



Monday 18th September 2023

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday morning. It is cold, grey and foggy. Yesterday on the racecourse people were in winter coats with hoods up and gloves on. This, immediately after the heatwave.

The planning meeting for the 32 houses on the adjacent field went ahead on Thursday morning after a 2-year battle. The work we have all put into it has been immense. As one neighbour put it 'we are a tour de force'. But as far as everyone in the town thought, it was a done deal, the planning officer was recommending approval. The Yorkshire Post headline read 'The controversial housing development set to be approved ..'.

We gathered, took our seats in the hall in the council office building and stared quietly as all the slides went up on the big screen showing the lay out of the new estate with the 65 trees gone, the 200m of ancient stone wall and hedgerows gone. They showed the front elevations – all birch and balconies, the back elevations, and how the new road would sweep in. The planning officer wittered on about the positive trickle-down effect on the town. The landowner, the Earl of Ronaldshay gets his way here. Always. This was a planning test case, the first decision to be taken since Richmondshire Council has ceased to exist and become North Yorkshire. The voting councillors have no connection to Richmond, they came from all over county.

When the vote came, every single councillor voted against it. The hall erupted, people were cheering and screaming and hugging. We were told by the chair to take our 'frivolities' outside. Men and women alike, everyone came out crying. Democracy triumphed, the power of the people, against the odds. We won. No diggers coming in at first light. No diggers coming in ever, we hope. Though I have a feeling this won't be the last battle we fight over it. But for the moment phew, and phew for all wildlife who have made it their home.

We have pink fir apple potatoes in the bags again this week, confusingly similar looking to the sweet potatoes we have. (Just in case you've had a few when you're looking for something to cook). Here, just the one tasty recipe you could try:

Sweet Potato and Broccoli Curry with Cashews

1 onion	2 garlic cloves
25g ginger	oil for frying, e.g. sunflower or coconut
400g sweet potatoes	1 head broccoli
1 stock cube	2 tsp ground turmeric
1 tsp ground cumin	1 tbsp Thai green curry paste
400ml coconut milk	30g salted cashew nuts
1 lime	½ tsp black onion seeds

Put a kettle of water on to boil. Finely chop the onion and grate the garlic and ginger. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a pan and fry the onion on a medium heat for 5 minutes, until starting to soften. Peel the sweet potato and chop into 1½cm cubes. Break the broccoli into small florets. Measure out 400ml of boiling water and crumble in the stock cube. Add the garlic, ginger, turmeric, cumin and curry paste to the onions and cook for 1 minute, stirring. Add the coconut milk, hot stock and chopped sweet potato. Season with salt, bring to a simmer for 10 minutes then add the broccoli florets and cook until all is tender. Serve with quinoa or rice with wedges of lime and garnished with chopped up cashews and black onion seeds.

Mick who helps me with the sheep wanted to wait until after the Hunton Steam Gathering before moving them to Hauxwell Hall. He is heavily involved in the event and manages the entries and puts up the miles of rope around the site, cordoning off the different areas. The day before the event when he, his son and wife were all there to help, his wife got run over by a tractor. His son had jumped in it, forgot where the brakes

were and ran her over. They had to call the Air Ambulance. She had a broken ankle and tyre tracks up the side of her body.

Last week I had the job of calling the farmer at Kirkby Fleetham to tell him we were going to move the sheep. He didn't pick the phone up so I sent a long message to explain we were leaving as we had the opportunity to move them closer to Richmond. I told him it saddened me as the sheep had been very happy there, as had we.

I expected to get a message back saying 'Good. Thank God for that. And good riddance'.

Instead he rang me saying he really didn't want them to go. The sheep were part of the farm now. His children loved them, the tenants in the farm cottages loved them being there. He said if it was about money he would reduce the rent. He said they would miss Mick going up there as he helped them out with various things, including getting their ponies in when they were away and gave more security to the farm.

What a hideous quandary I am now in. Someone suggested taking half to Hauxwell, but it just doubles the work having them in two places. And besides, I never like splitting them up. They have their social groups, their best friends.....lifelong friends. Those relationships are known only to them and it would be unthinkable to separate them, probably forever.

I decided I would leave it to Mick to decide. He said he would rather they stay in Kirkby Fleetham. And to emphasise how much, he said he thought they would start dropping dead if they went to Hauxwell as it is colder there. OK. So where does that leave me with the Daltons of Hauxwell Hall who 'I' had approached to ask them about grazing.

To make it all worse, I have just had a message from them saying

'just wondering when you are coming with the sheep, we are all ready for you'.

My mind flashed back to my visit to them - they showed me the small barn they said they would clear out for us to put our affairs in. When they showed me the fields, they pointed out the bits of fencing they needed to fix before they arrived. They showed me the pens that they would get sorted out for when we needed to gather them up. They must have done all that work. The message is on Whatsapp, she knows I've read it. I have to respond. I don't know what to say. I don't know what to do.

Help !!!

I hope you have a good week,

Best wishes, Isobel