise range of activities in CCCC.

## **RAF Menwith Hill**

We continue to maintain close working relationships with local Authorities and the Emergency Services. During the past year, we conducted a very successful emergency planning day which included representatives from the local Police, Fire and Ambulance services. We are also working with Harrogate Fire Brigade on a mutual support agreement and we have been working closely with North Yorkshire Council and North Yorkshire Police on a reduction in the speed limit on the B6451 and the Menwith Hill Road. We are hopeful that a reduction in the speed limit to 40mph on the roads around the base will be implemented in the near future.

We reopened our Main Gate in 2024 after a significant period of construction. Work is continuing on our New Support Facility, and we are very grateful for the patience of the local community with the temporary road closures this necessitated in 2024. Our next major project will be the demolition and construction of a new Fire Station scheduled for 2027.

Construction and maintenance activity inevitably involves contractor vehicle and lorry traffic and we are very mindful of the need to minimize the impact on our local roads. This is at the forefront of our minds as we are planning and scheduling.

Visits for members of the local community continued and we hosted ten groups alongside three cadet troops. There is a full calendar of base visits for the coming year.

We hosted a Civic Leaders Briefing morning in June 2024 and held our Thanksgiving event at Darley Memorial Hall for the third time. It was a huge success once again with over 100 people attending. We hope to continue the tradition this year.

We continued our outreach work, spending time with Darley Playing Fields Association and resurfacing 100 metres of path at the side of the River Nidd on behalf of Pateley Bridge Town Council. We have also spent time at Ripon Walled Garden.

We hosted Harrogate and District Young Carers to a day out at a local Farm Park, and our 2024 Toy Drive collected gifts and vouchers for over 650 children in need in our local area.

## **Darley Memorial Hall**

The Memorial Hall has hosted its usual wide range of major activities, including regular monthly dances, well-supported film nights, featuring many great movies, and the indoor bowls and snooker clubs throughout the winter.

The Hall has also accommodated several other events for a wide range of organisations, as well as events for local residents. Major events have included two big functions for the village, (a ceilidh to mark the end of summer and a tea party to celebrate Christmas, both attended by nearly a hundred local villagers).

A Thanksgiving Day dinner for RAF Menwith Hill was hosted in November, attended by many local guests as well as civic dignitaries from throughout North Yorkshire.

There were also events for Darley Primary School, for the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and for the regional association of Women's Institutes and a Macmillan coffee morning.

Some big cycle races used the Hall as their headquarters and there were many private events including parties, celebrations, and commemorations.

## **Focus on Darley**

Focus on Darley is a voluntary organisation made up of all the local charities and groups in the village. It publishes the regular Village Newsletter, which keeps everyone in the village informed about activities and events and organises community events on behalf of the village.

The Parish Council makes an annual contribution to the printing costs of the newsletter, and all of the member organisations pay a fee that also supports these costs. All the work of editing and distributing over 600 copies every two months is done by volunteers.

## Darley and Menwith Parish Council

Darley and Menwith Parish Council (the Council) held eleven meetings during the year to 31 March 2025. These were all held in the meeting room at Darley Memorial Hall.

The Council had a full complement of the same seven Councillors throughout the year. Every Councillor gives their time on a voluntary basis, and many also give additional time to represent the Council at meetings and events, and to be part of other local organisations, as a way of keeping the Council informed.

The Council was again heavily involved in planning matters, responding to thirty-one different consultations on planning applications, planning enforcement and appeals. The Council also continues to monitor how the preparation of a new Local Plan for North Yorkshire will affect Darley and Menwith Parish.

Speakers at Council meetings included Sarah Hart, who spoke about local community-led housing schemes.

The Council responded to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England review when it was clear that the North Yorkshire Council proposal could adversely affect the North Yorkshire Council representation of parishioners from 2027.

The Council supports several organisations in the community with regular grants – this includes a grant to Darley Playing Fields Association (towards the costs of providing the playground), Darley Memorial Hall (a contribution to help towards the cost of providing the public car park for the village) and Focus on Darley (towards the costs of printing its regular newsletter). It also gave a grant to Christ Church Community Centre towards the cost of improving accessibility to the venue.

The Council regularly reports problems with roads, footpaths, and lighting within Darley and Menwith Parish to help keep these in good order. During the year, North Yorkshire Council Highways agreed to hold monthly calls to push for progress with ongoing highways issues and to report new problems and matters. Calls have been held in most months since July 2024.

The Parish Caretaker, Jim Benson & Sons, continues to do a great job, regularly cutting the grass through the village and around lanes and junctions once a year. The team also helps with *ad hoc* tasks such as fitting new benches and signs and strimming the Fringill area and footpaths when needed.

The Council also continues to maintain four defibrillators, located at Hookstone Memorial Hall, Christ Church Community Centre, Prospect Cottages and at Darley Playing Fields. These are monitored regularly to keep the devices available for emergencies, replacing batteries and pads and carrying out servicing when needed.

With the help of a grant from North Yorkshire Council, the Council replaced and updated the information board panel on Stocks Green, Darley. The Council also purchased a new sign to direct visitors to the car park at Darley Memorial Hall and a new noticeboard outside the village shop.

A project to improve access on one of the village footpaths (known as "Footpath 1") is ongoing. However, through the generosity of the landowner, one very high stile has been replaced with a gate. A second gate purchased by the Council is awaiting installation.

## Organisation contact details

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
Christ Church Community Centre	Sue Runham	01423 780317	suerunham@hotmail.co.uk
Christ Church, Darley	Bryan Dexter	01423 781535	bdxldx@gmail.com
Christ Church Darley Scout Group	Erica Spencer	01423 780905	akelaccd76@gmail.com
Darley Community Library	Theresa Watts	01423 780359	dandtwatts640@gmail.com
Darley Cricket Club	Tim Marriner	01423 780318	marrinja@aol.com
Darley Heritage Group	Sue Welch	01423 780970	swelch@darleygreenacres.net
Darley in Bloom	Helen Simpson	07742 717051	hmsimpson1@gmail.com
Darley Memorial Hall	Jane Wardman	07443 477359	secretary@darleymemorialhall.com
Darley Methodist Church	Alan Jordan	07532 436790	alanjordan1951@gmail.com
Darley & Menwith Parish Council	Martin Pearson	07541 518456	clerk@darleyparishcouncil.org.uk
Darley Playing Fields Association	Mark Simpson	01423 781809	msimpso7@gmail.com
Darley and Summerbridge Primary School Federation	Nick Coates	01423 780234	ncoates.darley@ycatschools.co.uk
Darley Village Website	Sue Welch	01423 780970	sue@darlevillage.info
Focus on Darley	Angela Houseman	01423 780056	angela@ehouseman.co.uk
Hookstone Memorial Hall	Suzie Field	07843 058110	field.bents@btinternet.com
InHarmony Community Choir	Lucy Malby	07823 554496	lucy.malby@icloud.com
RAF Menwith Hill	Angela Marquis	01423 777971	angela.marquis.gb@us.af.mil
The Charity of Isabel Day	Sue Welch	01423 780970	chairman@darleyparishcouncil.org.uk