

# North Yorkshire Council

5 November 2025

## **Assessment of Asset of Community Value Nomination *NYCACV0068 Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough, York, YO23 3PH***

### **Report to the Head of Localities**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To determine whether Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough, YO23 3PH should be placed on the Council's List of Assets of Community Value (ACV) under the Localism Act 2011, following a nomination from Bilbrough Parish Council, a qualifying nominator, validated on 12 September 2025.

#### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The nomination is for Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough. The recommendation is that the Head of Localities:
- (i) Determines that the nomination for Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough (NYCACV0068) is successful and meets the definition of community value as detailed in the Localism Act 2011
  - (ii) It should be placed on the North Yorkshire Council Assets of Community Value List of Successful Nominations

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to consider all valid nominations for properties and/or land to be placed on the List of Assets of Community Value. This is also known as the 'community right to bid'. Land or property considered of community value can be nominated by a voluntary or community body that complies with Regulation 5.
- 3.2 When a listed asset comes up for sale, an ACV is subject to a protected period (moratorium) during which a community interest group bid for the asset. The purpose is to create a "window of opportunity" to secure funding and bid for the property on the open market. The owner is not obliged to accept a bid from a community interest group and can sell to whomever they choose at the end of the moratorium period.
- 3.3 The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 provide a mechanism for the owner of land listed as an ACV to request an internal review and also appeal to the first-tier tribunal against the listing. Although first-tier tribunal decisions are not binding precedents any appeal decisions provide judicial guidance to the operation of the legislation. The guidance

provided by these decisions is becoming increasingly useful to local authorities in the assessment of Assets of Community Value nominations.

- 3.4 Private owners may claim compensation from the Council for loss and expenses incurred through their property being listed. More details are provided in the 2012 Regulations.
- 3.5 This report ensures that the Council considers the nomination for Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough as required by the Act.

#### **4. NOMINATION CONSIDERATION**

##### **a) Description of asset**

- 4.1 The small village of Bilbrough has a population of 348, according to 2021 census data, and is around nine miles south-west of the city of York. It is close to the major A64 road which links Leeds, York and Scarborough.
- 4.2 The nomination is for Three Hares Inn, a public house, which sits in the centre of Bilbrough village. Bilbrough is a quiet village, the pub is located on the main street of the village, in the centre. At one end of the street is a church, and at the other end of the street is a village hall with a children's play area nearby. The main street of the village is mainly comprised of large, detached houses. The pub is a detached building with managers/owners' accommodation on the first floor. There is an enclosed beer garden and carpark.
- 4.3 The nominated site had previously been listed on the Register of Assets of Community Value by Selby District Council (Reference 2020/0472/CAR). The listing expired on 5 July 2025. Bilbrough Parish Council nominated the site as an Asset of Community Value in May 2025, the nomination was unsuccessful with the decision made on 8 July 2025.
- 4.4 Three Hares Inn is not currently open for business and is vacant. A search online indicated it was "temporarily closed". A lease for the pub is being marketed, with a to let sign on the building itself and an online listing.
- 4.5 It was confirmed through business rates information that the pub has been closed since 6 April 2023.

##### **b) Nomination and Validation**

- 4.6 The nomination to list Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough as an Asset of Community Value was received on 10 September 2025 and validated on 12 September 2025. A copy of the nomination form with additional information is attached at **APPENDIX A** and in accordance with the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 a decision is required by 6 November 2025.

- 4.7 The nomination on behalf of Billbrough Parish Council was accepted on the basis of the nominating group qualifying as a Parish Council under Section 89 (2)(b) of the Localism Act 2011.
- 4.8 It was established that the property was owned by Wellington Pub Company PLC (Company Registration Number 3406623). This was confirmed through a Land Registry search (Title Number NYK115484).
- 4.9 There were no current occupiers or management as the pub was vacant.
- 4.10 The nomination includes all the buildings (including owners/managers accommodation) and the carpark, and as such covers all the land within the Title NYK115484.

**c) Site Visit**

4.11 A site visit had recently been made for the previous nomination. The site visit took place on 22 May 2025, a weekday lunchtime, with the following observations made:

- The pub was closed and clearly vacant
- There was a large to let sign on the front of the building, this advertised “Free of Tie Public House, 3 Bed Accom, Car Park & Garden”
- The building looked in reasonable condition
- The main door was well secured and there were some “keep out” security signs in the windows which detracted from the appearance of the building
- It was not possible to assess the interior
- There was level access and an off-street carpark
- There was a notice board attached to the front of the building which was being used to display some information about the parish council and some local services
- The village itself was very quiet with not many people walking or driving through
- Around the village there were not many services, there was a church, a play area and a village hall
- The houses on Main Street were mainly large, detached houses
- The village hall appeared well used and was well maintained, it was available for hire and held regular public events

**d) Owner Comments**

- 4.12 Gosschalks LLP, on behalf of Wellington Pub Company Limited, submitted a formal objection to the nomination of The Three Hares Inn, Billbrough, as an ACV. The letter, dated 27 September 2025, argued that the nomination by Billbrough Parish Council should be rejected.
- 4.13 The freeholder noted that the property had been closed for over two years, with no current or recent non-ancillary community use, and no realistic prospect of such use resuming in the next five years. They argue that the

nomination lacks substantive evidence and is primarily aimed at preventing development rather than preserving a genuine community asset. They also emphasise that historic significance or longevity of use is irrelevant under the Localism Act 2011.

- 4.14 The letter also notes that the community has adapted to the pub's closure by using alternative venues, and that no viable tenant or purchaser has come forward despite efforts over several years.
- 4.15 In summary, the owner maintains that the nomination does not meet the legal criteria for listing and appears to be an attempt to block redevelopment rather than preserve a genuine community asset. Points raised on behalf of the freeholder are considered in this report where relevant.

**e) Community Value Consideration**

- 4.16 In terms of making a decision on this matter, the nomination, together with any additional information received within the agreed timescale, has been used to assess if the property/land nominated meets the definition of community value as detailed in the Localism Act 2011 (Section 88).
- 4.17 Section 88(1): "A building or other land in a local authority's area is land of community value if in the opinion of the authority-
- a) an actual current use of the building or land that is not an ancillary use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and,
  - b) it is realistic to think that there can continue to be a non-ancillary use of the building or land which will further the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, although the use does not have to be the same."
- 4.18 Section 88(2): "A building or other land in a local authority's area that is not land of community value as a result of subsection (1) is land of community value if in the opinion of the local authority—
- a) there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community, and
  - b) it is realistic to think that there is a time in the next five years when there could be non-ancillary use of the building or other land that would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.
- 4.15 There are many examples of pubs having community use and assets have been listed on this basis by local authorities. Each nomination is, however, assessed individually and it is for local authorities to determine whether each one meets the definition of community value as detailed in the Localism Act 2011.

4.16 There is no current actual use of the nominated land/property as it has been closed for a period of two and a half years. This means Section 88(1) cannot be satisfied and the assessment process will therefore focus on whether the two conditions in Section 88(2) have been met.

## **5 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES**

5.1 The following consultees were notified of the nomination:

- NYC Planning
- Local Land Charges
- NYC Environmental Protection
- NYC Community Safety and CCTV
- NYC Food, Farming and Health & Safety
- NYC Licensing
- NYC Localities
- NYC Revenues and Benefits
- Local Councillor

5.2 All consultees had recently provided responses to the nomination that was dealt with in July 2025. There were no further comments or updates. The consultee responses from the previous, recent nomination are included below.

### **NYC PLANNING**

5.3 The NYC Planning service were consulted and made the following comments:

#### *Planning history*

ZG2024/0800/FUL – change of use from sui generis to residential including internal and external alterations and creation of new parking area – Refused 16.10.2024 and dismissed on appeal reference APP/U2750/W/25/3358695 on 15.04.2025.

CO/1983/1289 (8/84/29A/PA) – change of use from former blacksmiths shop to dining area, erection of new kitchen and extension of car park – Granted 14.09.1983

No further planning history in relation to the use has been identified. Upon review of the planning history, it is noted that the lawful use of the building is public house which falls within sui generis use class and given that the most recent application ZG2024/0800/FUL was refused and dismissed on appeal, this remains the case for the foreseeable future.

It is also noted that the Inn was nominated by Billbrough Parish Council and designated as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) on 6 July 2020 and that its listing expired on 6 July 2025.

### Planning policy

It appears from the submission that the Parish Council is in the process of application for a community right to bid in order to have an opportunity to have a better chance to raise finance, develop a business and to make a bid to buy the pub on the open market in order to re-open the pub and potentially introduce additional facilities to be used by the community and visitors.

It is noted that the site is located within the development limits of Bilbrough and planning policy SP13 B (1) of the Selby District Core Strategy supports the more efficient use of existing employment sites and premises within defined Development Limits through modernisation of existing premises, expansion, redevelopment, re-use, and intensification with policy SP14 A supporting local shops and services, including village shops and services, by resisting the loss of existing facilities and promoting the establishment of new facilities to serve the day-to-day needs of existing communities and the planned growth of communities.

### Conclusion

On the basis of the above, it is therefore concluded that there are no objections to the community bid so far as planning matters are concerned.

### **LOCAL LAND CHARGES**

- 5.4 A search for Local Land Charges was undertaken. There were three local land charges relating to the nominated site:
- Two planning consents for alterations to the public house from 1983 and 1985
  - The Bilbrough conservation area

### **NYC ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

- 5.5 The Environmental Protection service were consulted, and no comments were received.

### **NYC COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CCTV**

- 5.6 The Community Safety and CCTV service were consulted, and no comments were received.

### **NYC FOOD, FARMING AND HEALTH & SAFETY**

- 5.7 The Food, Farming and Health & Safety service were consulted, and no comments were received.

### **NYC LICENSING**

5.8 The Licensing service were consulted and made the following comments:

- The licence number is LN/000003179, The licence holder is Wellington Pub Company, Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London, SW1P 4QP
- The licensable activities on the license were for the performance of dance, live music and recorded music
- There is no Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) on the licence so the sale of alcohol cannot take place
- No DPS, 'no sale of alcohol' came into effect from 11.04.2023
- To add a DPS would require a DPS variation application, a consent form and a fee of £23.00
- Were a DPS in place the times would be Monday to Saturday 10.30 – 00.30 and Sunday 11.00 – 23.00 hours

### **NYC LOCALITIES TEAM**

5.9 The Localities service was consulted and provided the following feedback about the nomination:

- The community is relatively small but demonstrates strong local engagement. The village hall in Bilbrough is well-utilised and has recently benefited from improvements funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). It is managed by a competent and active committee, indicating that the community possesses the capacity to oversee buildings and deliver projects effectively. While operating a community-owned pub would represent a significant undertaking, similar initiatives have been successfully implemented elsewhere. With the right combination of time, skills, and expertise among local residents, such a project is achievable. Should the community pursue this path, appropriate advice and guidance is available to support them through the process.

### **NYC REVENUES AND BENEFITS**

5.10 The business rates team advised that according to their records, the Three Hares Inn ceased trading on 5 April 2023.

### **LOCAL COUNCILLOR**

5.11 The Local Councillor was consulted, and no comments were received.

## **6 ASSESSMENT INFORMATION**

6.1 In assessing the community value of Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough all information received has been considered. Consideration is based on the criteria listed at paragraph 4.18. There is no current actual use of the nominated property as it has been closed for a period of two and a half years. The assessment process is therefore to determine if the two conditions in Section 88(2) have been met.

**CONDITION ONE Section 88(2) - There is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community.**

**1. Recent Past**

- 6.2 In order to be listed the nomination must demonstrate that there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the nominated asset furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community. There is no statutory definition or guidance regarding the term 'recent past' and it is deliberately loose regarding the specific five-year timescale in the second condition. The official guidance is that 'if there have been uses of the land for purposes such as use by the Ministry of Defence for live ammunition practice the period could be ten to twenty years.' Some authorities have set their own timescales including three or five-year periods preceding nominations. It seems clear that no fixed timeframe definitively defines the 'recent past'; it is for each authority to interpret and determine.
- 6.3 When considering the closure of public houses, periods of six years (River Arms in Cheeseborne), five years (the Kings Head in Diss) and five and a half years (the Cricketers Rest in Norwich) have been considered to be outside the recent past. There are also examples where the recent past has been in excess of six years, in **Hawthorn Leisure v Chiltern DC** the Kings Head in Great Missenden had been a pub since the nineteenth century and the unchallenged evidence of the publicans from 2000 to 2007 established that during that period the pub qualified as an ACV. Judge Lane held that given the long history of the Kings Head as a pub the use during that period ending in 2007 occurred in the recent past, this period ended over seven years before the nomination. It appears that what constitutes the recent past is determined based on the circumstances of each nomination.
- 6.4 In **Crostone v Amber Valley** Judge Lane stated that the assessment of recent past will depend on all the circumstances in a particular case and that "the expression is a relative concept". He stated that regard for the length of time the Black Swan had been a public house was relevant (the period was nearly two hundred years). The implication is that the longer the period of use furthering a community benefit, the longer the period which will constitute the recent past.
- 6.5 In **Worthy Developments v Forest of Dean DC**, the judge stated that when considering 'recent past' it could not have been intended to import the five-year period from the future condition when Parliament had failed to set out a precise period for the condition.
- 6.6 There is also no equivalent consideration of 'recent past' in planning determination and therefore there is no appropriate comparable evidence as part of any Planning Application decisions.

6.7 North Yorkshire Council has not determined a specific timescale to apply when considering the recent past and each nomination is assessed individually. As stated previously there is no agreed criteria for 'recent past' determination, however, there are a number of relevant factors that could be considered when determining what constitutes the recent past and these are listed below. Assessments of these factors are appropriate for the nomination for Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough so that the facts can be established:

- (1).The length of the period of community use of the nominated asset in the past
- (2).The type of asset involved
- (3).The nature of the community use of the nominated asset
- (4).The degree of connection between the asset and the community
- (5).Whether the asset has been out of use for a period prior to the nomination.

**(1).The length of the period of community use of the nominated asset in the past**

6.8 The nomination form included the following relevant information:

- The nomination states that Three Hares Inn has served as the village's social hub for over two centuries (since at least 1823) and provides evidence to support this
- The planning history shows planning consents linked to its use as a public house in the 1980s
- It was actively used by the community up until March/April 2023, when it closed following the tenant's departure

6.9 As mentioned at paragraph 4.13, the owner argues that the longevity of use is not a consideration when assessing the nomination, stating that, "the Nomination details that the Property has been a pub for circa 200 years. To be abundantly clear, it is not the role of the 2011 Act to protect properties purely because they are old, or uses have been historic – there is absolutely no provision for this (nor the consideration of this) in the 2011 Act." This can be challenged through relevant case law, as referred to at paragraphs 6.3 – 6.5 and below:

- "Given the long history of the Kings Head as a pub, up to 2007, it is, I find, correct to describe that use as having occurred "in the recent past"" – Judge Peter Lane, First-Tier Tribunal, Hawthorn Leisure Ltd and Chiltern District Council (CR/2015/0019)
- "The "recent past" is not defined in the Localism Act 2011 or any relevant subordinate legislation. What constitutes the "recent past" will depend upon all the circumstances of a particular case. To that extent, the expression is a relative concept. In this regard, it is relevant that the Black Swan operated as a public house for almost 200 years, until its closure in 2012." – Judge Pete Lane, First-Tier Tribunal, Crostone Ltd and Amber Valley Borough Council (CR/2014/0010)

6.10 The nomination provided newspaper archives and historic evidence to demonstrate that the pub has been open for two centuries. This also evidenced the building's role as more than a pub, as it was a bookmakers and auctioneers. Overall, the nomination demonstrates a long, varied history of community use (over 200 years), with substantial supporting evidence. Relevant case law supports inclusion of evidence relating to the length of the period of community use, in a case-by-case assessment of nominations.

## **(2). The type of asset involved – Public House**

6.11 The nominated asset is a public house as confirmed by comments from Planning "it is noted that the lawful use of the building is public house which falls within sui generis use class and given that the most recent application ZG2024/0800/FUL was refused and dismissed on appeal, this remains the case for the foreseeable future."

6.12 Although the asset is a public house, this alone does not confirm community value without evidence of recent or ongoing use that furthers social interests/wellbeing. This is noted by the owner's representative and supported by case law.

6.13 There is a view that pubs are social settings in themselves and are places where people go to drink and socialise, conversely there are issues around the detrimental health and social impacts of alcohol. These factors are considered in the context of each individual pub nomination, and it is the consideration of a number of factors identified in the report that fulfil the assessment of community use.

6.14 As well as being used as a pub, the building was also used for various village events, these were identified in the nomination and dated back two centuries:

- Sports clubs and social dinners
- National celebrations and commemorations
- Bilbrough School Feast
- Pageants
- Auctions
- Bookmakers

6.15 The nomination included historic sources and community testimony that identified the site as a pub that also served as a versatile hub for the local community. Consultation with NYC Planning confirmed the lawful use was as a public house and noted a planning application for change of use to residential had been refused and the appeal dismissed.

## **(3). The nature of the community use of the nominated asset**

6.16 This assessment takes into account the uses identified in the nomination as community use, these are also considered in the following section regarding ancillary use. The nomination identified the following:

- Historic events are listed in paragraph 6.14
- The pub served as a central social venue for the village, supporting both food and drink sales
- It was a place for social interaction, community gatherings, and informal support networks
- During the pandemic, it adapted to community needs by offering takeaway food services
- The community has shown a strong desire to revive the pub, including forming a group ("Friends of The Three Hares") and engaging with local political representatives

6.17 More recent specific examples that were identified in the nomination are:

- Quiz nights (every Thursday - 30-50 attendees)
- Bilbrough church bellringers (every Tuesday, post-practice)
- Live music (the regular singer also hosted karaoke on alternate Fridays)
- Wakes and remembrances - a regular venue following funerals and other services at St James' Church.
- Book club, wine club and Battlefield Society meetings
- Church committee meetings
- Village Hall Committee meetings (when the VH was booked for other activities)
- Ladies' nights - monthly
- Meeting/return point for race days around the region
- Traditional start/end point for the annual 'Christmas Carols Around The Village'
- National celebrations and commemorations - also the meeting/end point for ceremonies involving the beacon on nearby Ingrish Hill, e.g., Armistice Day, VE Day.
- Bank holiday hog roasts (May/August)
- Ice-cream booth (serving hatch on Main Street)
- Bilbrough Golf Day dinners. Since the pub closed, this annual village event has struggled to find a suitable venue for its traditional prize-giving evening.
- Accommodation: guest flat upstairs and camper vans in the car park

6.18 The pub was previously listed as an ACV by Selby District Council and expired in July 2025. A previous ACV listing does not automatically influence a new nomination because each application is assessed independently based on current circumstances.

6.19 The property owner of The Three Hares Inn argues that the site should not be listed as an Asset of Community Value because it has been closed for over two years, with no current or recent non-ancillary community use, and no realistic prospect of such use resuming in the next five years. The owner also notes that the community has adapted to the pub's closure by using

alternative venues, and that no viable tenant or purchaser has come forward despite efforts over several years.

6.20 The nomination outlines general pub-related activities as well as evidencing significant community use beyond typical expectations of a pub.

**(4). The degree of connection between the asset and the community**

6.21 The nomination form included the following relevant information:

- The pub is described as the “heart of the village”
- People in the community had demonstrated willingness to volunteer time and effort to help reopen it
- The local community were involved in the selection of ales and wine that was to be sold at the pub
- The pub was an employer of young people from the local community
- Students from the nearby college use the pub
- Over 50 statements in support of the nomination from the local community was received
- Newer residents have expressed regret at not experiencing the pub, indicating its cultural and social significance

6.22 Comments from the owner’s representative relating to the connection between the asset and the community included: “the former tenant decided to depart the Property due to the lack of commercial viability. In short, the pub is not factually supported by the community.” This comment from the owner’s representative does not adequately address the criteria under Section 88(2). While commercial viability may have influenced the former tenant’s decision to leave, it does not determine whether the asset had community value that furthered social wellbeing or interests.

6.23 The nomination provided information about links with the local community over a long period of time, additionally there were no other public houses in the village of Bilbrough. Supporting evidence also provided information and evidence about specific events, activities and local groups that used the venue. Many statements in support of the nomination were included with the nomination from local residents and businesses. Whilst the owner links a lack of community support with the closure of the pub and its lack of commercial viability, it does not take into account that uses that further social interests and social value may exist independently of profitability.

**(5). Whether the asset has been out of use for a period prior to the nomination**

6.24 The nomination identifies that the pub has been closed since March/April 2023, this was confirmed through internal consultations with NYC Licensing and Revenues and Benefits, as business rates and licensing data confirmed the business was not operating from April 2023. The nominated asset has therefore been out of use for a period of two years and six months.

- 6.25 The property has been, and still is, advertised to let. The lease being advertised is for a 20-year period.
- 6.26 The asset has been out of use since March/April 2023, and while it remains advertised to let, there is no indication of imminent reactivation. Evidence in the nomination demonstrates a local resident made an offer to purchase the freehold which has yet to be responded to.
- 6.27 The period of community use of the nominated asset in the past was considered in detail at paragraphs 6.8 – 6.10. The period of closure of two and a half years is considered short in the context of a period of community use of two centuries.

### **Recent past conclusion**

- 6.28 Although the asset has been closed for a period of two and a half years, the evidence demonstrates that its active use was substantial and directly furthered social interests and wellbeing. The Localism Act 2011 does not define “recent past,” leaving interpretation to the circumstances of each case. Given the asset’s longstanding role as the village’s social hub and its continued lawful use as a public house, the activities documented in the nomination fall within the scope of recent past use. The period of inactivity does not outweigh the strong local connection, and therefore the uses identified should be regarded as meeting the statutory recent past requirement under Section 88(2). ***Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the recent past element of the criteria is met.***

### **2. Actual use that is not an ancillary use**

- 6.29 The term “ancillary use” is not defined in the Act, and it is left to each local authority to determine. In the context of assessment, the frequency, regularity and whether uses are still in place have been identified as factors for consideration. It was thought that this condition meant that the community use had to be the primary use of the asset, but this was dispelled by Judge Warren in **Firoka (Oxford United Stadium) Limited v Oxford City Council**, and the test is whether the use is significant, but does not require it to be the predominant use.
- 6.30 Information in the nomination about actual uses extended beyond eating, drinking and socialising (see paragraphs 6.16 - 6.20).
- 6.31 There was a wealth of community testimonies and statements of support provided alongside the nomination. Example of the comments received from local residents are below, these highlight the role of the pub as central hub for the local community:
- “The Three Hares has always provided an essential space for community groups, social clubs, and residents of all ages to gather. For many, especially those who live alone, it offers companionship and reduces

social isolation. It represents part of our shared cultural heritage and contributes to the identity of the village itself.”

- “The pub has served as a significant community hub for the village of Bilbrough and also formed a supporting venue for other groups.”

6.32 Although the asset is a public house it has diversified over time. In past years the pub has housed an ice cream parlour and coffee shop which “was popular with village children and also the passing cyclists”.

6.33 The nomination suggests that The Three Hares is used as a meeting place for local groups/societies, this is evidenced in comments from the local residents, some of these groups/societies included:

- The Village History Society – held regularly
- Spanish Lessons – weekly for two years
- Bellringers – weekly
- The Ladies group – held monthly
- Wine Society
- Battlefield club
- Golf Society
- Book club

6.34 The nomination states that the pub staged numerous charity fundraisers including Carols around the piano in the pub raising money for a different charity each year. There is evidence in the nomination and supporting evidence which shows ad-hoc charity fundraisers have been held at the pub for a minimum of 30 years.

6.35 The owner’s representative commented that the property has been closed for over two years and currently has no active use: “The Property has not been open, thus it has not provided any function whatsoever, to any class of person or people, for some 30 months now.” However, a detailed analysis of information available has led to the conclusion that the uses detailed by the nominator fell within the recent past (see paragraphs 6.2 – 6.28).

6.36 The nomination and supporting evidence provided proof of actual uses that were not ancillary to that of use as a public house. There was some information relating to frequency, regularity and numbers of attendees and there was detailed information about types of uses. ***There is sufficient information provided to demonstrate actual use that is non-ancillary and therefore this element of the criteria is met.***

### **3. Furthering the social wellbeing or social interests**

6.37 There are no clear definitions provided in the legislation as to what constitutes ‘social wellbeing/interests’ except that social interests can include ‘cultural, recreational and sporting interests’. The nomination identified some relevant uses as detailed in previous sections (see paragraphs 6.16, 6.17 and 6.33).

6.38 Testimonies indicate that the pub holds particular significance for a diverse range of local residents including families newly settled in the area, parents of young children and older people who may spend more time at home, and local entrepreneurs seeking networking opportunities.

6.39 The pub has played a vital role in fostering community spirit and reducing social isolation, particularly during periods of heightened vulnerability such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Testimonies from local residents highlight its significance as a safe, welcoming, and familiar space where individuals could reconnect and regain a sense of normality and belonging. In addition to its social function, the pub also contributes to the emotional and perceived safety of the village environment.

6.40 The nominator provided 53 statements from local residents, many of these evidenced how the pub furthered social wellbeing. Some examples are below:

- “I saw at first hand the positive community spirit the pub generated. During Covid, when so many of us were isolated, the pub became a lifeline, particularly for young families like mine...being able to reconnect with others in such a safe and familiar setting played a huge part in restoring a sense of normality and belonging.”
- “It cannot be appreciated what an active, well lit ‘beacon’ in the heart of a village with no street lights can contribute to the well-being and comfort felt by the Community; it’s almost like the effect when a theatre goes ‘dark’.”
- “The pub served as an informal meeting place where neighbours connect, local news is shared, and community bonds are strengthened.”
- “The Three Hares has, for many years, served as more than a public house—it has been a vital centre of community life in Billbrough”
- “It enabled business to be conducted in a natural, community-focused way, strengthening trust and local connections”
- “For many, especially those who live alone, it offers companionship and reduces social isolation.”
- “As a gathering place that brings together residents across age groups and backgrounds, the pub directly contributes to social cohesion and mental health through community connection.”
- “Socially, the pub was a safe and welcoming space where friendships were built and generations were bridged”
- “Research and polls indicate that closing pubs and other hospitality venues has led to a decline in the social and mental wellbeing of the population”

6.41 There was an immediate response from the community when the pub closed, with the establishment of the ‘Friends of The Three Hares’ FOTTH. This group aimed to “rally local support for anyone willing to take on the lease/tenancy”.

- 6.42 The provision of takeaway food during the pandemic highlights the pub's adaptive role in maintaining a service during a period of national isolation. Its return to being a "social hub" reinforces its function as a venue for socialising, even under constrained circumstances.
- 6.43 The reference to the pub being the "vital centre of community life" indicates it is important for community interactions, with significant evidence provided to support this by the nominating group in the form of testimonies from the local community. The lack of alternative options for eating, drinking, and informal socialising underscore the significance of the pub to the local community.
- 6.44 It is recognised in the ACV regime that "social interests" includes, in particular, cultural, recreational and sporting interests. The nomination identifies some examples of recognised social interest uses such as supporting clubs, societies and sports teams. The residents' testimonies demonstrate the pub's central role in the community, in reducing isolation and creating community cohesion which can be considered to further social wellbeing. It comes across that, over the years, the pub has significantly contributed to the vibrancy and resilience of village life. ***There is sufficient evidence that uses identified further the social wellbeing or social interests and this element of the criteria is therefore met.***

#### 4. Of the local community

- 6.38 There is no definition or guidance as to what constitutes the 'local community'. The judgement in **Pullan v Leeds City Council** (25 April 2016) was that, in relation to the Old Cock public house, the entire town of Otley was considered to be the local community.
- 6.39 In terms of local community there are many references in the nomination and supporting evidence including:
- The nomination is from the local parish council
  - The establishment of the Friends of The Three Hares
  - It is the village's social hub and social heart of the village
  - The nomination form included specific reference to local organisations who used the pub as a meeting place (paragraphs 6.17 and 6.32)
  - "Preserving the heart of Bilbrough"
  - "Vital centre of community life in Bilbrough"
  - "It's reinstatement on the ACV register would safeguard the possibility of it returning to its rightful place as a cornerstone of the village's social well-being for generations to come"
  - "The Three Hares pub represents the beating heart of this historic community"
  - "Throughout its closure, several residents have also volunteered to keep the area to the front of the pub tidy and tend its window-boxes."
  - "Residents now lack a dedicated community meeting point"

- 6.40 A questionnaire was delivered to the residents of Bilbrough, 51 households responded and a summary of responses are below:
- 96% of households would like to see The Three Hares re-open
  - 591 hours of voluntary time pledged with 33% of respondents offering to support the pub in a financial way
  - Many residents offering trade services
  - Suggestions of future other community services that could be hosted at The Three Hares
  - 92% of respondents open to attending a meeting to discuss findings and explore options for re-opening the pub
- 6.41 There are several references to in the nomination to the village. The site visit confirmed Bilbrough was a small, quiet village with limited services. There was no other public house, or permanent hospitality venue that could facilitate informal socialising, eating and drinking. There was a church, a village hall and a children's play area with an area of public open space. The village hall appeared to be well-maintained and well-used, it was available to hire, and the nominating group confirmed it was regularly used by community groups and local organisations for events and activities. When a site visit was undertaken in May 2025 there were noticeboards in the village advertising a 'pop-up' food truck and bar, available on a Sunday afternoon/evening.
- 6.42 The owner's representative made some comments about the local community and its relationship with the asset and use of other venues, including:
- "We submit that this is a gross misuse of the ACV regime, a regime which was established to protect communities which were in real danger of losing assets without which they could not function"
  - "it is a fact that the community have already made changes to ensure that their community and meeting, etc is unaffected by the closure of the Property. The community have organised a 'Thirsty Friday', are which time interested members of the community meet at the Village Hall – a continuing and valuable community meeting place, that remains open and well used."
- 6.43 Framing the ACV regime as a safeguard only for assets critical to a community's functioning is inaccurate. The statutory criteria are deliberately flexible to allow communities to protect places that play a significant role in their social fabric, not just those that are indispensable.
- 6.44 The assertion that the community has adapted by creating alternative meeting arrangements, such as "Thirsty Friday" at the Village Hall, does not undermine the nomination's compliance with Section 88(2) of the Localism Act 2011. The statutory test is whether the asset's current or recent non-ancillary use furthered social wellbeing or social interests, and whether it is realistic to think that such use could continue. The fact that the community

has sought temporary alternatives reflects resilience, not the absence of value in the nominated asset.

- 6.45 ***It is reasonable to determine that the identification of the local community required by the legislation from the nomination and information available is the village of Bilbrough. There was no other pub in the village but there was an active village hall that supported planned community activities.***

#### **Section 88(2) CONDITION ONE - CONCLUSION**

- 6.46 Condition One requires that there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or land, that was not ancillary, furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community. The conclusion is based on the assessment of each component of this condition.
- 6.47 The Three Hares Inn has a long-established presence in the village since at least 1823, the nomination was supported by historical evidence of community use over a long period of time. The property has been closed since April 2023, a period of two and half years, however given the detailed information about the length, type of community use and the significant degree of connection between the asset of the local community the recent past element of the criteria is met.
- 6.48 The nomination provided sufficient evidence of specific uses beyond general pub functions, and information was provided regarding local organisations and user groups who historically used the pub. Information about specific events and details on frequency, regularity, and attendance were included in the nomination demonstrating a significant non-ancillary use. Therefore, the actual use that is not an ancillary use element of the criteria is met.
- 6.49 The nomination and supporting testimonies demonstrate that the pub has played a significant role in fostering social wellbeing and community cohesion. It has served as a vital space for recognised social interests, providing cultural, recreational, and informal social activities, which testimonies indicate were highly valued by a broad and diverse range of residents. While recent use has been halted due to its closure in April 2023, evidence shows that until then it was a hub for social connection, reducing isolation, and fostering community wellbeing as a versatile, welcoming, and central gathering place. The community's response to the closure, including public mobilisation and offers of volunteer support, reflects a strong attachment to the asset and its ongoing relevance. The nominated site appears to remain an important and valued part of village life. As such, the furthering the social wellbeing or social interests element of the criteria is met.
- 6.50 The nomination demonstrates strong and widespread support from the local community, defined as the residents of Bilbrough. Evidence included in the nomination and resident testimonies, and a community questionnaire showing overwhelming interest in reopening the pub, with pledges of time,

financial support, and trade services. The pub is consistently described as the social heart of the village and has been used by many local groups and organisations, with no comparable alternative venue for informal socialising. The community's proactive response to the proposed change of use, including engagement with the local MP and volunteer mobilisation, further reinforces the asset's continued relevance and importance to village life. The local community element of the criteria is therefore met.

- 6.51 Overall, based on the evidence presented, Condition One is met. The nomination demonstrates that the pub was used in the recent past for non-ancillary activities that furthered the social wellbeing and interests of the local community. Testimonies and supporting documentation confirm its role as a valued social hub, with strong community attachment and engagement. Despite its closure, the asset retains ongoing relevance, as reflected in the community's proactive efforts to support the nomination and the potential reopening of the pub. **It is therefore reasonable to determine that there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community, Condition One is met.**

**CONDITION TWO Section 88(2) - *It is realistic to think that there is a time in the next five years when there could be non-ancillary use of the building or other land that would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.***

- 6.52 The test does not require the likely future use of the relevant building to be determined but rather to determine whether future community use is one of a number of realistic options for the building (**Patel v London Borough of Hackney and Worthy Developments v Forest of Dean DC**).
- 6.53 The test is also not whether such future use is wholly unrealistic but whether it is realistic to think that there could be a relevant non-ancillary use in the next five years (Judge Lane at Para. 26 in **General Conference of the New Church v Bristol CC** supra. 12 February 2015). In addition, "what is realistic may admit a number of possibilities none of which needs to be the most likely outcome" (**Evenden Estates v Brighton and Hove City Council**). It is common for nominations not to have a business plan put forward by those supporting the listing and judges have not regarded this as significant when considering whether future community use in the next five years is a realistic prospect.
- 6.54 It has been established that the threshold to satisfy the "realistic to think" test is low. The First Tier Tribunal in **King v Chiltern District Council** commented that "the test is not a demanding one. "Parliament has chosen to set the bar low".
- 6.55 This condition requires the realistic assessment whether in the next five years there can be non-ancillary use of the building or land which will further (whether or not in the same way) the social wellbeing or social interests of

the local community. In terms of making this assessment, the following information has been considered:

- The community testimonies demonstrated the benefit to social wellbeing of the local community and the collective desire for the pub to reopen and these benefits to be restored
- A community group the 'Friends of The Three Hares' (FOTHH) has been established. So far, they had met with their MP, worked to rally local support to find a tenant and surveyed the local community. Future planned work included raising funds for a commercial survey of the property (intended to provide information to prospective tenants)
- The survey undertaken by FOTTH showed the following:
  - 96% of the 51 households that responded would like to see the pub reopen
  - 92% would attend an informal meeting to explore what the community could do to support a re-opening
  - 39 of the respondents were prepared to offer time, money or both to the re-opening (591 hours of voluntary time were pledged)
  - 13 respondents were prepared to make a financial donation
  - A number of ideas for community services were put forward
- A commercial lease for the property is available and being marketed
- The nomination stated there would be considerable local interest in the sale of the freehold and/or a favourable change of the lease terms, and provided evidence of an offer from a local resident to buy the freehold in April 2025 that had not been responded to (the owner's representative states that their client has not been approached with a bid for the property)
- The consultation with NYC Planning confirmed:
  - there were no objections to the nomination so far as planning matters were concerned
  - the lawful use of the building is public house which falls within sui generis use class
  - as a recent change of use to residential application was refused and dismissed on appeal its status as a public house was likely to remain the same for the foreseeable future
- The nominating group provided excerpts from the Planning Inspectorate's Appeal Decision that were relevant to future use, commercial viability and the lease terms
- The consultation with NYC Communities indicated that the community has the capacity and experience to manage local projects, suggesting that running a community-owned pub could be achievable with the right support and expertise
- The owner's representative noted that:
  - the former tenant left due to lack of commercial viability, stating that the community did not sufficiently support the pub when it was open
  - the 'Friends of the Three Hares' group has so far failed to find a new tenant, and this indicated a lack of commercial interest
  - their client has not been approached with a bid for the property (although the nomination included evidence of a bid being submitted to the owner via Criterion Asset Management Ltd.)

- The nomination included a number of ideas, contributed by the local community, associated with future activities that could take place at the site
- 6.54 The assessment of Condition One noted evidence including community testimony and survey results demonstrating strong local support to reopen the pub. This included practical offers (e.g., time/skills and financial) which demonstrate support for a reopening project, as well continuing community use that would benefit social interests and social wellbeing should it reopen.
- 6.55 Whilst the owner’s representatives state no offer for the freehold has been proposed: “The Nominators have had 5 years during which they could have approached Our Client at any time with a proposal or offer for the freehold interest, and yet they are still to make any offer and/or proposal.” The supporting evidence provided by the nominating group stated the following, “A formal offer was made on the freehold by local resident [NAME] in April 2025; a copy of the relevant email is attached with [NAME]’s consent, together with a letter of support for this ACV nomination. At the time of this submission, [NAME] has yet to receive a response to the offer from either the owners or their representatives.
- 6.56 It is acknowledged from the consultation with NYC Planning that, “the lawful use of the building remains as a public house, classified under the sui generis use class. As the most recent planning application for change of use to residential (Ref: ZG2024/0800/FUL) was refused and subsequently dismissed on appeal, this designation is expected to remain in place for the foreseeable future.” The nominating group included the following excerpts from the Planning Inspectorate’s Appeal Decision (April 2025) that relate to future use:
- “The Council notes that there was considerable public interest, particularly in relation to preserving its current use, but that the lease offering was not an attractive option. It suggests that the local community would be interested in purchasing rather than leasing the property and that this could generate suitable bids.”*
- “A substantial plot is associated with this property which could be reconfigured to give greater flexibility under different circumstances”*
- “[the owner’s] evidence does not fully demonstrate that the premises are no longer viable for retail use.”*
- “there is insufficient evidence to indicate that it is not viable or that it has been marketed on reasonable terms from a policy perspective”*
- 6.57 The commercial lease has been available for over two years and continued to be advertised. At the time of preparing this report the terms of the lease were as follows:
- Leasehold

- A new Free of Tie Lease is offered for a term of 20 years on Full Repairing & Insuring terms
- Rent will be £30,000 per annum subject to 5 yearly rent reviews and RPI increases collared at 2.5% and capped at 5%
- Six months rental deposit will be required
- The estimate for the ingoing's needed to secure the premises were £27,000

6.58 The owner's representative noted that the previous tenancy ended and that efforts to secure a new tenant over a period of more than two years were unsuccessful, suggesting the pub may not be commercially viable. They did not reference or acknowledge that a freehold offer that had been made (and evidenced in the nomination) or acknowledge or respond to comments relating to commercial viability and lease terms from the planning inspector outlined at paragraph 6.56. In reference to their comments on commercial viability, while the former tenant may have found the business commercially unviable, this does not preclude the asset from furthering social wellbeing or interests in the future. Commercial viability is influenced by many factors and does not determine whether the community values the asset or could make use of it in other ways. The ACV test under Section 88(2) is forward-looking and considers realistic potential for community use, not just past commercial performance.

6.59 The 20-year term of the lease did not class as a relevant disposal in terms of the ACV legislation and therefore no moratoriums had been triggered linked to the site's previous ACV status.

6.60 The successful operation of the pub by a new tenant or owner, whether a community enterprise or a private leaseholder, is not dependent on ACV status. Consultation with the NYC Communities Team highlighted the local community was competent and active as evidenced by recent grant applications and project delivery, indicating potential skills, experience, resources and capabilities were available locally.

6.38 From the nomination it came across that, the community views the pub as having strong commercial potential due to the support of residents within the village of Bilbrough, its advantageous location near York, local wedding venues, and popular cycling routes, combined with a lack of nearby alternatives for food, drink, and socialising. There was an understanding that the future success of the pub would depend on progressive and committed management, that served both locals and visitors. The nomination provided the following proposals and suggestions of new and previously popular functions:

- Coffee/breakfast shack - making use of the beer garden and outdoor area - a resident entrepreneur has offered to train baristas
- Takeaway food service
- Shop / farm shop for essentials - eggs, milk, bread, local produce, etc.
- Quiz nights - previously very popular
- Outdoor hog roasts / barbecues

- Pizza nights - either catered in house or via external mobile business
- Accommodation - Airbnb / temporary site for camper vans in car park / 'yurts' in outdoor area
- Sports viewing - not previously available
- Morning mother-and-baby club
- Walking / dog-walking / cycling / jogging / orienteering clubs
- Special interest groups - book club / chess / local history society
- Darts team
- Live music
- Car boot sales
- Art exhibitions for local artists
- Remote working hub (daytime)

### **Section 88(2) Condition Two - CONCLUSION**

6.39 Condition One was satisfied due to sufficient evidence of non-ancillary community use that furthered social wellbeing or social interests in the recent past. The nomination and information available demonstrate the building's potential as a viable pub/business and suggested numerous possible future uses, supported by its location, capacity and enthusiasm in the community, and the identification of specific customer groups and possible functions. Although the owner's representative highlight that efforts to find a new tenant have thus far failed, suggesting that this indicates the pub is not commercially viable, a commercial lease for the property continues to be available, and an offer from the local community to buy the freehold appears to have been put forward in April 2025 but not progressed. Furthermore, a planning inspector made the following comments that are relevant when considering the likelihood of the pub reopening, these are summarised below:

- There was strong community interest in preserving current use
- Concerns were raised over unattractive lease terms
- There was a lack of evidence proving non-viability in commercial sense
- There was potential for alternative ownership models and reconfiguration to give greater flexibility

6.61 Case law provides assurances that the test is whether future community use is one of a number of realistic options, and confirms nominating groups are not required to submit detailed business plans or financial information in order to satisfy this criteria.

6.62 In reviewing the information available, the statutory criteria under Section 88(2)(b) were met. **It is realistic to think that there is a time in the next five years when there could be non-ancillary use of the building or other land that would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, therefore Condition Two is met.**

- 6.63 Although the recommendation of this report is designate the pub as an ACV, this does not guarantee that the pub will reopen and/or that it will operate in a way that furthers social wellbeing or social interests for local residents or visitors.

### **Conclusion**

- 6.64 The aim of Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act and the Assets of Community Value Regulations is to encourage community-focused, local-led action to save and take over assets which are significant to them. The scheme is intended to give communities the opportunity to identify assets of community value and have them listed and, when they are put up for sale, have more time to raise finance and prepare a bid for them. These assets could include the village shop, community centre or pub but assessment is based on the evidence submitted and it is for the local authority to determine each nomination.
- 6.65 A valid nomination to register Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough as an Asset of Community Value was received for assessment. The assessment is whether the details within the nomination, together with any additional information received, satisfy the criteria as detailed in the Localism Act 2011 Section 88 (2). See below:
- 6.67 Section 88(2): “A building or other land in a local authority's area that is not land of community value as a result of subsection (1) is land of community value if in the opinion of the local authority—
- a) there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community, and

#### **(Condition One – see paragraphs 6.1 - 6.51)**

- b) it is realistic to think that there is a time in the next five years when there could be non-ancillary use of the building or other land that would further (whether or not in the same way as before) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.

#### **(Condition Two – see paragraphs 6.52 - 6.63)**

### **Condition One**

- 6.68 Overall, through a detailed assessment relating to the recent past, non-ancillary use, furthering social wellbeing or social interests and identification of the local community it is possible to conclude that nomination satisfies the criteria. Sufficient evidence was provided by the nominating group to demonstrate this. ***Based on the information available it is therefore reasonable to determine that there is a time in the recent past when an actual use of the building or other land that was not an ancillary use***

***furthered the social wellbeing or interests of the local community. Therefore, Condition One is met.***

## **Condition Two**

- 6.69 There is strong community interest in retaining the pub's use, and evidence suggests future community use remains a realistic option despite failed attempts to secure a tenant. A lease is still available, an offer to purchase was made but not progressed, and comments from a planning inspector were referenced concerning the lack of proof of commercial non-viability and the potential for alternative ownership or reconfiguration. Based on the information available ***it is realistic to think that within the next five years the building could be used in a way that furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community. Therefore, Condition Two is met.***
- 6.70 The evidence demonstrates that the nomination meets the definition of community value as detailed in the Localism Act 2011. It is therefore recommended that Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough is listed as an Asset of Community Value and it is placed on the North Yorkshire Council List of Successful Nominations.

## **7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 None. In considering the nomination for Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough, the Council's responsibilities required by the Localism Act 2011 and The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012, are discharged.

## **8. IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS**

- 8.1 If successful, the fact that land/property is listed as an Asset of community Value may be taken into account as a material consideration for any future planning application.

## **9. FINANCIAL APPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 If the decision is to list the property, the owner can make a claim for compensation for which the Council is liable.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Following the decision, all parties will be advised of the outcome of the decision, and the council's reasoning for it.
- 10.2 If the property/land is listed the council is required to apply to the Land Registry for entry of a restriction on the Land Register. This restriction will be in a form of wording in Schedule 4 to the Rules, as Form QQ. This is "No transfer or lease is to be registered without a certificate signed by a conveyancer that the transfer or lease did not contravene section 95(1) of the Localism Act 2011". An owner of previously unregistered listed land, who

applies to the Land Registry for first registration (or a mortgagee who applies for first registration on behalf of the owner), is required at the same time to apply for a restriction against their own title. The local authority is also required to apply to the Land Registry for cancellation of the restriction when it removes an asset from its list.

- 10.3 If the property/land is listed and the owner/leaseholder wishes to dispose of it, they must notify the council. Once this has taken place an interim moratorium period (6 weeks) will apply where disposal of the property may not take place (except if sold to a community interest group which can take place at any time). If, before the end of the interim moratorium period the council receives a written request from a community interest group to be treated as a potential bidder then a full moratorium period applies. Disposal may then not take place within 6 months from the date the Council receives notification from the owner (except if sold to a community interest group).
- 10.4 When a listed asset is disposed of, and a new owner applies to the Land Registry to register change of ownership of a listed asset, they will therefore need to provide the Land Registry with a certificate from a conveyancer that the disposal (and any previous disposals if this is the first registration) did not contravene section 95(1) of the Localism Act (the moratorium requirements).
- 10.5 Where a nomination is unsuccessful, the nominated asset will be placed on the North Yorkshire Council Assets of Community Value List of Unsuccessful Nominations for a period of at least 5 years, together with reasons for not including the land.

## **11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are no equalities implications.

## **12. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are no climate change implications.

## **13. CONCLUSIONS**

- 13.1 The owner and other parties will be informed of the decision. The owner will be advised that there is provision within the Regulations (The Asset of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012) for them to seek a review of the Council's decision.

## **14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 14.1 The evidence demonstrates that the nomination for Three Hares Inn, Billbrough meets the definition of community value as detailed in the Localism Act 2011.

## **15. ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 15.1 None. In considering the nomination for Three Hares, Bilbrough (NYCACV0068), the Council's responsibilities required by the Localism Act 2011 and The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012, are discharged.

## **16. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Head of Localities:

- (i) Determines that the nomination for Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough (NYCACV0068) is successful and meets the definition of community value as detailed in the Localism Act 2011
- (ii) It should be placed on the North Yorkshire Council Assets of Community Value List of Successful Nominations

### **APPENDICES:**

Appendix A – Nomination form (with supporting evidence) and site plan

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

Localism Act 2011

The Assets of Community Value Regulations (England) 2012

Community Right to Bid: Non-statutory advice note for local authorities

Head of Localities

County Hall

Northallerton

*8 July 2025*

Report Author – Claire Wilson & Charlotte Large

Presenter of Report – Claire Wilson & Charlotte Large

Website/references:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2421/regulation/5/made>

<https://bilbrough.parish.uk/>

<https://bilbrough.org.uk/>

<https://wellingtonpubcompany.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/3829511-Three-Hares-Bilbrough-2023-RD.pdf>

<https://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKFTT/GRC/2016/CR-2015-0019.html>

[https://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKFTT/GRC/2015/CR\\_2014\\_0010.html](https://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKFTT/GRC/2015/CR_2014_0010.html)

# Community Right to Bid: Assets of Community Value

## Nomination Form

(Office use only) ACV Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 1: About your organisation

#### 1A. Contact Details

Please provide basic contact details for your organisation

<b>Name of the organisation</b>	Bilbrough Parish Council
<b>Organisation postal address</b>	████████████████████ ██████████ ████████████████████
<b>Organisation website</b>	<a href="https://bilbrough.org.uk/page/parish-council">https://bilbrough.org.uk/page/parish-council</a>
<b>Named contact for the organisation</b>	██████████
<b>Position of named contact within the organisation</b>	Chair
<b>Telephone number for named contact</b>	██████████
<b>Email address for named contact</b>	████████████████████@██████████

## 1B. Organisation type

Please place an 'X' in the middle column against the appropriate organisation type

Organisation Type	X	Registration number of charity/company (if applicable)
<p><b>Parish Councils</b></p> <p>This may be for an asset in its own area, or in the neighbouring Parish Council area</p>	X	
<p><b>Neighbouring Parish Councils</b></p> <p>If the Parish Council borders an un-parished area, then they may nominate an asset within the neighbouring District Council or Unitary Council.</p>		
<p><b>Un-incorporated groups</b></p> <p>Nominations can be accepted from any un-incorporated group with membership of at least 21 local people who appear on the electoral roll within the local authority, or a neighbouring local authority. This will for instance enable nomination by a local group formed to try to save an asset, but which has not yet reached the stage of acquiring a formal charitable or corporate structure.</p> <p><b>Please complete additional form in Appendix 1 if this applies to you.</b></p>		
<p><b>Neighbourhood Forums</b></p> <p>There can only be one neighbourhood forum for an area and the way they are set up is clearly defined by the Council as a planning authority. The procedure for becoming a neighbourhood forum is set out in Section 61F of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.</p>		
<p><b>Community interest groups with a local connection</b></p> <p>These must have one or more of the following structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A charity</li> <li>• A community interest company</li> <li>• A company limited by guarantee that is non-profit distributing</li> <li>• An Industrial and Provident Society that is non-profit distributing/Community Benefit Society</li> </ul>		



## Section 2: About the asset

### Section 2A: Basic details

Please provide basic details about the asset

<b>Type of land/building (for example, pub, shop)</b>	Pub
<b>Name of the premises</b>	The Three Hares Inn
<b>Address of the premises</b>	Main Street, Bilbrough, North Yorkshire YO23 3PH

In addition to the above information, please attach a clear plan which identifies the land/buildings you wish to nominate with a line drawn around the boundary of the area you wish to nominate. This could be a Title Plan from Land Registry, or any other map which gives us enough detail to identify the site.

### Section 2B: Ownership

Please provide details about the asset's ownership, if it is known to you

<b>Name of the owner</b>	Wellington Pub Company
<b>Address of the owner</b>	4 Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London SW1P 4QP
<b>Contact details for the owner</b>	4 Millbank Tower, 21-24 Millbank, London SW1P 4QP
<b>Name of any other occupier</b>	N/A
<b>Name of any other person with an interest in the premises</b>	N/A
<b>Address of any other person with an interest in the premises</b>	N/A
<b>Contact details for any other person with an interest in the premises</b>	N/A

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE

## Section 2C: The premises as an Asset of Community Value

Please explain why you feel the land/premises meets the definition of an Asset of Community Value. Provide as much information as possible. Please note, it is likely that these comments will be shared with the asset owner.

### ACV Definition

A building or other land in a local authority's area is considered land of community value if, in the opinion of the authority:

- (a) an actual current use of the building or other land – that is not an ancillary use – furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community; and
- (b) it is realistic to think that there can continue to be a non-ancillary use of the building or other land which will further (whether or not in the same way) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.

If there is no current use:

- (c) The definition is extended to land which has furthered the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community in the recent past, and which it is realistic to consider will do so again during the next five years.

**How does the current main use of the building/land – or a use in the recent past – further the social interests or social well-being of the local community?**

#### General background

The Three Hares was initially listed as an ACV in July 2020. Since this listing was due to expire in July 2025, a new - but similarly presented - nomination was submitted in the knowledge that it would be assessed according to the same legislation as before (the Localism Act 2011 and the Asset of Community Values (England) Regulations 2012).

However, the assessment process, along with local government, has changed substantially in the five years between the nominations and the July 2025 nomination was unsuccessful. Following subsequent discussions about the decision, NYCC acknowledged that the relevant changes to the process were not made clear. We therefore submit this fresh nomination without delay but with the supporting evidence and detail required by the current process.

Although the pub has been closed since 2023, its value to the community remains undiminished. If anything, its importance has been more keenly felt over the two years that the village has been without its social hub. The strength of feeling and support was recently demonstrated in no uncertain terms as the community came together to oppose the owner's plan to redevelop the pub into a private residence.

As has been made consistently clear throughout both the recent planning matter and the ACV process, the community is not prepared to exercise its right to bid under the current lease terms offered by the owner. Given that The Three Hares must remain a pub, we therefore seek to renew its ACV status in the event that the freehold is made available for sale and/or the owners elect to reconsider the lease terms.

We acknowledge that planning issues and arguments have little bearing on the assessment of community value. However, we respectfully contend that any discussion here arising from the recent planning case can and should be deemed relevant solely in the context of this nomination and the pub's actual community value.

#### Historical background

The Three Hares has been closed since March 2023, during which time the owner has unsuccessfully tried to end its long existence as a pub. It is therefore over two years since the pub has been used for any purpose at all, let alone for the social benefit of the community. At the moment, then, Bilbrough is missing its social and historic heart (we use the term advisedly since the pub lies at the centre of the village).

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**How does the current main use of the building/land – or a use in the recent past – further the social interests or social well-being of the local community?**

From the ACV assessment of the pub in July 2025, it is clear that the concept of 'recent past' is highly important but open to interpretation. However, the case law cited leads to the conclusion that *"the longer the period of use furthering a community benefit, the longer the period which will constitute the recent past"*. Thus we here submit evidence of the pub's long history and contribution to Bilbrough village life.

The pub has been in existence for well over 200 years, being listed in Baines Directory of 1823 as 'The Hare Inn' under the ownership of Robert Wright & Sons, who were also the village blacksmiths (<https://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/YKS/ARY/Bilbrough/Bilbrough23Dry>). The old smithy now forms part of the pub. According to local historian [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] family are listed in subsequent censuses as Bilbrough's publicans and blacksmiths from 1823-1871. During this time, the pub hosted sports and social dinners (including the annual Bilbrough School Feast), local pageants and auctions (see attached 'Historical Evidence'). The [REDACTED] and many of the pub's subsequent landlords and their descendants rest in the village churchyards.

It is not clear when 'The Hare' became 'The Three Hares', but the pub was sold along with the rest of the village in 1943 as part of the Fairfax Estate, Bilbrough and the Fairfax family having strong connections to the English Civil War (detailed in St James' Church and the attached 'History Feature').

During the 1970s and 80s, the pub not only served the community and visitors with food and drink, but also staged live music, car boot sales, numerous charity fundraisers, days out for York race-goers, and was home to cricket, football and darts teams. Landlord [REDACTED] even served as the village's licensed bookie, taking bets by telephone. The pub also hosted the auction for the village school upon its sale in 1988.

The Three Hares went on to build an outstanding reputation for its food and hospitality, winning several awards. This historic success and acclaim is obviously a source of great local pride, with residents and their friends and families also benefiting from a 'destination' pub to which they didn't have to travel. Indeed, the community was able to enjoy the last landlady's excellent food right up to the pub's final day of trading.

**More recent past**

While being supported by the community, the pub has, in turn, always been there to support the community, providing the stage for:

- Quiz nights (every Thursday - 30-50 attendees)
- Bilbrough church bell-ringers (every Tuesday, post-practice)
- Live music (the regular singer also hosted karaoke on alternate Fridays)
- Wakes and remembrances - a regular venue following funerals and other services at St James' Church.
- Book club / Wine Club / Battlefield Society meetings
- Church committee meetings
- Village Hall Committee meetings (when the VH was booked for other activities)
- Ladies' nights - monthly
- Meeting/return point for race days around the region.
- Traditional start/end point for the annual 'Christmas Carols Around The Village'
- National celebrations and commemorations - also the meeting/end point for ceremonies involving the beacon on nearby Ingrish Hill, eg Armistice Day, VE Day.
- Bank holiday hog roasts (May/August)
- Ice-cream booth (serving hatch on Main Street)
- Bilbrough Golf Day dinners. Since the pub closed, this annual village event has struggled to find a suitable venue for its traditional prize-giving evening.
- Accommodation: guest flat upstairs and camper vans in the car park

(Evidence for several of the above can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/TheThreeHaresBilbrough/> though please note that the page is now dormant.)

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**How does the current main use of the building/land – or a use in the recent past – further the social interests or social well-being of the local community?**

Locals were also involved in the selection of the pub's ales and wines, with regular tasting evenings and a suggestion list for the next 'guest' ale (to go alongside local cask favourite 'Billbrough Top' brewed by former resident [REDACTED] - see article in 'Historic Evidence').

During the Covid pandemic, landlady (and last tenant) [REDACTED] provided a much-appreciated takeaway meal service for residents.

The Three Hares was also hugely popular with cyclists - and their supporters, since the village lies on the route for many organised cycling events - as well as students from nearby Askham Bryan College, especially following the closure of their previous 'local', The Buckles Inn, in 2019.

It should be noted that the pub has also provided regular and safe employment for the village's younger residents, in the kitchen and as glass collectors and waiting staff, with older teens and university students employed behind the bar.

The attached 'Community Testimony' document contains numerous personal statements and quotes from residents, each detailing what the pub means to them (plus two standalone submissions from local business owners). On a purely social level, the pub's value cannot be underestimated.

Following the guidance provided by the Localities team, we submit that this section and supporting documentation provides the requisite evidence to meet the criteria necessary to satisfy Condition One, Section 88(2) of the Localism Act 2011:

- 1) Length of period of community use
- 2) Type of asset involved (previously confirmed by Planning)
- 3) Nature of community use
- 4) Degree of connection with the community
- 5) Use prior to the nomination - no use since March 2023; recent community activity is detailed in the following section.

Please explain how there can continue to be a main use of the building/land which will further the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community, whether or not this is in the same way as before.

Since the pub's closure, the community has made a demonstrable effort not only to see and help it reopen, but also to prevent its permanent loss through redevelopment. The latter issue is a matter of public record and will not be detailed again here, save to say that the pub must retain its sui generis use and should be regarded as a viable community asset.

As repeatedly stated and with full understanding of the pub's previous ACV status, the community was and is not inclined to submit a bid under the current lease terms. However, there would be considerable local interest in the sale of the freehold and/or a favourable change of the lease terms.

The 'Friends of The Three Hares' (FOTTH) community group was initially established to rally local support for anyone willing to take on the lease/tenancy. A public meeting was held (image attached), followed by a survey circulated to the village and neighbouring Catterton, the results of which are presented in the attached document 'FOTTH Survey'.

591 hours of voluntary work were pledged (including skilled labour), with several respondents also making financial pledges towards the cost of a potential commercial survey on the property - the idea being that the survey would belong to the community and used to provide information for prospective tenants.

MP Sir Alec Shelbrooke met with village representatives in October 2024 to offer his assistance during the planning matter, and has recently written a letter in support of this ACV nomination (attached).

Throughout its closure, several residents have also volunteered to keep the area to the front of the pub tidy and tend its window-boxes.

The community has thus demonstrated a considerable and collective desire to see the pub reopen, even if only to restore the social interests and wellbeing it provided before. Again, we refer to the personal statements made in the Community Testimony document to show that the main use of the pub would continue to be of enormous social benefit. But its closure has also prompted ideas for other uses in the future, some of which are listed in the attached FOTTH survey and discussed further in the next section.

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**If not currently used for the purposes listed above, is it realistic to think that within five years the building/land can be brought back into a use that furthers the social interests or wellbeing of the local community, whether or not in the same way as before?**

What the near future holds for The Three Hares will be largely and obviously determined by the actions of the current owners.

What is not in doubt is the community's conviction that the pub has huge social and commercial potential under any committed and progressive stewardship. As detailed in the village survey, the community has shown demonstrable support for the next operator, be that a new tenant or a new owner.

We cannot be sure if the current owners are still making a genuine attempt to attract a tenant, but we sincerely hope this is the case. We can be certain that there has been explicit local interest in purchasing the freehold should it become available. A formal offer was made on the freehold by local resident [REDACTED] in April 2025; a copy of the relevant email is attached with [REDACTED] consent, together with a letter of support for this ACV nomination. At the time of this submission, [REDACTED] has yet to receive a response to the offer from either the owners or their representatives.

The aforementioned village meeting and survey also elicited numerous ideas to further the pub's contribution to social interests and community wellbeing and engagement. This constitutes a highly attainable 'wish list' which would not only benefit the community but also serve to attract visitors and custom from further afield - being anyone from cyclists, walkers and students to users of local hospitality (eg local Airbnbs and the two hotels at Bilbrough Top) and - given the paucity of alternatives - residents from the wider area. Proposals, suggestions and previously popular pursuits include:

- Coffee/breakfast shack - making use of the beer garden and outdoor area. A resident entrepreneur has offered to train baristas
- Takeaway food service
- Shop / farm shop for essentials - eggs, milk, bread, local produce, etc (a separate kiosk exists)
- Quiz nights - previously very popular
- Outdoor hog roasts / barbecues
- Pizza nights - either catered in house or via external mobile business
- Accommodation - Airbnb / temporary site for camper vans in car park / 'yurts' in outdoor area
- Sports viewing - not previously available
- Morning mother-and-baby club
- Walking / dog-walking / cycling / jogging / orienteering clubs
- Special interest groups - book club / chess / local history society
- Darts team
- Live music
- Car boot sales
- Art exhibitions for local artists
- Remote working hub (daytime)

Having been suggested by residents, any such ventures would clearly be of social benefit to the community and would also offer revenue streams beyond ancillary use for the tenant and/or owner.

Since the community (unknowingly) had no right to appeal the decision of the previous nomination, we feel it necessary to address the owners' comments made thereon which serve to cast doubt on both the pub's viability and the community's motivation (as summarised in para 6.16 of the previous ACV Assessment of 8 July 2025). In the interests of clarity, we therefore present the following excerpts from the Planning Inspectorate's Appeal Decision (14 April 2025 - attached):

- *"The Council notes that there was considerable public interest, particularly in relation to preserving its current use, but that the lease offering was not an attractive option. It suggests that the local community would be interested in purchasing rather than leasing the property and that this could generate suitable bids."*

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If not currently used for the purposes listed above, is it realistic to think that within five years the building/land can be brought back into a use that furthers the social interests or wellbeing of the local community, whether or not in the same way as before?

- *“A substantial plot is associated with this property which could be reconfigured to give greater flexibility under different circumstances.”*
- *“[the owner’s] evidence does not fully demonstrate that the premises are no longer viable for retail use.”*
- *“there is insufficient evidence to indicate that it is not viable or that it has been marketed on reasonable terms from a policy perspective”*

We would also draw attention to the owners’ assertion that *“the nomination is seen as an attempt to block redevelopment rather than preserve a genuine asset.”* We would point out that the successful ACV nomination of July 2020 - to which the owners made no objection - was made when the pub was actively leased and operational (albeit under Covid restrictions) and under no apparent threat of redevelopment. The pub’s commercial value to the owners may have changed since then, but its value to the community and the community’s motivation for preserving it have clearly not.

We believe that sufficient evidence is presented in this nomination to also satisfy Condition Two, Section 88(2) of the Localism Act 2011. Given that the pub’s sui generis use must remain, we further submit this nomination in good faith and in the hope that the owners will now seek to achieve a sensible and beneficial outcome for all.

The Three Hares has served the Bilbrough area’s social interests and wellbeing for a very long time. The community firmly and realistically believes that, given the consistency and strength of feeling and support, it can and will continue to do so for a very long time to come.

### Section 3: Checklist and Declaration

In addition to the form, please confirm any attachments if provided.

Document	X
Copy of organisation’s constitution/rules/other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilbrough Parish Council standing orders</li> </ul>
A clear plan defining the land/premises being nominated	<p>Attached documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three Hares location plan</li> <li>• Historical evidence</li> <li>• Community testimony (comprising 52 personal statements)</li> <li>• Friends of The Three Hares (FOTTH) survey + group photo</li> <li>• ACV support letter - Sir Alec Shelbrooke MP</li> <li>• ACV support letter - [REDACTED]</li> <li>• ACV support letter - [REDACTED]</li> <li>• Formal freehold offer on The Three Hares - [REDACTED]</li> <li>• Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decision (April 2025)</li> </ul>

Finally, in order to confirm that the information contained within this nomination form is correct and complete and that the required documents are attached, an appropriate authorised officer must sign the below declaration.

We can accept electronic signatures.

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Full name	
Signature	

Please return this form and any accompanying materials to the appropriate e-mail address below:

[AssetsofCommunityValue.NYC@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:AssetsofCommunityValue.NYC@northyorks.gov.uk)

If you require any assistance, please contact [AssetsofCommunityValue.NYC@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:AssetsofCommunityValue.NYC@northyorks.gov.uk)

**Privacy notice**

Please retain a copy of this form for your records and should your circumstances or contact details change then please let the appropriate contact officer know.

This information will be held in accordance with NYC Privacy Notices.

**Appendix 1. For unincorporated groups**

Please only complete this section if you are an un-incorporated group

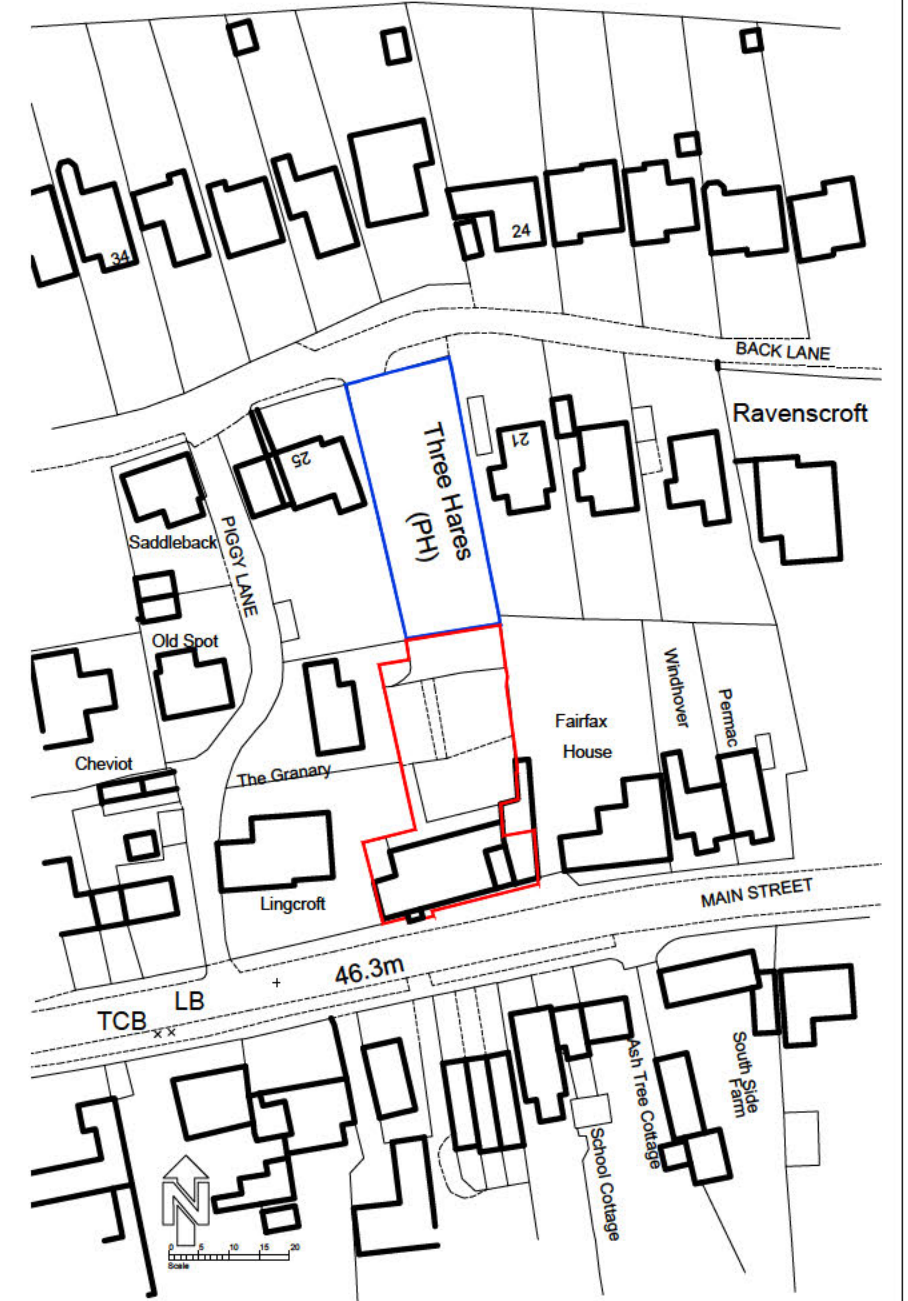
In the case of an unincorporated body, at least 21 of its individual members must be registered to vote locally in order to make an ACV nomination. Please confirm the names and addresses of these members with a signature. If they are registered to vote in the area of a neighbouring local authority, rather than in North Yorkshire, please confirm which area that is.

Member name	Member address	Signature

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Revision	Date		
Copyright Reserved		Do Not Build	All Dimensions To Be Checked On Site
Project			
Three Hares Main Street Bilbrough			
Drawing			
OS Location Plan 1:1250 Block Plan 1:500			
<b>Wythe Holland Limited</b>			
Chartered Architects		10 Emlyn's Street	
Phone +44 (01780) 757878		Stamford, Lincolnshire	
www.wytheholland.co.uk		mail@wytheholland.co.uk	
Date	Scale	Job No	Drawing No
19.08.24	1:1250	2171	01 B

ACV

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From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Monday 8 September 2025 at 13:08 BST

---

Hi [REDACTED]

Following on from the discussion about the Three Hares, I would like to add to the opinions already being raised about the validity of this project.

### **Preserving the Heart of Bilbrough: Why the Three Hares Pub Deserves Asset of Community Value Status**

In the picturesque village of Bilbrough, North Yorkshire, stands a quintessential English public house that has served as more than just a place to enjoy a pint and a meal. The Three Hares pub represents the beating heart of this historic community, and its designation as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) would ensure its preservation for future generations while recognising its vital role in village life.

#### **A Village Steeped in History**

Bilbrough is a village with deep historical roots, dating back to Norman times when its parish church was first established. Located just off the A64 between York and Leeds, this small North Yorkshire settlement has maintained its rural character despite its proximity to major urban centres. With a population that has grown modestly from 319 in 2001 to 348 in 2011, Bilbrough represents the kind of close-knit community where local institutions like the village pub play an irreplaceable role in social cohesion.

The village's Main Street, where the Three Hares proudly stands alongside the Norman church, forms the historic core of this ancient settlement. This positioning is no accident – for centuries, English villages have developed around the twin pillars of church and pub, representing the spiritual and social centres of community life.

#### **The Three Hares: More Than Just a Pub**

The Three Hares distinguished itself as far more than a typical drinking establishment. It operated as what can truly be termed a "community hostelry," serving multiple vital functions that bind the village together:

**Community Hub:** The pub served as an informal meeting place where neighbours connect, local news is shared, and community bonds are strengthened. In a small village like Bilbrough, such spaces are essential for maintaining social fabric.

**Cultural Centre:** Regular quiz nights and live music events provided entertainment and cultural enrichment for residents who might otherwise need to travel significant distances for such activities. These events foster community participation and create shared experiences that strengthen local identity.

**Inclusive Hospitality:** The pub's commitment to serving three real ales chosen in consultation with locals demonstrates its responsiveness to community preferences, while the availability of gluten-free options showed consideration for diverse dietary needs.

**Democratic Participation:** The practice of involving locals in beer selection exemplifies the kind of participatory democracy that makes community institutions truly representative of their users' needs and preferences.

**Economic Anchor:** The pub provides local employment and supports the broader village economy by attracting visitors who might also patronise other local businesses.

The Localism Act 2011 established that assets can be designated as ACVs if their current use furthers the social wellbeing or cultural, recreational, or sporting interests of the local community. The Three Hares clearly meets these criteria:

**Social Wellbeing:** As a gathering place that brings together residents across age groups and backgrounds, the pub directly contributes to social cohesion and mental health through community connection.

**Cultural Interests:** The pub's live music programme and role as a venue for community celebrations enriches local cultural life.

**Recreational Interests:** Quiz nights, dining experiences, and the pub's function as a social destination all serve recreational needs that would be difficult to replace if the establishment were to close.

**Community Resilience:** In small villages, pubs often serve as informal information centres and mutual aid networks, particularly important during challenging times.

#### **The Threat of Loss**

Recent property listings indicating the pub is available for lease highlight the vulnerability of this community asset. While the current owners have invested "financially and with their heart" in the establishment, changes in ownership or business model could threaten its community-focused operation.

The loss of village pubs across rural England has been well-documented, with closures often leaving communities without a central gathering space. Once closed, pubs rarely reopen, and the social infrastructure

they provided is extremely difficult to replace. Villages that lose their pub often report decreased social cohesion, particularly affecting elderly residents who may have fewer alternative social outlets.

### **The Case for Protection**

Designating the Three Hares as an Asset of Community Value would provide several crucial protections:

**Right to Bid:** If the property comes up for sale, the community would have six months to prepare a bid, providing time to organise community ownership or ensure any new owner understands the pub's community importance.

**Planning Considerations:** ACV status would be a material consideration in any future planning applications, making it harder to convert the building to purely residential or other non-community uses.

**Community Awareness:** The designation process itself raises awareness of the pub's importance and can galvanise community support for its preservation.

**Legacy Protection:** ACV status ensures that the community value of the building is formally recognised and protected for future generations.

### **Investment in Community Future**

The Three Hares represents successful integration of commercial viability with community service. Its combination of quality food, carefully selected beverages, and regular community programming creates a sustainable business model that benefits both proprietors and residents.

The pub's location on Main Street, with adequate parking for 20-30 vehicles and a beer garden, provides infrastructure that would be expensive and difficult to replicate elsewhere in the village. This physical asset, combined with its established role in community life, makes it irreplaceable in practical terms.

### **Conclusion**

The Three Hares pub in Bilbrough exemplifies the community assets that the ACV legislation was designed to protect. It serves essential social, cultural, and recreational functions in a village where alternative venues are limited or non-existent. Its loss would not only deprive residents of a beloved local institution but would fundamentally alter the character and social dynamics of Bilbrough.

By granting ACV status to the Three Hares, North Yorkshire Council would acknowledge the pub's vital contribution to community wellbeing while providing practical protection against its potential loss. This designation would demonstrate commitment to preserving the institutions that make rural communities vibrant and sustainable places to live.

The Three Hares is more than a business – it is a cornerstone of Bilbrough's community identity and social infrastructure. It deserves protection as an Asset of Community Value not just for what it is today, but for the irreplaceable role it plays in the ongoing story of this historic Yorkshire village.

*This article represents a community case for preserving an institution that serves as both business and social infrastructure, demonstrating how commercial enterprises can successfully fulfil essential community functions while maintaining financial viability.*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Rt Hon. Sir Alec Shelbrooke, K.B.E., M.P.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Claire Wilson  
Devolution & Community Rights Officer  
North Yorkshire Council  
Local Engagement  
Civic Centre  
PO Box 787  
Harrogate  
HG1 9RW

21<sup>st</sup> August 2025

Dear Ms Wilson,

**Re: Asset of Community Value (ACV) nomination for The Three Hares Inn, Main Street, Bilbrough, YO23 3PH**

I write in support of the recent nomination of The Three Hares Inn in Bilbrough to be listed as an Asset of Community of Value.

With the public house dating back two centuries, it was owned by John Smith's Brewery from 1944 and, before it closed, was a vital village hub.

A new 'Thirsty Friday' community event at the Village Hall began in July, helping to retain the village social spirit alive following the loss of their only pub.

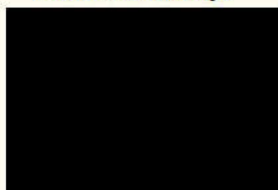
The Three Hares had played an essential role in hosting many local events and meetings, including village events, music nights, quiz nights, seasonal celebrations and gatherings, and much more.

Should this local facility ever be lost, it would be devastating for Bilbrough.

Bilbrough Parish Council successfully fought the recent application to convert the building into a private dwelling, and therefore the pub is gladly retained but remains empty.

It is imperative that this historic pub is given this further protection by North Yorkshire Council, so that it can continue to serve the village and wider community for many more years to come.

Yours sincerely,

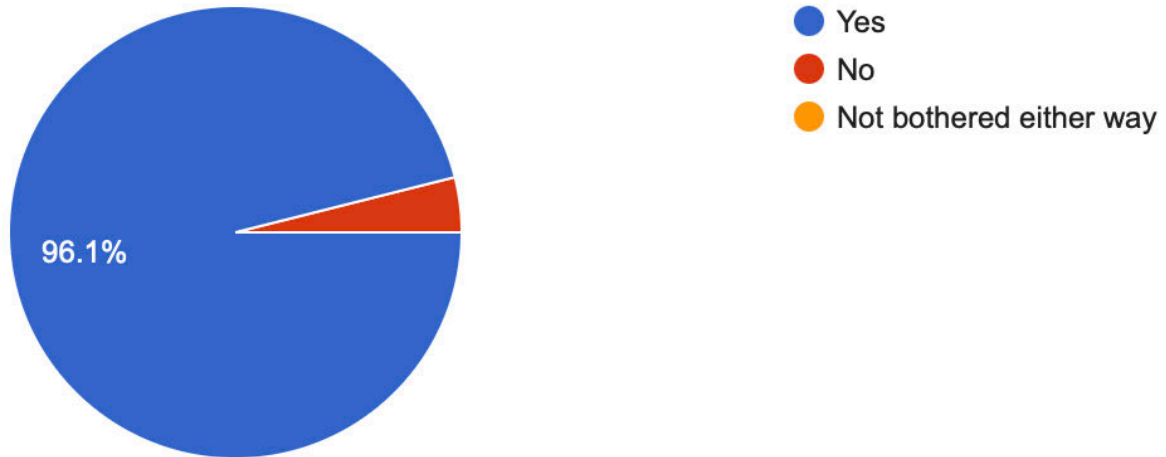


c.c.  
Bilbrough Parish Council

# RESPONSES TO THREE HARES QUESTIONNAIRE

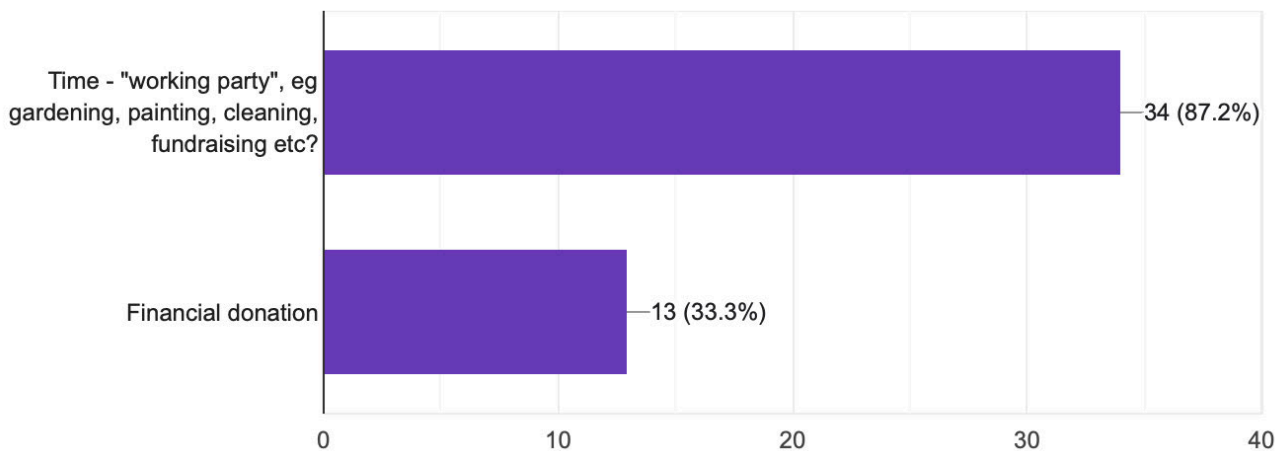
51 households responded. Responses as follows:

1. Would you like to see TTH re-open?



2. Would you be prepared to offer time, money or both to help with the re-opening of TTH?

- 39 responses (76% of all respondents)
- 591 hours of voluntary time pledged



3. Do you have a trade that may help us, if so please state?

- Good at DIY in general
- Electrics and plumbing
- Could help with tidying/cleaning/gardening x 4
- Could possibly find & print some A3 sized survey drawings of pub if that would be useful? ■■■
- Marketing
- Crowdfunding, marketing, videography, event management, coffee shop management.

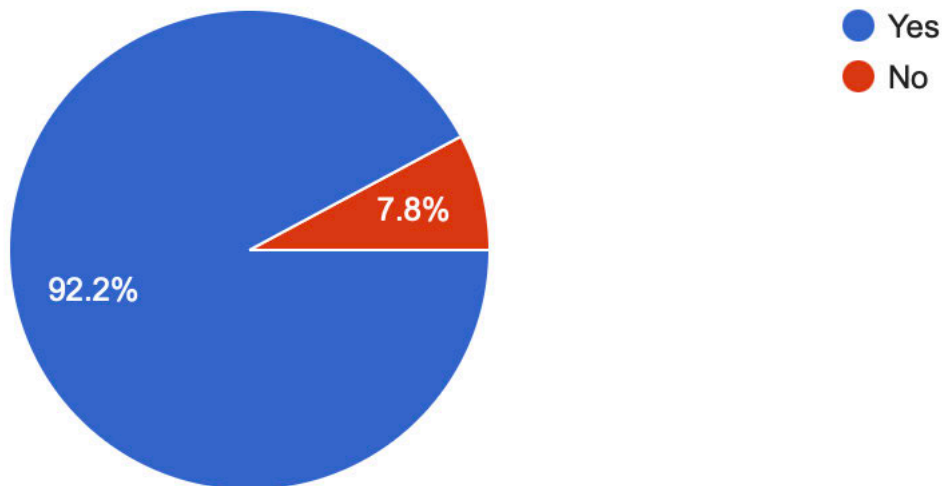
4. If TTH offered other community services would you be interested?



Other suggestions:

- Out of hours vending machine for essentials
- Rooms / Airbnb apartment
- Book club
- Basic shop with milk, bread, eggs, fresh produce, newspapers
- Courier pick up/drop off point
- Local farm shop
- Early evening takeaways
- Working hub for home workers
- Live music
- Rotating art displays from local artists
- Pub quiz

5. FOTTH would like to hold an informal meeting/social gathering and invite all interested parties so that we can explain what we have found out about the pub so far and also to explore what the community could do to support the re-opening. Would you attend?



Other comments:

- Question - why are you not trying to buy the freehold? Sure you have but worth a look at crowdfunder website for a number of initiatives for community pubs e.g. <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/stories/the-drewe-arms-journey-from-closure-to-crowdfunding-success> I would start by thinking of using the grounds as a coffee shop. Train the teenagers in the village / area to be baristas. Use the carpark and garden to attract cyclists. We have worked in coffee shops and know the model well if you need help with that side of things. Or you could set up a mini food market in the carpark area. Lots of potential to generate revenue in advance of the building being renovated.

██████████ - ██████████.

## Fwd: Formal Submission of Freehold Offer for The Three Hares, Bilbrough – £250,000

---

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Monday 18 August 2025 at 17:09 BST

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Follow-up email...

----- Forwarded message -----

From: [REDACTED]

Date: Tue, Apr 29, 2025 at 2:08 PM

Subject: Re: Formal Submission of Freehold Offer for The Three Hares, Bilbrough – £250,000

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I hope this message finds you well?

I am writing to follow up on my previous email (April 23) in which I submitted an offer of £250,000 (two hundred and fifty thousand pounds) for the freehold purchase of The Three Hares public house in Bilbrough.

The offer reflects a genuine intention to see this long-dormant property brought back into beneficial use as a hospitality venue serving the local and wider community. As previously noted, the property remains a registered Asset of Community Value, and the recent appeal decision ([REDACTED]) clearly affirms the planning and statutory protections that continue to apply to the building in its current use class.

It is evident that the cost of refurbishment, which your own reports estimate in the region of £200,000–£250,000, would require a significant investment on top of any purchase price. The offer I submitted therefore takes these realities into account and aims to represent fair and realistic market value for a property in its present condition, within the constraints of its designated use.

I would be grateful if you could confirm that this offer has been received and passed to the relevant parties for consideration.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to your reply.

Kind regards,  
[REDACTED]

On Wed, Apr 23, 2025 at 1:19 PM [REDACTED] wrote:

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to formally resubmit my offer to purchase The Three Hares Inn, Main Street, Bilbrough, York YO23 3PH, for the sum of £250,000 (two hundred and fifty thousand pounds) on a freehold basis. My initial offer was made to [REDACTED] of Fleurets who assured me it was passed on to the relevant parties.

As you are aware, The Three Hares has remained closed for several years and has been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. It is clear that, in its current condition, a further investment of approximately £250,000 would be required to refurbish the premises to a standard fit for modern operation – including essential upgrades to the kitchen, public areas, and accommodation rooms.

The recent dismissal of the appeal by the Planning Inspectorate ([REDACTED]) clearly outlined that the building remains a designated Asset of Community Value (ACV) until July 2025 and that there is insufficient justification for the proposed change of use from its current status as a public house. The decision specifically criticises the viability assessment presented and notes the unreasonable lease terms, which not only deterred prospective operators but also fell short of the minimum statutory threshold for a relevant disposal under Section 96(6) of the Localism Act 2011.

The Inspector further found that the catchment area for potential customers had been grossly understated, and that significant local and regional demand exists, especially when considering access from surrounding towns

and institutions such as the nearby Askham Bryan College and three popular wedding venues.

As such, I urge Criterion and the Wellington Pub Company to now make a good-faith attempt to divest this asset in a manner that aligns with the aims of the Localism Act, national planning policy, and the interests of the community it once served.

My offer of £250,000 for the freehold represents a fair market value, especially given the building's condition and the capital expenditure required to restore it. It is made in good faith and with the intention of reinstating The Three Hares as a sustainable and thriving pub serving both locals and visitors alike.

Please confirm receipt of this offer at your earliest convenience. I would be happy to proceed with all due speed subject to standard due diligence and legal process.

[Redacted signature block]

[Redacted signature block]

- **Re: Reinstatement of The Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough as an Asset of Community Value**

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment at the recent decision to reject the nomination of The Three Hares Inn, Bilbrough, as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), and to formally appeal for its immediate reinstatement.

The Three Hares has, for many years, served as more than a public house—it has been a vital centre of community life in Bilbrough. Beyond the ordinary function of serving food and drink, it has provided a welcoming and significant setting for local rites of passage. I speak not only from personal experience but on behalf of many residents when I say that the pub has, throughout the decades, hosted pre-ceremony gatherings for weddings held at St James' Church—a short walk away—and funeral wakes for villagers who lived their entire lives in Bilbrough. These are not one-off anecdotes; they are part of a long-standing, shared social tradition that ties the pub into the very fabric of this village.

The recent closure of the pub should not be misinterpreted as a reflection of its diminished value to the community. The reasons for its closure are well-documented and, sadly, familiar. The pub is owned by the Wellington Pub Company, which operates under the property asset management arm of Criterion Capital. As outlined in numerous media investigations—including reporting by *The Guardian* and *The Morning Advertiser*—this company has been repeatedly criticised for its cynical approach to pub ownership. Their model often involves imposing onerous lease terms on tenants, withholding investment, and allowing once-thriving pubs to fall into managed decline. This artificially creates the illusion of commercial unviability, paving the way for eventual redevelopment or disposal for alternative, more profitable use.

The Three Hares appears to be following this pattern. Despite local support and interest in reviving the pub, it has remained shuttered since 2023 while Wellington has failed to offer realistic terms to potential operators. It is not a lack of community need or affection that keeps the doors closed—it is a deliberate business strategy.

The council's decision to deny the ACV status appears to rest on a narrow interpretation of "recent" community use and "realistic" future potential. But the *Localism Act 2011* was not created to serve only those communities already operating pubs as community centres; it was designed to give communities a fair opportunity to prevent the permanent loss of socially important spaces before it's too late. The Act's intention was clear: to protect precisely the kinds of institutions like The Three Hares that face extinction at the hands of corporate landlords who treat community heritage as disposable assets.

I urge North Yorkshire Council to reconsider this decision. By siding with a private equity-backed pub company over the voices of local people, you risk facilitating the slow erasure of the shared spaces that bind our villages together. Conversely, by reinstating The Three Hares as an Asset of Community Value, you will not only honour the law's intent—you will empower a community that is prepared to fight for its future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

██████████

██████████

Bilbrough  
York

██████████

## THE THREE HARES, BILBROUGH

### COMMUNITY TESTIMONY / STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT

██████████  
I have lived in Bilbrough ██████████ and the village pub, The Three Hares, has always been an integral part of life here. There is no doubt that it was a genuine village asset and it is sorely missed.

I first went as a child with my parents and then, ██████████ worked at the pub, as did most children of my age in the village. Back then, it was the place where all the local farmers would come at the end of their working day and it was always busy.

Over the decades, the pub has evolved. It had an ice-cream parlour/coffee shop which was popular with village children and also the passing cyclists, (of which Bilbrough has many). The Stone Room was renovated and the garden area was improved and enclosed, enabling it to be safer for children.

Halloween was always a busy night as all the children from Bilbrough and the surrounding villages would go to the pub with their parents after trick or treating around the village. Spoils would be compared and shared, there were competitions for outfits and apple bobbing.

Tuesday night is bell-ringing night and the campanologists used to head to the pub after practice.

I was on the Parish Council and we would go to the pub after meetings.

██████████ Spanish classes in the pub for two years.

The Village History Society also held regular meetings at the pub.

There was a regular monthly 'ladies night' which was very well attended and enabled many ladies who didn't want to go to the pub on their own to meet up with other villagers.

I have been to countless wakes there over the years as well as birthday parties, engagement parties and pre wedding day get togethers ██████████

Christmas was always packed, before and after Midnight Mass and also on Christmas Day itself, when everyone in the village would get together.

██████████ worked in the pub up to the point of closure, as did many other children in the village.

██████████ five holiday lets in the village ██████████ ██████████ massive downturn in bookings since the pub shut. This has had a wider knock on effect ██████████ guests would

regularly book villagers (especially the teenagers) for dog walking, and baby sitting and local self-employed people for beauty treatments and pre-wedding hair/make-up. [REDACTED] offering bed and breakfast rates as well as dinner, bed and breakfast rates and this would have been a wonderful mutually beneficial arrangement for two local businesses. Sadly, the tenants and the owners could not agree on terms for a new tenancy agreement.

[REDACTED]

As both [REDACTED] in the village, I can confidently say that The Three Hares has been a vital community asset, offering far more than food and drink.

[REDACTED] an ideal setting in which to meet clients and potential clients in a relaxed, informal environment. Unlike an office or more formal venue, The Three Hares encouraged conversations and relationships that would not have developed elsewhere. It enabled business to be conducted in a natural, community-focused way, strengthening trust and local connections. It was also a superb venue where business owners could meet to share ideas and support one another, helping many local enterprises to thrive.

[REDACTED] I saw at first hand the positive community spirit the pub generated. During Covid, when so many of us were isolated, the pub became a lifeline, particularly for young families [REDACTED] being able to reconnect with others in such a safe and familiar setting played a huge part in restoring a sense of normality and belonging.

Now living in a neighbouring village and working as an [REDACTED] across Bilbrough and the surrounding areas, I have seen repeatedly the value that both homeowners and buyers place on a village with a thriving public house at its heart. With only a handful of nearby villages still fortunate enough to have pubs that open regularly, The Three Hares is a much-needed and highly valued asset for the wider community.

[REDACTED] an open and successful village pub enhances the value and appeal of homes in the area. [REDACTED] this factor is particularly important given that so many other brewery-owned pubs in the region have sadly closed. The Three Hares is therefore not just a social hub but also a key element in maintaining the economic health of the village.

Beyond these specific perspectives, The Three Hares has always provided an essential space for community groups, social clubs, and residents of all ages to gather. For many, especially those who live alone, it offers companionship and reduces social isolation. It represents part of our shared cultural heritage and contributes to the identity of the village itself.

For all of these reasons, I believe The Three Hares fully deserves to be recognised as an Asset of Community Value. Its social, cultural, and economic importance cannot be overstated.









■■■■■■■■■■

I am writing in support of the application to retain The Hares Pub in Bilbrough as a community asset.

The village itself is a thriving and affluent community that is desperately missing the focal point that the pub provided. Not just as pub but as a meeting place for clubs and those with shared interests to meet and maintain their social connections. In previous years there were many occasions when ■■■■■■■■■■ cyclists in the village would end ■■■ ride with a social refreshment. In addition, ■■■■■■■■■■ the pub beer garden was very often an early evening weekend meeting place for young families after a few hours in the local play park with the children. The parents could enjoy a drink / bite to eat while the children could enjoy the space in the beer garden and their own soft drinks. It is a real asset to our village, where a significant number of young families reside and I believe would thrive on the social interaction that this community asset could, and did provide.

The closure of The Three Hares is further compounded by the closure, or repurposing of, three pubs that are within walking distance of Bilbrough. There is clearly a growing void in the surrounding area that could be addressed through the retention of The Three Hares as a pub, should the land lord see fit to offer the pub for sale or on more market appropriate lease terms.

Finally, there is a significant, and growing, amount of published research on the negative effect on mental health and well being from the closure of pubs across the UK, particularly in rural communities. The concerning trend of the closure of both rural and urban pubs is tied to a rising epidemic of loneliness—especially among men—who may have fewer alternative avenues for casual socialising. This trend is supported by mental health professionals and researchers, who stress the unique role pubs play in offering non-judgmental, communal environments. Research and polls indicate that closing pubs and other hospitality venues has led to a decline in the social and mental wellbeing of the population, with nearly two-thirds of respondents reporting negative effects on their own mental health. For men in particular, pubs are a preferred coping space, and the reduction in access to these spaces has removed a vital source of routine support and distraction during stressful times.

I hope this message of support is well received and the Three Hares can retain its status as a protected community asset.

■■■■■■■■■■

The Three Hares is a key village asset. It has been the hub for many family orientated community events. Regularly holding Halloween parties or Easter Egg hunts for the village children. Without this community asset these village events will cease to happen and will result in the village losing the community that drove many of us to move here.

[REDACTED]

The pub has served as a significant community hub for the village of Bilbrough and also formed a supporting venue for other groups.

As a community hub, it provided a space for local committees to meet, including the Bell ringers, Wine Society, Village Hall Committee, Church groups, Parish Council and the Battlefield club. Having these meetings in a public space, also enabled other residents to gain an awareness of their existence and potentially to join in. Since the pub closed, these meetings have mainly taken place in private houses, reducing the sense of community and belonging.

At Christmas, the pub also acted as a valuable space to bring families together, and for children to have moved away to other parts of the country (world) to reconnect with former friends. This was supported further by the village's strong link to Tadcaster Grammar school, so that many of the children had grown up as a part of a strong community. The village had a carol singing tradition, which was supported by the pub, and raised money for charities.

Bilbrough is also now one of the only pubs in the area that remains open. This has increased its potential catchment area to include Colton, Askham Bryam, and Healaugh.

Finally, the pub used to host a number of regular events. This included a monthly ladies evening, a weekly men's night on a Thursday and a quiz night. The quiz night brought different people together to form teams and created a light-hearted rivalry between villagers.

No one in the village wants the pub to close, and there is a strong sense of loss. Bilbrough is a strong and supportive community, who are willing to support a community asset, with time, skills and potentially investment. This is demonstrated by the number of individuals currently involved in supporting other village assets like the Village Hall, Church, Playing field and Parish Council.

[REDACTED]

Amongst other advantages such as quality of local schools and transport links, a great attraction of the village was the quality of the Three Hares pub and the excellent social community aspect it generated.

[REDACTED]

The Three Hares has been an important part of forming community feeling in the village. The Three Hares would hold a ladies evening once a month to enable ladies in the village who may not know many people to go the Three Hares to meet other ladies. This created many strong friendships and is thanks to the Three Hares hosting such evenings.

██████████. ██████████  
Bilbrough is a small but relatively isolated village and the Three Hares pub was the main meeting point for villagers and visitors alike. ██████████ properties here due to the fact there was a village pub, enabling us to meet residents old and new. It was also a destination pub and attracted many visitors from far afield for its food and country-pub style charm.

It was the only remaining open pub within walking distance of the village – with the pubs The Buckles, Askham Richard’s Rose and Crown and Colton’s Sun Inn all closed; as is nearby restaurant, The Aagrah on the A64.

It is also the nearest pub to the Travelodge and the Premier Inn at Bilbrough Top, and it attracted many hotel guests who preferred to stay local rather than make the journey into the city.

It was known as a hub for many groups over the years including cyclists, walkers, and country sports enthusiasts. There were regular meetings of motorsports groups that stayed locally, wedding parties attending the nearby Normans wedding venue and church goers, choirs and bellringers from the adjacent St James Church. Quiz teams, mums groups, card schools, students from the local agricultural college, tourists from local AirBnbs and many more groups all attended the pub on a regular basis; and now all of them have nowhere to meet or socialise.

It was such an important hub for Bilbrough and has been since the early 1800s – to say that it’s an asset of community value is an understatement. It’s vital to the very fabric of all of us living in the village.

██████████. ██████████  
Carols Around the Village have taken place in Bilbrough the week before Christmas for many years ██████████. We collect for a different charity each year. The event is greatly appreciated and looked forward to by many in the village.

When the pub was open the event used to start there with people meeting in the pub before going around the village. The carol singers would then end up back at the pub when there would be carols around the piano and the charity collection continuing in the pub. The pub as the centre of the event really added to it and meant that far more people took part than have done so since the pub has closed.

██████████. ██████████  
During the past months when the building has been allowed to fall into disrepair there has been no central point to welcome newcomers into the community and maintain the village community spirit. The village needs the pub to maintain it as a community supporting and integrating all from the youngest to the oldest (who in particular may become more isolated).

Having lived in York itself previously [redacted] village having a local pub giving residents of the village an ability to meet and socialise.

[redacted] the Pub has always been an important part of village life... the pub [has] had a long history and a central part of the village's identity.

[redacted] somewhere with a well established pub. Bilbrough ticked both boxes [redacted] We have had no regrets and the Three Hares has proved to be the hub of everything and where we have met many friends... with the closure of the Three Hares we no longer have a public house that we are able to walk to. The nearest is The Nags head at Askham Bryan but this is over 2 miles away and not safely accessible by foot. The desire for the Three Hares to reopen is so strong within the village that a group of us got together to form the "Friends of the Three Hares" group and having held a village meeting it is clear that there is incredible support in the village to support the Three Hares. Indeed, there were pledges of both money and hundreds of hours of labour made at the meeting to help any potential landlord get up and running.

[redacted] The pub was a much used and valued village asset, used for village quizzes, meetings, social get togethers, as well as being a renowned eating venue attracting people from across the county.

[redacted] The village of Bilbrough has had a pub for as long as I have lived here, [redacted] and it's closure was a sad day for the residents of not just Bilbrough but the surrounding villages which have already lost their own pubs. We have lost somewhere to meet up and socialise and hold events.

[redacted] Whilst it was open, the Three Hares was not only a vital part of the character of the village but was also an important centre point of community life, not only for Bilbrough but also for the surrounding villages. This is particularly so as at least 3 other nearby pubs have closed in recent years.

█. █

█ there was a pub where I could make friends and feel part of the village community.

█. █

The pub is a critical social meeting point in Bilbrough and is at the centre of the community. To my mind there is no doubt the pub would flourish if a sensible rental fee was agreed.

█. █

The Three Hares Pub is a crucial community amenity. It was until its recent closure the heart of the village and meeting place where residents of Bilbrough █ were able to socialise and where important community bonds were created and nurtured. When we came to the village █ we were able to get to know our neighbours and become part of the community through meeting them at the Three Hares.

█. █

Whilst Covid and more recent economic challenges have had major impacts on the hospitality sector, many have not only survived, but have thrived - customers and the public at large realising that use them or lose them was the reality. Many have done so by realising that multi-use options are the way forward - coffee shop, deli and cafe by day, pub by night - with specific events occurring to support regular activities. In summary, I feel that not enough has been done to fully explore this potential to re-open and re-energise the Three Hares.

█. █

█ The Three Hares has always been an important part of the village, bringing the village community together, as well as drawing people to the village from surrounding areas for years.

█

Bilbrough is a charming village, and attracts visitors to admire it. It also has some important links with the Fairfax Family, now departed the York area. The Family had a manor house in the village, and the local church contains the tomb of Lord Fairfax and his wife. This Fairfax was the military commander of the Parliamentary forces in the 17th century Civil War. A revived Three Hares could use this linkage.

█. █

There has been a public house in the village all my lifetime █. The village has no shop now and nowhere to meet to eat and drink.





■■■■■■■■■■ along with the convenience of school buses to both primary and secondary schools ■■■■■■■■■■ a pub to meet our neighbours, entertain friends and be part of a social group, we have indeed grown our friendship group through this mechanism and that group assisted massively in getting us through the various lockdowns, absolutely invaluable friendships being made at this popular and well known hub. It has not only been a place to refresh but one to hold meetings for the golf society, book clubs, dinner club for this village and those surrounding Bilbrough itself.

■■■■■■■■■■ I am writing to support the need for a pub in Bilbrough. As a family we have used it for a variety of purposes. To celebrate, to meet friends and neighbours, for employment ■■■■■■■■■■, for groups of ladies to meet once a month in a welcoming and safe environment and mostly as a source of friendship and support for many including ourselves. In the dark winter months it was very much a community pub on a Friday night. We all miss it very much.

■■■■■■■■■■ The Three Hares has long served as a vital social hub for local residents. Its loss would not only remove a valuable community gathering place but also erode a part of our local heritage. The pub has been a centre for social interaction, local events, and community support, fostering a sense of belonging and connection among residents.

■■■■■■■■■■ The Three Hares has been a public house serving the village of Bilbrough for many years and certainly going back to the Victorian period. It has provided, over those years, a valuable public service as a meeting place, a place of resort for conversation, food and drink among villagers and visitors alike. It has hosted many important village social events such as summer barbecues and carol singing events. We could expatiate on this at length but the short point is that it has been a community asset of the highest importance for well over a hundred years.

There is widespread support in the village and local environment for the survival of the Three Hares. The village pub is an indispensable social asset for our community and part of what makes the area in which we live unique and so attractive.

■■■■■■■■■■ It is worthy of note that prior to the expiry of the previous lease, the business was trading well and since the Coronavirus pandemic has benefited significantly from trade derived directly as a result of the Normans Wedding Venue some half mile distant and also a large Airbnb business within Bilbrough. The food was exceptionally good!

██████████, The Three Hares has been the number one place for meeting friends, socialising and enjoying food and drink with friends and neighbours. As such it is an irreplaceable community asset in our eyes

It is such a shame that the corporate owners are being unrealistic in their aspirations for re-letting it to help them make a case for a change of use to residential

The truth is, it was thriving and only closed because the lease came to an end and the leaseholder retired. I am sure if it was marketed at a sensible rent/ lease term it would re-let for pub use without difficulty and once again become the centre of village social and community life

Hopefully, if it can be redesignated as an asset of community value and a change of use resisted, the corporate owners will eventually have to market it for it's current use on a sensible basis



## Bilbrough School Feast, 1837

**BILBROUGH SCHOOL FEAST.**—We have again the pleasure of recording this very gratifying annual meeting, which took place on Monday last. This school is conducted upon the principles of the national system, and proves (were proofs still wanting) how admirable that system is, when properly acted upon. At half-past two o'clock, Mr. Danby, from the old established central school in this city, commenced an examination of the different classes, beginning with the lowest; and though the numerous auditors were in former years astonished and delighted with the attainments and discipline exhibited, their admiration fell far short of what was universally felt and expressed last Monday. The children appeared to have been thoroughly grounded in the first principles of our national religion, according to their several capacities; and some of the higher classes repeated and answered questions from the Church Catechism in a very correct manner, doing great credit to their indefatigable clergyman, and no less assiduous schoolmaster, Mr. Moore. The manner in which arithmetic is taught is truly astonishing; the higher classes correctly multiplied three or four given figures by the same number, without the aid of paper, slates, or pencils; and continued answering questions in the same way till the result came to hundreds of thousands. After the examination, the children, amounting to 75, were regaled with a plentiful supply of tea, plain cakes, &c.; and looked as happy as youth, and the approbation of their teachers and superiors, could make them. Afterwards, nearly 90 of their parents and friends partook of the same refreshment, also provided for them, at his own expense, by their justly esteemed pastor, the Rev. Benj. Eamson; and the number of lovely infants in arms, and "toddling" by the sides of their healthy mothers, gave fair promise that the exertions of their pastor and teacher are not likely to terminate. Mr. Eamson then addressed his youthful flock, who were arranged in a semicircle before him, pointing out to them the great advantages they would enjoy, both in this world and the next, from following the instructions they are now receiving. After the examination just gone through, he had the pleasure of pronouncing, that, through their attention to the able and unremitting instructions of their excellent master, they had done well. But he hoped they would ever bear in mind, that a day of still stricter examination awaited them—how soon they knew not—when, acting upon the principles now instilled into them, or acting contrary thereto, it might, or might not, be pronounced upon each, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." He then, in a neat manner, spoke of the demise of our late gracious sovereign, and of a queen having succeeded to the government of these mighty realms, whom we are all called upon to honour and show all due allegiance to, but who, on account of her youth and inexperience, and the dangers by which in consequence she is surrounded, requires the constant and earnest prayers of all her subjects; and he trusted they would fervently join in imploring the Almighty to give her wisdom, knowledge, long life, and every requisite blessing, to govern this mighty empire in peace and with prosperity to her subjects. The attention with which the children, as well as the adults, listened to this address was very gratifying; they then most affectingly sang the National Air, altered to suit the "queen," instead of the "king," accompanied by a by no means despicable band of village performers upon different instruments. It was then proposed, and cheerfully seconded by Mr. Eamson, that as it was a kind of proclamation of our gracious Queen Victoria, the labouring men should be regaled with bread and cheese and a quart of ale each, and between 20 and 30 sat down in the open air on benches, to partake of this refreshment, provided by Mr. Robin Wright, of the Hare Inn,—of whom her youthful Majesty might be proud, as respectable specimens of her English village subjects. A procession was then formed of almost all the inhabitants, amounting to nearly 100, headed by their clergyman, and the village band playing and singing "God save the Queen,"—the bells of the church adding their cheerful peal. [The whole population, at the last census, was only 325.]—After parading up and down the village, they stopped opposite the school-room, and Mr. Eamson shortly and appropriately addressed them a second time, concluding by wishing them health and prosperity, and that they might never spend a less happy day than that which was thus terminated.—They testified their esteem for him by several hearty cheers, the men waving their hats. The happy group then dispersed.—Several of the gentry of the first respectability in the neighbourhood attended, among whom were the Misses Fairfax, the Rev. R. and Mrs. Thompson, &c. &c., and a party of friends, partook of the refreshing beverage of tea with their kind entertainers, Mr. and Mrs. Eamson, who, by every means in their power, promoted the hilarity of the day—a day long to be remembered in the annals of the lovely and picturesque village of Bilbrough.

School feast - York Herald, 8 July 1837

Clipped By:

21 Jul 2025

# Cricket match and dinner, 1837

<b>CRICKET PLAYING.</b>			
<b>BILBROUGH AGAINST NUN-APPLETON.</b>			
<p>The return match between these clubs, came off at Bilbrough on Thursday the 5th inst. The playing was very good on both parties, and the attendance very numerous. After the match was over, the players and their friends amounting to upwards of 50 sat down to an excellent dinner, provided by Mr. R. Wright, the Hare Inn, Bilbrough; and spent the evening in the most convivial manner. Mr. Letby and Mr. G. Walker, both of this city, were Umpires; the former for Nun-Appleton, and the latter for Bilbrough.— The following is a statement of the playing:—</p>			
<b>NUN APPLETON.</b>			
<i>First Innings.</i>		<i>Second Innings.</i>	
Cartwright, caught by Clark	6	bowled by Clark	15
J. Cundall, b. by Clark	8	caught by Thos. Wright	7
Jennings, ct. by Potter	2	bowled by Wm. Cattley	10
Wilkinson, b. by Cattley	4	run out	1
Lockey, caught by Bennett	4	bowled by Wm. Cattley	3
R. Cundall, b. by Clark	3	run out	7
Oates, bowled by Cattley	5	bowled by Wm. Cattley	16
Potter, bowled by Cattley	1	caught by Bennett	22
Denton, ct. by R. Wright	2	bowled by Clark	3
Carrack, bowled by Clark	0	leg before wicket	0
Houseman, not out	0	not out	6
Wide balls	2	Wide balls, &c.	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>BILBROUGH.</b>			
<i>First Innings.</i>		<i>Second Innings.</i>	
R. Wright, st. by Jennings	7	bowled by J. Cundall	1
J. Cattley, b. by J. Cundall	0	caught by Potter	16
W. Cattley, b. by J. Cundall	10	bowled by J. Cundall	1
T. Wright, ct. by J. Cundall	11	caught by Jennings	13
Payne, caught by Jennings	9	bowled by Cartwright	0
Clark, b. by Cartwright	0	bowled by Cartwright	5
Rennison, run out	3	bowled by Cartwright	7
Parker, b. by J. Cundall	2	run out	14
Bennett, b. by Cartwright	2	caught by Wilkinson	4
W. Wright, b. by Cartwright	0	bowled by Cartwright	0
Dickinson, not out	1	not out	0
Wide balls, &c.	5	Byes	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>

## Village procession, 1842

Newspapers  
by ancestry  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/396526266/>

The Leeds Intelligencer and Yorkshire General Advertiser (Leeds, West Yorkshire, England) · Sat, 12 Mar 1842 · Page 5  
Downloaded on 17 Jul 2025

**ODD FELLOWSHIP.**—On Monday last, the Bilbrough Loyal Rose and Thistle Lodge of the Manchester Unity of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in the Tadcaster District, held their first anniversary at the house of Host Robert Wright, the Hare Inn, Bilbrough, when the officers and members, headed by the brass band from York, walked in procession to the Parish Church, where the Rev. B. Eamsonson, Vicar, delivered a very appropriate, impressive, and encouraging sermon from Heb. xiii. 1—"Let brotherly love continue." The Reverend Vicar afterwards dined with the lodge, and by his free and affable manner, in the presidential chair he endeared himself to all. After

## Land auction at The Hare, 1855

Newspapers  
by ancestry  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/401633321/>

The Yorkshire Herald and the York Herald (York, North Yorkshire, England) · Sat, 10 Mar 1855 · Page 4  
Downloaded on 17 Jul 2025

**BILBROUGH.**  
**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,**  
**BY MESSRS. ACTON & SON,**  
**A**T the House of Mr. ROBERT WRIGHT, the Hare Inn, Bilbrough, on **MONDAY**, the 19th **MARCH**, 1855, at **THREE** o'Clock in the Afternoon, subject to Conditions to be then produced,  
**A FREEHOLD CLOSE** of **LAND**, containing Two Acres and a Half, or thereabouts, known by the name of "**TOWNEND CLOSE**," situate near to the Village of Bilbrough, and adjoining the Road from that place to York, now in the occupation of Mr. Robert Wright, jun.  
Further particulars may be had on application to  
**Mr. THOS. HODGSON,**  
Solicitor, Market Street, York.  
**York, 7th March, 1855.**

## Blacksmiths to let, 1877

Newspapers  
by ancestry

https://www.newspapers.com/image/402121175/

The Yorkshire Herald and the York Herald (York, North Yorkshire, England) · Mon, 2 Apr 1877 · Page 1

Downloaded on 17 Jul 2025

**TO LET.—To Master Blacksmiths, and others.**  
**—A good SHOEMING and JOBBING BUSINESS TO**  
**LET, situate at Bilbrough, near York.—Apply to ROBERT**  
**WOODBURN, Hare Inn, Bilbrough. 6065a**

## Bilbrough Estate sale (advert and press article), 1943

COUNTRY LIFE—NOVEMBER 12, 1943 845

Telegram: "Wood, Agents, WOOD, London." Mayfair 6341 (10 lines).

**JOHN D. WOOD & CO.**  
23, BERKELEY SQUARE, LONDON, W.1.

**YORKSHIRE—Between TADCASTER AND YORK**  
*Wetherby is 9 miles; York and Tadcaster are 6 and 3½ miles respectively by road.*  
**IN LOTS FREEHOLD**  
THE MOST ATTRACTIVE AGRICULTURAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY  
KNOWN AS  
**THE BILBROUGH ESTATE, Near YORK extending to about 1,120 ACRES**  
COMPRISING  
**SEVEN CAPITAL TILLAGE AND DAIRY FARMS**  
THREE SMALL HOLDINGS, GRAVEL-BEARING LAND, ACCOMMODATION AND BUILDING LAND mainly along the Tadcaster to York main road, with company's water mains available, and the major portion of  
**THE PICTURESQUE VILLAGE OF BILBROUGH**  
containing (with Possession on Completion) the FREE and Fully Licensed Premises, THE THREE HARES INN, THE OLD RECTORY, BILBROUGH HOUSE, and TEN USEFUL COTTAGES, THE WHOLE PRODUCING  
**£1,473 PER ANNUM GROSS**  
Which will be OFFERED FOR SALE BY AUCTION, in LOTS (unless sold privately meanwhile) by JOHN D. WOOD & CO., at THE SALE ROOM, THE ROYAL STATION HOTEL YORK, on THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1943, at 2 p.m.  
Sellers: Messrs. GLAY & DODSWORTH—W. H. COBB & SONS, Duncombe Place, York. Land Agent: C. W. THOMPSON, ESQ., F.S.I., F.I.L.S., Estate Office, Eberick, York. Auctioneers' Office: 23, Berkeley Square, London, W.1 (Tel.: Mayfair 6341). Sale Particulars, price 2s.

VERY PRIVATELY IN THE MARKET FOR INVESTMENT  
**PART OF WELL-KNOWN 'SPORTING & AGRICULTURAL ESTATE**  
IN FERTILE PART OF SCOTLAND CLOSE TO MARKET TOWN  
**2,177 ACRES 20 FARMS**  
SMALL HOLDINGS AND TACKDUTIES  
**RENTAL £1,820 PER ANNUM - - - - - BURDENS £134**  
**WILL BE SOLD TO SHOW 4½% RETURN**  
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# A FAIRFAX ESTATE FOR AUCTION

## Village of Bilbrough Included

### "Evening Post" Reporter

One of the ancient estates of the Fairfax family—Bilbrough Hall estate, between York and Tadcaster—is to be offered by auction at the end of the month.

Bilbrough, which occupies the highest land in the neighbourhood, 150ft. above sea level, was part of the original estate of the Fairfax family, dating from the 14th century. It passed down the male branch, and at one time belonged to "Black Tom," the famous Parliamentary General, who, with Lady Fairfax, lies buried in the church.

The property descended in a collateral branch of the family, and after the death of Mr. Guy Fairfax, it was bought by the late Lord Fairfax, head of the American branch of the family, who afterwards claimed his seat in the House of Lords, a claim which was accepted by the special committee of the House of Peers.

Subsequently Lord Fairfax sold the estate as a whole to Mr. G. C. Knight, by whose instructions it is now to be offered in lots.

### Village for Sale

It is an agricultural estate, comprising about 1,120 acres, split into seven tillage and dairy farms, three smallholdings, and accommodation land, chiefly along the York-Tadcaster main road. The village itself is for sale, including an old inn, the Three Hares, the Rectory, Bilbrough House itself, and some cottages.

Near the churchyard are remains of the Manor House in which was born the first Lord Fairfax, Thomas, father of Lord Ferdinando, and grandfather of the famous Lord "Tom" Fairfax.

## The Three Hares social history

### Darts team, 1977

Nag's Head made further progress up the table when they easily beat Three Hares 6-3.

Rose and Crown 'B' beat Coach and Horses by the odd game, a fine win by Eddie Sumner gave the Tadcaster team the aggregate point. Leading positions for the Nags Head cup are: Paul Smith 66 (21-22-23), Gerald Bilbrough 67, Doug Williams 68, Les Buck and Digger Ward 69. Dave Ritcher leads the Arthur Bell Cup with an aggregate of 350, he is closely followed by Tony Newbard on 330.

DIVISION 1				
	P	W	A	P
Bay Horse (Clifford)	16	14	16	44
Alice Hawthorn	15	11	10	32
Spotted Ox	15	10	10	30
King William	16	9	11	29
Chequers	15	9	7	25
Royal Oak 'B'	15	8	8	24
Royal Oak (Tadcaster)	15	7	6	20
Boot and Shoe	18	6	7	19
Rose and Crown 'A'	16	5	5	15
Howden Arms	15	5	4	14
Crown	16	1	1	3

DIVISION 2				
	P	W	A	P
Brunswick	17	18	16	48
Fox	17	13	14	28
Royal Oak 'A'	16	11	10	32
Sun Inn	15	9	9	27
Bay Horse (Whixley)	15	9	8	26
Nags Head	17	6	6	18
Coach and Horses	16	5	8	18
Lord Nelson	16	5	7	17
Marota	16	5	5	15
Three Hares	16	6	2	14
Rose and Crown 'B'	15	5	3	13

The monthly meeting is at King William on Tuesday.

### Cricket dinner and meeting, 1977

Newspapers  
Yorkshire Evening Press (York, North Yorkshire, England) · Mon, 14 Feb 1977 · Page 10  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/1184384719/> Downloaded on 17 Jul 2025

**CRICKET MEETING**


York Ramblers CC hold their annual meeting, followed by a pie and peas supper at the Three Hares, Bilbrough, tomorrow (8 p.m.).

### Live music, 1986

Newspapers  
Yorkshire Evening Press (York, North Yorkshire, England) · Mon, 13 Jan 1986 · Page 4  
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/1185085183/> Downloaded on 17 Jul 2025

**TONIGHT.** Live music at The Three Hares, Bilbrough. Shane Peters, 8.30 p.m., plus dining at special prices, plus free bottle of wine for four or more. Come early. Also the ideal venue for our super carvery lunches, — Tel. Tadcaster 832128.

## Dustin Gee tribute, 1987



**Dustin Gee: Gig in his memory**

### Gig to mark star's death

ROCK 'N' ROLLERS from the 1960s music scene in York are getting together for a gig at Bilbrough.

Landlord Mick Mills is organising a grand re-union at the Three Hares pub on February 16, in memory of York-born comedian Dustin Gee, who died after a heart attack just over a year ago.

Mick played in Dustin's 60s band, Gerry B and the Rockafellas. A re-union of local ex-group players of the 1960-70 era was a great success last year, he decided to hold another nostalgic evening this year, near the anniversary of Dustin's death.

## Charity fundraisers, 1987 - 1989

### Hares to charity

A CHARITY auction will be held tomorrow night at the Three Hares in Bilbrough, near York, to raise money for cancer research and the Injured Jockeys Fund.

It will be attended by racing enthusiast Brian Goodwill who has walked more than 2,000 miles between every racecourse in the country for the charities in memory of jockey Jayne Thompson

● THE charity football match between Long Marston and the Three Hares, Bilbrough raised £73 for St Leonard's Hospice. The final score was Long Marston 5, Three Hares 1.


The event is one of a series being organised by the Three Hares in aid of the hospice.

□ Sing Song Night - in aid of Jolen Key needing a heart operation: The Three Hares Pub, Bilbrough, near York, 7.30pm.

Auction of Bilbrough School site, 1988

**Newly Registered**

**Upon instructions from North Yorkshire County Council, the former  
BILBROUGH FAIRFAX COUNTY PRIMARY  
SCHOOL, BILBROUGH, YORK**



A most interesting site in the centre of this attractive, unspoilt and highly desirable village conveniently situated between York, the business conurbations of West Yorkshire and the motorway network. The site contains a Victorian semi-detached original school building with planning permission for change of use to residential use together with a modern, single-storey extension with planning permission for demolition to provide space for one residential dwelling. The site has a frontage of 75'9" together with an overall depth of 184'0" and would be of appeal to builders, developers or private purchasers alike. For sale by public auction (unless sold privately meantime) at The Three Hares Public House, Bilbrough, York, on Wednesday, January 20th, 1988, 3 p.m. prompt.

(Ref. Y/0640)

Car boot sale, 1988

**CAR BOOT SALE - Three Hares, Main  
Street, Bilbrough. Saturday July 23rd,  
10am - 1pm. £5 per carr, all welcome. - Tel.  
Tadcaster 832128.**

## Bookie landlord departs, 1988

**LANDLORD** Mick Mills, pictured, is flying into a new career as a bookie and as pilot to Wetherby racehorse trainer, Richard Whitaker.

Mick, aged 43, and his wife Marie, are departing after eight years at the Three Hares, at Bilbrough.

They have bought the The Old Poachers restaurant and pub at Brighton, near Selby, for £190,000.

Mick has long been interested in racing and flying as hobbies.

Now they are becoming part of his business. With Mr

# Sky's the limit for new venture

Whitaker he has bought this Piper Saratoga aircraft from jockey Willie Carson.

They will fly to race meetings all over the country from Sherburn-in-Elmet airfield in the single-engined, six-seater plane.

While Marie will be in charge

of day-to-day running of the pub, assisted by Mick, he also plans to open a purpose-built credit bookies' office alongside.

He has for some time been operating as a licensed credit bookmaker from the Three Hares, taking bets from customers over the phone.

Mick, a qualified pilot for 12 years, also plans to fly from the airfield at Brighton.

His interests in racing are diverse. He is also a director of the recently formed Wetherby Racing Bureau Plc, which allows members of the public to become part-owners of racehorses by buying company shares. The company has just bought its first horse, Colombeire, a three-year-old gelding.

● Picture: George Hendrie

● Report: Michael Laycock

## Award-winning chef arrives, 1991/2

**Star chef:** Award-winning chef Peter Mayoh will be working at The Three Hares, in Bilbrough, when it re-opens on December 3. He has worked at the Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland and was head chef at a country house hotel in Cheshire. The new licensee is Peter Whitehead. He said the refurbished pub would become a country inn and restaurant, and would be striving to attain a Michelin star rating.

The Star, Thursday, May 28, 1992 33

# Wining & Dining

## Growing reputation for quality food... Advertising feature

PETER and Sheila Whitehead have put the Three Hares at Bilbrough on the map.

After a 15 month search for the perfect North Yorkshire inn, the couple settled on the Three Hares and have spent the last few months building a formidable reputation for great food served in a the welcoming atmosphere of a country inn style restaurant.

Able assisted by their country manor-trained chef Peter Mayoh, the couple now offer a seasonal menu which takes in the experimental as well as the traditional.

Fresh fish is brought inland from Grimsby harbour to balance an imaginative menu that includes a variety of vegetarian dishes plus seasonal vegetables and sauces.

The food is complemented by a "sensible, short but exciting wine list at a reasonable price".

The Whiteheads have gained vast experience in the hotel and public house sector and have now set about refurbishing the Three Hares' rooms with some style.

One is the pool table and the video games and, nowadays, customers can choose to sit and chat either in the bar, in a lounge boasting copper-topped tables or in the smoking or non-smoking restaurants.

The restaurants can cater for 50 between them and the one located in the stone-flagged former blacksmith's premises is particularly popular during balmy summer evenings.

The Three Hares lies just off the A64 and offers bar meals from noon until 2pm, Tuesday to Saturday, and from 7pm to 9pm from Tuesday to Sunday.

A selection from the blackboard is available during Sunday lunchtimes (noon until 2pm) while the restaurant serves from 7pm to 9.45pm Tuesday to Saturday.



THREE HARES: Ready to serve you are hosts Peter and Sheila Whitehead and (centre) chef Peter Mayoh



### The Three Hares Country Inn & Restaurant

MAIN STREET, BILBROUGH, NEAR YORK

We are pleased to offer a selection from our seasonal restaurant menu

*Cold Terrine of Salmon and Sole with a Dill Sauce and Cucumber Salad—£3.95*  
*Ravioli of Goat's Cheese flavoured with Chives, set on a bed of Lentils and Spring Onions with a Herb and Pepper Sauce—£4.75*

*Poached Chicken Breast stuffed with a forcemeat from its leg, flavoured with Sage, set on a bed of Green Lentils with a Smoked Bacon and Sage Cream Sauce—£4.95*

*Beef Fillet on an Onion Puree with a Garlic Sauce and Roast Garlic Cloves—£11.95*

*Pilo Tartlet of Oriental Spiced Vegetables with Beansprouts and Water Chestnuts set on a Ginger and Orange Sauce with Deep Fried Spinach—£5.50*

*Iced White Chocolate Parfait with Coffee Sauce—£3.50*

*Caramel Bavarian Cream with Pear Puree and a freshly poached Pear—£3.25*

This is only a small choice of dishes which is always complemented by a daily "Specials" blackboard including fresh fish such as:

*Red Sea Bream cooked "En Papillote" with oriental vegetables in a Ginger sesame sauce £7.50*

*Poached Halibut with Lobster cream sauce and Crayfish garnish £8.95*

A large vegetarian section is available and we are able to cater for special diets.

For those wanting a less formal atmosphere a similarly imaginative bar menu is available in our lounge areas

We are happy to discuss any special occasion you may wish to celebrate with us.

For reservation or enquiries please Telephone TADCASTER (0837) 832128

FOOD AND DRINK



The Three Hares at Bilbrough: Warm welcome for families.

# Discovering a country oasis

**A** SUNNY Sunday saw me and my family heading out towards Scarborough and the seaside. That is until we saw half of Yorkshire apparently doing the same, with cars bumper to bumper miles away from the resort.

We turned tail, with a wailing, disappointed four-year-old in the back, but the magic words 'pub lunch' miraculously dried Beth's tears.

After a brief visit home, where Beth and her two-year-old brother, Matthew, splashed in the paddling pool, we drove off towards the country.

A few minutes later, we were off the busy A64 and heading towards the peaceful village of Bilbrough. Not a soul stirred. It was so quiet that we were unsure at first if The Three Hares, a country inn and restaurant, was open. But it certainly was, and we received a very warm welcome.

As we ordered drinks at the bar and studied the extensive and interesting menu of the day chalked up on a large blackboard, the children disappeared rapidly into the beer garden to get down to the serious business of attacking the play equipment.

For them, lunch out preferably involves crawling over and hanging off as many play items as possible.

We decided to pass on the tempting starters, mostly priced around £1.95, and ordered main courses.

Bearing in mind the liveness of our offspring, we asked if we could eat outside in the garden

**CAROLINE WINNING sees the disappointment of a missed trip to the seaside replaced by a memorable Sunday pub lunch.**

rather than in the wooden-beamed pub dining room. 'No problem' was the reaction, putting us in a relaxed mood. I ordered poached salmon fillet with cream and herb sauce at £7.50, and Ian chose pan-fried lamb's liver with smoked bacon and mushrooms at £5.95. Children's portions of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding were selected, too.

**T**hen, sipping gin and tonics in the heat, we waited for our lunch. And what a lunch it was. It arrived shortly after, piping hot and beautifully presented.

Although it was not cheap, the meals arrived complemented by an ample selection of perfectly cooked vegetables. A plate of delicious new potatoes, broccoli, carrots, cabbage and roast potatoes meant our appetites were well catered for.

My salmon was cooked to perfection, moist with a delicate flavour, set off by a beautiful buttery sauce. I sneaked a piece of liver - superb - and savoured a nibble of the children's roast beef with wonderful onion gravy.

So, all in all, our lunch vanished rapidly until Matthew

spilled a glass of orange juice in his sister's lunch - thank goodness for pub gardens! Next, it was the turn of the sweets. After deliberating over the delights on offer, mostly priced at around £2.25, I chose summer pudding and Ian the unusual seed parfait of pineapple with chocolate sauce. These, and the children's (homemade with real fruit chunks) strawberry ice cream arrived promptly, garnished beautifully.

My summer pudding, boasting local strawberries and raspberries, swam in a tangy berry sauce with two 'islands' of gently whipped cream.

Ian enjoyed his dessert, except when the children decided they also wanted to demolish his chocolate sauce.

We ordered coffee, which arrived with a jug of real cream - no ghastly pre-packaged stuff here - and a plate of homemade petits fours.

After paying the £37.45 bill, which was extremely good value for a memorable meal, we took the young waiter's advice and strolled down to a field of horses for the children to admire.

All in all, we were glad to have passed on the sizzling seaside for a welcoming country oasis.

◆ The Three Hares Inn, Main Street, Bilbrough. Tel (0937) 832128.

**Service:** Prompt and friendly.  
**Value:** Very good.  
**Food:** Excellent and imaginative.  
**Ambience:** Cosy but classy.

# Wine sales lighten up the gloom

MARTIN LACY looks at the latest trends in wine drinking plus some useful books to take on your travels.

**D**ESPITE the doom and gloom in the economy, wine sales have shown a slight increase this year, according to the Wine and Spirit Association. The latest 12-month figures show an increase in sale of just 0.2 per cent, but after several years of decline, the latest figures for light and fortified wines were up encouragingly by 8.6 per cent and ten per cent respectively (are we drinking more sherry?).

Although the Wine and Spirit Association says that the recession is clearly not over and there is no real indication of a recovery, word in the wine trade is that things are picking up slowly. The massive boom in wine sales in the past decade or so had to slow down, and the recession has put the brakes on the boom. But wine stores report a switch in consumer spending.

While overall sales are stagnating, people are switching from the cheapest wine to more expensive ones. Where customers would in the past perhaps buy a couple of bottles of wine a week in the £3-£5 bracket, now they are only buying one, but in the £3-£5 range.

Hence the move by so many wine stores to upgrade their stocks with a greater emphasis on the £3-£5 market. The big question is: when the recession is finally over, will drinkers stick with their new wines or go back to old habits?

**A**FTER drinking wine, the next best thing is reading about it. Books enable you to share the pleasures others find in wine and those with plenty of information can be invaluable companions.

That is especially the case when the holiday season approaches. The right handy guide tucked in the suitcase can help you to discover hidden treats for tasting abroad and bringing back home.

Quite a few books have hit the market and here are some of them:

**Mitchell Beazley Wine Guides** - various authors (Mitchell Beazley, £7.95)

**MITCHELL Beazley** have decided to build on the great success of their pocket wine guides (including the excellent Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book) with a new series of expanded

paperback wine guides. I sampled four of the new series - Burton Anderson's Wines of Italy, Roger Voss's Wines of The Loire, Alsace, Rhone and other French regions, Ian Jamieson's Wines of Germany and The Wines of Bordeaux by David Peppercom - and excellent they are, too.

I was particularly impressed with Roger Voss's guide, touching as it did on major wine-producing areas such as the Loire and Alsace often neglected by wine writers, as well as covering areas like the Rhale, equally asking in importance.

As well as descriptions of the wines and the areas they grow in, the guides also list the main producers and provide other valuable information such as where tastings can be had and decent regional restaurants, making these ideal companions for both the home-based wine drinker or the continental traveller intent on sampling good wine at once.

*The Wine and Food Of Austria* by Glen MacDonogh (Mitchell Beazley, £14.95)

WHEN it comes to naming countries famous for their food and wine, it's a fair bet that the name of Austria doesn't readily spring to mind. But it should, says author Glen MacDonogh, in this well-researched and beautifully presented book, packed with excellent photographs by Manfred Horvath.

MacDonogh doesn't pull his punches, heaping equal amounts of praise and criticism on the food and wine of a country with a history of gastronomy stretching back to Celtic times.

Austria is on the same latitude as those great wine-growing regions of Champagne and Burgundy, and produces a whole range of wines from dry whites to superb sweet dessert wines. And, in spite of its long history, Austrian cuisine has not stood still as the author explores the major influence of Slavonic and Moslem nations on Austrian eating habits.

A fascinating insight on the cuisine of a nation known for its coffee, cakes and waltzes, but with an awful lot more to offer.

*The Yorkshire Evening Press*

Weekender

Food and drink



**In The Three Hares, Bilbrough (left), with (below) managers Sheila and Mark Whitehead and chef Peter Maycott**

# I'm sweet on the Three Hares

**T**O START at the end, the pudding was wonderful. A square of baked syrup ginger sponge sitting in a delicious puddle of crumpie custard. Now here was a pudding worthy of the name.

So often the dessert is a disappointment. Too many pub restaurants seem to buy in their puddings, which is a shame as without a good pud an otherwise enjoyable meal somehow falls away.

But at the Three Hares in Bilbrough, what comes last is well up to the standard of the rest of the meal, if not even a little above.

The Evening Press returned to the Three Hares sooner than is normal as the pub has been included in the new edition of the Which Guide To Country Pubs. The guide praised the 'substantial hot dishes', and quite right too.

Our only disagreement with Which? was with the quoted comment, 'At last, a pub that does decent veg. On the Thursday



Julian Cole

might when we ate in the pub, the vegetables were over-cooked and unimaginative. That caveat aside, the meal was very good indeed.

At the Three Hares you can eat either in the bar or in the restaurant. The bar was almost full when we arrived, and the restaurant empty. We decided to eat in company in the pub, only to find that the bar soon emptied as the restaurant filled. High-kick!

With those puddings still untried, we started with cream of mushroom soup for Gina, which might seem low-key for someone celebrating her birthday, but there you are. Ever a soupaholic, she declared the dish to be rich and creamy, with a nice edge of cheddar.

Deep-fried mushrooms stuffed with blue cheese did for me, and very nice too. A generous tasty starter it came with a dollop of garlic mayonnaise and a pleasing salad of mixed lettuce leaves.

From the list of 'more substantial main dishes', Gina had a casserole of pork, apple and cider, which was hearty and satisfying. The fresh taragon and parsley sprinkled on top was a subtle finishing touch.

Ever one to dine from the sea, I had gurnard of fresh sea in a yeast batter, which came as I later realised, guiltily with more mayonnaise, this time flavoured with dill and lemon. The gurnard were generous rather than fiddly, so often the case. Very good, to be sure.

And then to the puddings! Did I mention the puddings? My baked ginger sponge took some choosing. I must say, it was a close run thing with the sultana bread and butter pudding with vanilla sauce. But I was more than happy with my choice.

As someone who likes her puddings cold and creamy, Gina

chose the ice-cream. She was served with three slices of home-made ice-cream, accompanied by a crisp, pub-baked almond biscuit. The chocolate was so-so, she thought. The strawberry was good. But the pear ice-cream - this was 'exquisite', she said, her mouth still tingling.

Three Hares, Main Street, Bilbrough, near York. Phone: 0937 627126.

**FOOD: Hearty and tasty. SERVICE: Quick and efficient. VALUE: Good - about £13-13 a head in the pub for three courses.**

**AMBIENCE: Smart and cosy, shelve about the dreaded Muzak.**



Betty's Tea Rooms, 21 Holier's Square, York. Tel York (0904) 609142. 1000 benches in Harrogate, Northallerton and Ripley.

Now that spring is finally here, Betty's has announced a number of specialities to coincide with the more pleasant weather. These include a delicious prawn and avocado salad (£3.50) and the popular spring onion and mushroom rosti (intriguingly priced at £4.95). All the old favourites remain, including the evergreen prawn and haddock gratin and the resubit with Thackeray's ale, and setting at Betty's continues to be a treat - whether it be breakfast, lunch or supper. That wine is still pretty, though!

Freccolo Restaurant, 28 Castlegate, York. York (0904) 612764.

Bour, Cressant and Mont prints create a French atmosphere which is more than adequately maintained by the food. The mushroom and prawn cocktail for starters is a winner and the Dijonnaise sauce accompanying the pork is sensational. There are a number of equally puddings which are all recommended. There's a sensibly priced three-course lunch menu for around £10 and a more expensive à la carte evening meal. If you like French food and a French ambience, this is the precise article - where the food flavour extends beyond the food.

Robert Beaumont

# Tracking down a taste of the good life

**D**URING the dark winter months, bright lights have blazed in a few select establishments around York as bon viviers have sampled the good life.

Food and wine evenings have become a regular event at a host of restaurants and hotels in the area when the skills of the chef are matched to various wines, on a particular theme of food or wine, or both.

Indeed, so popular have these nights - where the single course covers several courses and wines to match - that some establishments are extending them into the summer. I joined two tastings this week on very different themes.

Full marks for initiative to Melton's, of Scarcroft Road, York, who decided to hold a food and beer evening. Lucy and Michael Hopt have never been frightened to try something new and their imaginative and extremely tasty menu was perfectly matched with a variety of bottled beers supplied by York Beer Shop.

After a glass of light yellow and nutty flavoured Pioneer Urquell as an aperitif, we tucked into ood cured as gradivax, chicken cooked in beer, most leg of lamb marinated as game, a selection of cheese, and raspberry soufflé.

With the ood, we drank Czech Budweiser. Budweiser, a dark golden beer with a rich, hoppy taste.

The chicken was cooked in French Jodelin. Biere de Garde, and the dark chestnut beer, with its rich, fruity taste was served with it.

With the lamb we sampled the only British beer in the tasting, the dark red rich and hoppy Burton's Porter, while a bottle of dark, pulpy, yeasty German Schauder Weisse wheat beer accompanied the cheese.

To round off an excellent evening, a perfect raspberry soufflé was accompanied by the slightly sour but incredibly fruity Belgian Timmermans Lambic Framboos.

Good beer can match any wine in flavour and complexity, and the evening proved that the product of the barter goes just as well with fine food as the product of the grape.

Y Melton's next food evening is a tasting of Bollinger champagne on Monday, May 10. Tickets are a hefty £47, but that includes eight wines as well as the food. Details on 0904 634341.

THE Orange Hotel, in Clifton, has run a popular series of evenings and we joined the final one of the winter season when the format was changed slightly. We dined on venison liver,



Martin Lacy

pate and fresh salmon, served with two fruity white wines, but the tasting proper started after the meal when we sampled four malt whiskies.

The tasting was hosted by Terry Clump, representing the Glenmorangie distillery, from Tain. The distillery's ten and 18-year-old single malts were tasted alongside two rivals, ten-year-old Lagavulin and Macallan.

I'm a big fan of single malts and Lagavulin, that amazing lacy malt with its burnt rubber and tar nose and taste of salt, seaweed, and oogh mixture, is one of my favourites. I didn't expect it to be popular at the tasting - it's very much an acquired taste - but it won a few fans.

But how would the Glenmorangie fare against my old favourite? Very well, was the answer. We tasted the ten-year-old first and discovered a straw-coloured liquid with a flowery, caramel nose

with suggestions of the blooming heather. Light and smooth, its sweet raisins and apricot flavours won plenty of praise.

In contrast the Macallan was very dark in colour, with a sweet whisky is aged in old sherry casks) and a sharp

effort on the tongue. We saved the best till last. The 18-year-old Glenmorangie was a dark, golden liquid with a sherry and vanilla nose with a hint of pistachio nuts.

Rich and silky in the mouth, it had a full, grapey flavour like fine cognac, and was easily the favourite with the diners.

Glenmorangie is available from most retail outlets, but both the ten and 18-year-old, plus the distillery's special oak-aged whisky, are available from Farty's wine merchants, 2 Lindsey Street, York.

Details of The Orange's summer wine and food evenings can be obtained on 0904 644144.

The postponed wine tasting of New World wines, at York Arts Centre, Micklegate, will now take place on Monday, May 17, 8.30-8.30pm. Tickets £4, with proceeds going to the Arts Centre Appeal. Further details on 0904 627126.



**In 18-year-old Glenmorangie, the star of a whisky tasting at York's Orange Hotel**

**FROM THE MENU**

**STARTERS**

Chicken liver pate £2.95

Yorkshire farmhouse cheeses with home-made pickles £5.95

**MAIN COURSES**

Fresh herb pasta with mushroom and cheese sauce £5.95

Pan fried lamb's liver with smoked bacon and mushrooms £5.95

Sole fry duck with crisp vegetables and soy and honey dressing £7.95

**DESSERTS**

Banana fritters with apricot sauce £2.25

Creamed rice pudding with spiced orange £2.25

## Pub Food of the Year, 1999

Stop York Tourism Forum, where businesses in the tourism industry discussed priorities for the future.

First Stop York, launched in 1995, has already helped increase employment, visitor spending, length of stay and occupancy in the city.

Tony Bennett, chairman of the strategy group, said the forum allowed open discussion of the key issues facing one of York's biggest employers.

● TV celebrity Richard Whiteley presented the Yorkshire Life Food

and Wine Awards at a ceremony at Hazlewood Castle. Yorkshire chef of the year was Andrew Pern, of the Star Inn, Harome, near Helmsley. Restaurant of the year went to the Yorke Arms, Ramsgill, near Harrogate, and the Rudding Park Hotel, Harrogate, won hotel of the year. Villu Toots, Harrogate, scooped newcomer of the year, and pub food of the year went to the Three Hares, Bilbrough.

● **Comment: Page 8**

● **Award winners and full story: Pages 14 and 15**

## Article citing pub's '18<sup>th</sup> century' history, 2003

Newspapers  
by ancestry

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/1185883193/>

The Press (York ed.) (York, North Yorkshire, England) · Wed, 14 May

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# Hare along to Bilbrough

A quintessentially-English coaching house in a picturesque village just outside York which offers award-winning food and hand-pulled, cask-conditioned ales... Sounds too good to be true?

A visit to the Three Hares at Bilbrough, sponsors of this year's Evening Press Food and Wine Exhibition, will dispel any doubts. This 18th Century dining pub has a serious reputation for fine food and the accolades to go with it.

Recently refurbished after a devastating fire closed the premises for nearly four months, the bar boasts a guest beer that changes every week and an impressive list of wines by the glass.

Meals are available from the bar or restaurant menus, which change regularly

according to the season and market availability.

The AA has awarded The Three Hares two rosettes for culinary excellence for the past three years as well as pronouncing it Pick of the Pubs for two years on the trot.

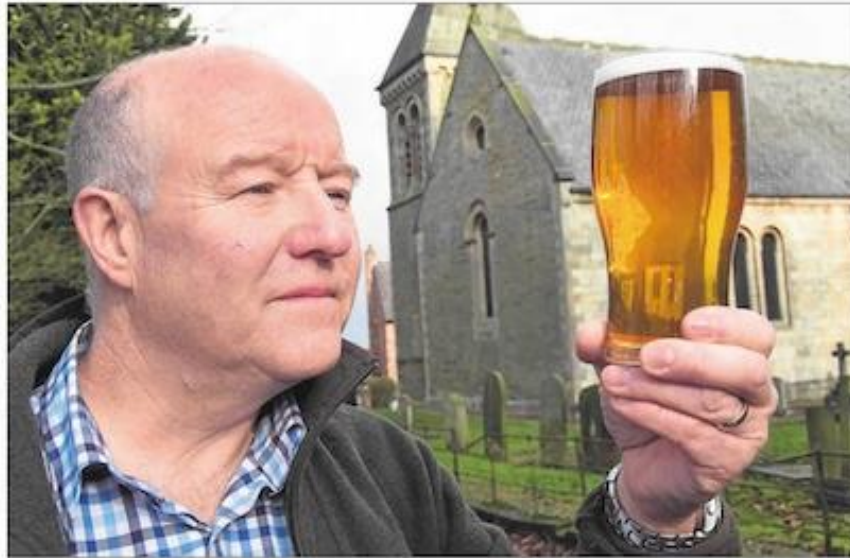
The restaurant incorporates the old village forge and offers a more formal setting in which to savour the a la carte menu.

Booking well in advance is recommended, especially on Sundays, when the full bar

menu is served alongside a set Sunday lunch at £11 for two courses or £14 for three. This incorporates succulent rib of local beef and either lamb or pork.

It is not your average village pub, but it does not pretend to be. The Three Hares offers the opportunity to sample excellent food, wines and beers in a comfortable environment which manages to hold on to the charm of its historic coaching inn origins.

# Pints of View



TOP BEER: Rallying enthusiast Nigel Cay with a pint from Bilbrough Top Brewery

Pictures: David Henson

## Beer of the week

### Dodo shows it's very much alive and thriving

**Dedipus Brewing Co, Dodo - £2.99, five per cent**

ORIGINALLY a spring seasonal beer, Amsterdam's Dedipus Brewery have brought back their California common ale - Dodo - in partnership with the Coffee and Coconut cals.

This is a 'steam beer', a lager fermented at temperatures normally used for ales, making it a bit more expressive and fruity than your typical lager.

Because this is a US style, Dedipus saw fit to mix things up and use Cascade for hopping throughout the process, rather than more traditional lager varieties. This adds a fruity nod to the beer's origins, while updating this take on the style for a contemporary drinker.

Pouring glowing amber, with tawny and copper accents, Dodo is topped by a thin head of soft off-white foam. The aroma is a crisp and fruity mix of lemon sherbet, and poached quince. Sweet and biscuity, malt loaf and raisin fruitiness is

paired with a dry, bran flake savour to create a crisp, refreshing base. The cascade hops add a ripe melon aroma, sweet and heady, with a bitter, refreshing grapefruit edge.

Evenly carbonated, with a bright and zesty character, the finish is level-headed and refreshing. A moderate to light bitterness is spread across the palate with orange zest and dusty ginger nuts. Refreshing, crisp, and drinkable, like a true Cali common.

Recommended by Michael Bates, Trembling Madness, Stonegate, York

# Rally fan Nigel's promising pint really sets the pace

IT'S go, go, go for the region's newest brewery - and car enthusiast Nigel Cay is the man in the driving seat. The rallying enthusiast is turning from cars to his other great hobby, by opening his own brewing operation.

Bilbrough Top Brewery is Bilbrough, between York and Tadcaster, was set up last September, recipes were developed over October and November and now - after three or four test beers - the first batch of Top Beer has been sent out.

A cask went on at The Three Hares, in Bilbrough, on Thursday night and casks are in the cellars of The Slip, The Swan and The Volunteer Arms in Clementhorpe, Bushgate Street and Watson Street respectively in York, and are likely to go on the bars in the coming days.

The name is a nod to both Bilbrough Top and Nigel's love of Top Gear, and Nigel is keen to receive feedback.

"There's apprehension when your baby goes out there, but you have to grasp the nettle, so we will see what the feedback is."

The driving force behind the area's newest brewery also happens to be a rally car enthusiast, as beer writer GAVIN AITCHISON discovers



EASY DOES IT: Nigel Cay pulls a sample pint of Top Beer, made by Bilbrough Top Brewery

It is more bitter than some pale blondes, with a citrusy aftertaste, he says.

Nigel has come to brewing later than many of the industry's new starters. He worked for Network Rail for the best part of 15 years and was in telecommunications before that, but he says he had always wanted to open his own brewery.

He's been a member of the Campaign for Real Ale for years, went on a brewing course led by renowned expert David Smith, of Copmanthorpe, and then he took the leap last year, setting up a six-barrel brewing kit in what had been his vehicle workshop.

"The course was really informative and turned the 'what you do' into 'why you do it' for me, looking at the chemistry behind it."

"That was really helpful."

Top Beer is a pale blonde ale, with an ABV of 3.9 per cent. Nigel says it's not "incredibly hoppy" but says

"We did a couple of test runs and produced some reasonable beer, but it was not at the level it had to be. It was drinkable, but not quite what I wanted."

So, he tweaked it again, then again, and on the third recipe he has decided to seek public opinion. Is this the final recipe? Not necessarily, says Nigel. He's keen to hear from drinkers at The Swan, The Slip and The Volly, all reputable real ale pubs with customers who know their stuff. Depending what they say, he may adjust the recipe again. Time will tell.

Nigel's keen to thank David Smith, and also Swan landlord Paul Crossman for his advice on branding and styles, and he has also secured a potentially fruitful partnership with another young business in Bilbrough, The Normans wedding venue, run by local couple Laura and Oliver Robinson, whose own drive helped inspire him to embark on his own new venture.

"They're in an amazing spot - and the idea is that I can supply beer for the weddings, and if people want to call it something special for their big day, they can."

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2017

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**HAIR CHOP:** Maureen Jeffery threatens her daughter Katie Hodgson with a trim ahead of the shave

# Katie set to get a charity Hares cut

BY MIKE LAYCOCK

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A BARMAID planning a hair-raising charity event has been inspired by the courage of York cancer patient Dawn Watts.

Katie Hodgson will get her head shaved at the Three Hares in Bilbrough, between York and Tadcaster, to raise money for York Against Cancer.

She said she was more determined on the venture after Dawn came into the pub for Sunday lunch and they got talking.

The Press has reported previ-

ously how Dawn, of Copmanthorpe, has raised more than £30,000 over the past four years for York Against Cancer and other charities, and has also recently raised an additional £23,000 to help fund complementary treatment for herself at a clinic in Spain.

Katie, whose mother Maureen Jeffery owns the Three Hares, said of Dawn: "She is an amazing woman – all that money that she has raised!

"Everybody seems to be affected by cancer either through family or friends, and when I spoke to Dawn, it made it all feel more real."

Dawn said: "We've only met

Katie the once but she was so full of fun and excited to be doing the head shave. It should be a great night."

Katie, who said she was also prompted to act by reading about York Against Cancer's new mobile chemotherapy unit, has already raised more than £700.

The shave will be part of an evening of fun activities on Saturday, November 4, including customers performing in Stars in their Eyes style, and raffles and prize draws.

• People can also donate to Katie's appeal via [www.justgiving.com/fundraising/katie-hodgson6](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/katie-hodgson6)

Site Plan NYCACV0068 – The Three Hares, Bilbrough



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<b>Drawing</b> OS Location Plan 1:1250 Block Plan 1:500		
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10 Evelyn's Street Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1DP mail@wytheholland.co.uk		
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The nominated site includes both the areas outlined in red and blue.