

# NORTH ASTON NEWS

MARCH 2012

No: 257



*Village Hall Update - Progress at last!  
Chewing the Cud, Gardening Club, Dating by the Book, Councillor Calling.*

# NORTH ASTON NEWS

MARCH 2012, No: 257



## CHAIRMAN Chewing the Cud

### Useful Contacts

#### North Aston News

Telephone: (01869) 347356  
Email: [info@north-aston.co.uk](mailto:info@north-aston.co.uk)

#### Chris Tuffrey, Chairman

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#### Sue Hatzigeorgiou, Treasurer

Telephone: (01869) 347727  
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#### Marcus Potts, Secretary

Telephone: (01869) 347356  
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#### North Aston PCC

Clive Busby, Church Warden  
Telephone: (01869) 338434  
Email: [casb@north-aston.com](mailto:casb@north-aston.com)

Kildare Bourke-Borrowes, Churchwarden  
Telephone: (01869) 340200

Email: [k.bourkeborrowes@btinternet.com](mailto:k.bourkeborrowes@btinternet.com)

#### North Aston Gardening Club

Chris Tuffrey, Chairman. See above.

#### North Aston Pet Alert

Please notify of any Firework Parties  
Deirdre Oakley: Tel (01869) 340646  
Also email: [info@north-aston.co.uk](mailto:info@north-aston.co.uk)

#### North Aston Farms

Telephone: (01869) 347865 or 347888  
Email: [jemtaylor@mac.com](mailto:jemtaylor@mac.com)

#### North Aston Organics

Telephone: (01869) 347702  
Email: [northastonorganics@gmail.com](mailto:northastonorganics@gmail.com)

#### Nicholson Nurseries

Telephone: (01869) 340342  
Email: [office@nicholsons.gb.com](mailto:office@nicholsons.gb.com)

#### North Aston 100 Club

Norman West. Tel (01869) 340368

#### CDC Local Councillor

James Macnamara, Lower Heyford  
Telephone: (01869) 340109  
Email: [cllr.james.macnamara@cherwell-dc.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.james.macnamara@cherwell-dc.gov.uk)

#### Thames Valley Police non-emergency

Telephone: 101

#### Out of Hours Doctor

Telephone: 08453 458 995

### Upcoming Events

#### Coffee Morning

Weds 7th March. 10:30am-12:00pm. Old Bakery

#### Mothering Sunday Workshop

Saturday 17th March. 2-4pm, Tackley Village Hall

#### Village Hall Forum

Monday 26th March. 7:30pm. Old Bakery

#### Village Clean-up

Throughout March, daily . . . please.

The temperature is rising, mornings are getting lighter and the nights are getting shorter. Spring has to be just around the corner but who would have thought that a drought order would have been put in place so early in the year.

March could be the start of a momentous period for many reasons but perhaps the most significant is the Village Hall project finally getting under way. I know there are those in the village who have doubted that it would ever happen; well, it has! Marcus has written a report later in the *News* but I would like to add my own comments. First, the meeting last month was well attended. If my figures are correct and you added those who wanted to attend but couldn't to those that did, we would have had eighteen residents at the meeting. That's more than 10% of the village wanting to be involved, and equivalent to 5000 people supporting such a project in Banbury. All very encouraging. The Charity is in the process of being set up and a number of people have volunteered to become Trustees.

As you may have noticed, work has started again in the Parkland of North Aston Hall. A number of concerns have been raised about the damage being caused to the verges along Middle Aston Lane and to the Fox crossroads. I have spoken to the contractors and they have assured me that they will take note and act on our concerns. Over the last 12 months we have had three major building projects in the village which have increased the use of heavy vehicles and plant. Hopefully they will all be nearing completion soon and North Aston can return to normal.

There seems to be an ever increasing occurrence of metal thefts in the area, the major one being the theft of the telephone cable, which cut us off from the rest of the electronics world for a week or more. Thank heavens for mobiles. In such a small community as North Aston, anything out of the ordinary tends to be noticed, be it a suspicious car or persons. If you see something let us know and we can pass it on to the Neighbourhood Watch in Banbury. On the subject of Neighbourhood Watch, holiday time will soon be upon us, many of us will be taking our annual holidays. We will be asking the advice of the Police on how to leave our homes while we're away, and their response will be printed in a future edition of the *News*.

The oil buying scheme is still going from strength to strength. An instance last month saw one of our members here in North Aston save £184 on 1000 litres against the price quoted to them by their old supplier. Don't forget, whether you order 500 or 1000 litres, the price per litre remains the same. Members please note that I now have to send orders in by the last Wednesday of each month.

Another scheme that is in its infancy is an energy buying scheme for gas and electricity. This scheme is being put together by Locality and if it gets off the ground it could mean big savings on our electricity bills. WATCH THIS SPACE.

Well all that is left is to wish you all a happy March.

Chris Tuffrey

You can call me by telephone on 07903 339155, send me an email: [info@offac.co.uk](mailto:info@offac.co.uk), or just knock on the door at Gilmore's, The Green.



Mail to: [info@north-aston.co.uk](mailto:info@north-aston.co.uk)

### Get Writing

The Writing Competition run in conjunction with the Deddington Festival, Oxfordshire, is open to all and offers a cash prize for the winner and runner-up in both the story (up to 2000 words) and poetry (up to 36 lines) sections.

Additionally all those whose work is shortlisted will receive a critique from the judge to help and encourage them towards doing more writing. The theme for the competition in both categories is open.

The closing date for all entries is 16 April 2012. Full details can be obtained by emailing [Hughm34@btinternet.com](mailto:Hughm34@btinternet.com) or by sending a stamped addressed envelope to:

*DWG Competition,  
7 The Daedings,  
Deddington,  
Banbury OX15 0RT*

*Sylvie Nickels  
Deddington Writers' Group*

### Dylan

Can I just apologise, through the *News*, to anyone I may have appeared to "blank" of late when out walking Dylan. He (and I) are currently in the middle of a dog-training course with Tony Orchard near Banbury, and one of the things we're battling to do is to teach Dylan not to over-react when he meets people and other dogs out walking.

The way we've been told to manage this is for me to stand between him and the source of his excitement so that they're shielded from view, and that often means placing my back towards people. Also, it helps if those passing ignore him as well, as he interprets any fuss or interest as reward for his bad behaviour, which only encourages him to do it all the more. I'm sorry if this appears rude, but the plus side is, the training seems to be working!

*Many thanks, Marcus*



# 100 Club



The lucky winners of the January Draw were:

First Prize (£10): N Graham (#97)

Second Prize (£5): D. Oakley (#48)

If you think that's lucky, then perhaps you should be taking part! If you're not currently a member and would like to join the North Aston 100 Club later this year, please call Norman on 340368 to reserve your number.

**You've got to be in it to win it!**

## North Aston Gardening Club

Last month we held the first Gardening Club meeting of the year. Bill brought along some netting he had bought from Gardening Naturally of Cirencester. He also had a few spare catalogues to share around the meeting. I have since contacted them and received by return more brochures if anyone would like one. They have also offered 15% discount to the Gardening Club for orders exceeding £200.00.

Tuck also brought along several packets of seeds that he purchased from Aldi. In fact I bought some onion sets from Aldi, so let's see how they fare. Aldi has a wide range of seeds various plants, roses and fruit trees all at reasonable prices.

The ordered seeds from Dobies have started to arrive and several of us have had one packet of seed delivered in a jiffy bag!!!

### The following dates for the diary:

The Annual Plant Swap and Sale Shop will be on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2.30pm on The Green

Annual Flower & Produce Show followed by Village Barbecue and Auction will be on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September on The Green.

More details of both events nearer the time.

One of the classes this year will be for the tallest Sunflower grown in a pot. We will be including seeds and entry instructions with the April edition of the *News*. Let's have the largest collection of Sunflowers to be seen in the county! Another new class will be for the heaviest crop of potatoes grown in a bucket. Again, for those in the village who would like to enter, we will be providing the seed potato at the end of March. All you have to do is to grow it and the crop will be weighed on the day of the show - contact me for more details.

The date for the March meeting has yet to be set but we will let members know when we have one. It looks like it will be towards the end of the month. Lynn Quek has offered to hold this next meeting in her home.

All the allotments have now be allocated. I personally have never seen such an early start made on them in the four years since I have had mine.

Chris Tuffrey

## Adverts

### Babysitting Service

Mature and responsible 16 year-old available for babysitting.

Please contact Yvie on 01869 340090

### Help make the community safer today

If you have any information about a crime, call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or visit the website at

[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

### Need a Baby Sitter ?

Responsible baby sitting service available most evenings, including weekends. Also dog walking.

Phone Josh on 01869 347356 anytime

### Computer Problems Solved

Look no further for a reliable computer repair and maintenance service. We'll remove viruses, fix hardware failures, boost the performance of your PC, or tackle a broad range of tasks.

Phone 07522 342093 or visit the website at

[www.naenterprise.co.uk](http://www.naenterprise.co.uk)

## Mothering Sunday Workshop

For

The United Benefice of Tackley, Steeple Aston & North Aston and Tackley Methodist Church

**Saturday March 17th 2-4 pm  
Tackley Village Hall**

Join us for Mothering Sunday crafts, activities, seed planting, music, singing & refreshments.

Please contact Erika,  
The Benefice Children  
& Families  
Worker  
for more  
information.  
Tel: 340084  
or Rebecca Hoare  
Tel: 340949



## NORTH ASTON ORGANICS

# Vegetable Stall

Open Mon-Sat from 9.00am  
In the car park behind the Old Bakery

- Wide variety of fresh seasonal organic veg at affordable prices
- Minimal packaging & zero food miles
- Supporting the local economy



Too busy?  
Why not try our Veg Box Scheme - Fresh vegetables delivered to you door.

Fresh this month: Plenty of Spinach, Salad and Purple Sprouting Broccoli available this month. Spring onions coming in from mid-March.

Email: [northastonorganics@gmail.com](mailto:northastonorganics@gmail.com)

**Tel: (01869) 347702**

## ORCC Trading Oil Scheme

We published fuller details in last month's *News*, but if you use oil for your domestic heating, this scheme could save you hundreds of pounds each year. If you would like further details, or would wish to join the North Aston 'Collective', please contact Chris Tuffrey, North Aston's liaison officer with ORCC. Call him on 07903 339155 or email: [info@offac.co.uk](mailto:info@offac.co.uk). Some members have saved over £250 in the last 12 months, which suggests that saving the annual cost of membership (just £20) several times over during the same period is not an exaggeration.

## Fish & Chips!

Every Thursday afternoon from 5:00pm  
until approx 5:30pm, by the telephone box

## Support the Mobile Library

Every Second Thursday of the Month  
09:40-09:55 by the Telephone Box

Not a member? Enrol at the library in Deddington, or on-line at [www.libcat.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.libcat.oxfordshire.gov.uk). It's free.

# Dating by the Book

## An hilarious new comedy from the Steeple Aston Players.

Juliet Raphael is a serious professional woman attempting to find a serious professional date for an awards ceremony. She does so less for the company of another witless man, but more in the hope she can save her literary agency from becoming one more business to sink during the recession. Hindering her in this quest are the lecherous advances from her top client and a celebrity French chef, Jacques Noir, the meddlesome interferences of her sister Tina and the disturbing personal habits of Ron, a traveling salesman born without the subtlety gene. To succeed against all of that Juliet is going to need a plain old miracle, but maybe Pascal, Jacques' embittered younger brother, can help...

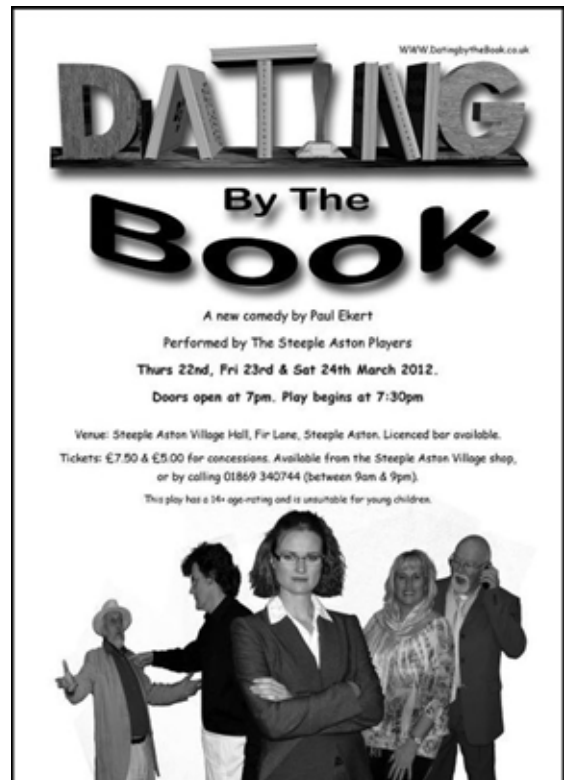
**Dating by the Book** is a brand new play by local Steeple Aston playwright, Paul Ekert, winner in the 'Best New Writing' category at the Halifax Ovation Theatre Awards 2011.

Produced and performed by the Steeple Aston Players including; Carl Tomlinson as *Pascal*, 'our own' Jan Liberadzki as *Jacques Noir*, Deborah Dunn as *Tina*, Phil Sharman as *Ron* and guest starring Liz Mente Bishop as *Juliet Raphael*.

**Dating by the Book** will run for three nights only; Thursday 22nd, Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th March 2012 in Steeple Aston Village Hall. Doors open at 7pm, and a Licenced Bar will be available.

**Tickets:** £7.50 (and £5.00 for concessions) available from Steeple Aston Village Shop or by calling 340744

Note: This play has 14+ age-rating and is not suitable for children younger than this age.



# COFFEE MORNING

Come and join us for an informal get-together at the Bakery on the first Wednesday of each month. Tea, coffee and cakes will be served from 10:30am till 12:00 noon.

## EVERYONE WELCOME!

If you would like transport, or a helping hand across the road, please ring Gwen Short (01295 810762) or Beryl Greenwood (340122) to arrange.



We hope to see you on Wednesday March 7th



## Making No Census

Thames Valley Police has been advised that an email entitled 'Population Census: a message to everyone - act now' is being circulated, allegedly in the name of National Statistician, Jil Matheson. This email demands individuals provide further personal information, supposedly for the Census and threatens fines for non-compliance. This email is a scam and a hoax. It has no connection whatsoever with the National Statistician, the 2011 Census or the Office for National Statistics. TVP believes the links in the email could download malware to any computer where the user clicks on the links. This could put your personal data, including financial information, at risk. Anyone receiving this, or similar emails, should delete them, not open any links and certainly not provide any information. For more information on how to protect yourself from this type of threat, please see [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org). If you wish to, please report receipt of any such suspicious emails to [www.actionfraud.org.uk](http://www.actionfraud.org.uk)

ONS takes the protection of personal census information extremely seriously. Collection of census data was completed last year and no further requests will be forthcoming from the Office for National Statistics relating to the 2011 Census.



# Village Hall

In one way or another, we've been working towards the creation of a Village Hall here in the village for about twenty years, and I know one or two people started kindling the fires even before then. At times it has been a slow and dispiriting exercise, and I'd be less than honest if I didn't admit there have been occasions when I've wondered if the day would ever come when I could say, with conviction, that we'd stopped talking and actually begun to act. Well, that day has actually come, and to all those who muttered about things "never happening" or that they'd "believe it when they saw it", the time has arrived to start believing.

In the last few weeks several significant steps have been taken. In mid-February, Chris Tuffrey and I met with David Endicott of solicitors Spratt Endicott in Banbury, and the firm has now been appointed as legal advisors to the Village Hall project. We were initially steered towards them because one of the firm's partners has family ties to North Aston, and while that person won't be directly involved (since it's not in their realm of expertise) it did allow us a foot in the door and favourable terms. In addition, David Endicott is not only a specialist in the establishment of charitable bodies, he's also a trustee on the Balscote Village Hall committee, and helped to steer that project through the legal and administrative minefields.

To begin with, Spratt Endicott will have two major undertakings to address. The first is to help us in the creation of a charity to oversee the construction of the Hall, the gathering in of funds, and the eventual administration of the building. The second, through another of the firm's partners, David Inch, is to sort out the legal paperwork associated with the transfer of the land in Beesley's Close from Jeremy Taylor to the Charity. This is obviously vital, since it is important that the interests of both parties are secured - Jeremy's, as the benefactor, in as much as he needs to be reassured that, in the unlikely event that anything untoward should happen in the future, his position as original owner of the land is safeguarded, and for the Village Hall charity, so that such things as ownership, rights of access and any liabilities are clearly understood.

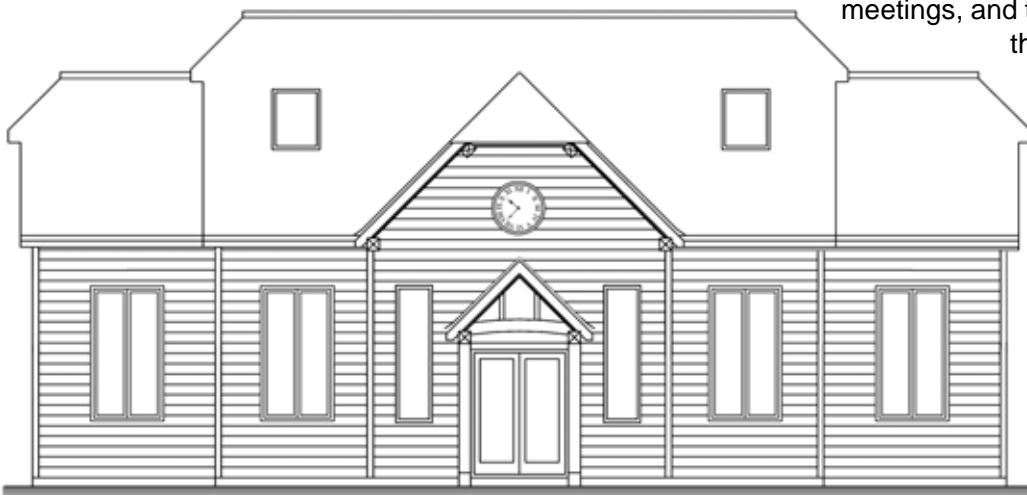
Another step-changing meeting also came in February, when Chris and I were invited down to the Hall – the other one – to meet with Kevin Cash. Almost from the moment he moved into North Aston, Kevin has been following the Village Hall saga with interest, and he first stepped up to offer his support two years ago. Since then we've had the rigmarole of last summer's survey to contend with, and everything had to be placed on hold. With that now behind us, Kevin wanted to reaffirm his proposal, and we were interested to find out what it was. In essence, Kevin has generously offered to cover a sizeable proportion of the costs of the actual build itself, including the services of his architect and the construction of the timber framework. The exact value of that contribution isn't clear yet, since we don't have plans or a design approved, but it is an excellent start. It also allows us to approach various funding bodies with donations on the table, so to speak, in the search for match-funded grants.

A meeting of the Village Hall Forum was held on February 21st, and details of both these significant advances were announced and discussed. The minutes from that meeting will be available shortly – please email me to request a copy, as there's insufficient space in the *News* this month to include them. However, arising from that meeting, Niel Nicholson contacted Oakwrights, the company responsible for building the new offices at the Nursery and who have also been working with Kevin Cash on one of his own projects. They are probably the country's leading experts in the design and construction of timber-framed buildings, but with such close local interest, appeared to offer the prospect of a keen price and good relations. Within 24 hours, we had a quote and a sample design to consider. Evidently, this is somewhat ahead of schedule, and the type of building we're working towards is on the agenda for the next VHF meeting, but it gives us ball-park figures to work with and some sketches to inspire us - see the line drawing below and let us know what you think.

Also on the to-do list before that meeting is to finalise the Business Plan, and Nicholas Kneale has been busy on that in the last few weeks, discussing costings and practicalities with representatives from Somerton and Duns Tew Village Halls.

From now on there will be monthly Village Hall Forum meetings, and the intention is that they will be on the last Monday of each month in the Old Bakery. If you want to be involved – and we do want everyone who's interested to take part - then please come along. The wagon really is rolling now, and we want everyone on board for the ride. Yes, there may be some bumps in the road ahead, but we're gathering pace.

Marcus Potts.  
([marcus@cmcgraphics.co.uk](mailto:marcus@cmcgraphics.co.uk))



# The way your health records are managed is changing

The NHS in England is introducing the **NHS Care Records Service** to improve the safety and quality of patient care. These secure electronic records will give healthcare professionals faster, easier access to reliable information about you to help with your care - particularly in an emergency, or if you see a doctor out-of-hours when your GP practice is closed. Your care records will be made up of two parts;

## The *national* Summary Care Record

This record is held nationally and will be available across England to support emergency care and will contain information on three subjects: your allergies; your medications; and any adverse reactions to medicines that you may have.

## The *local* Oxfordshire Care Summary

This is 'view only' and will contain more detailed information than the national Summary Care Record. It will only be available to local healthcare professionals involved directly in your treatment in Oxfordshire.

Every individual in Oxfordshire aged 16 years old and over\* will receive a patient letter at the beginning of April 2012, asking them to choose whether or not they want these care records. If you are a parent or guardian, you will need to make this choice on behalf of your child, or support them in making their own decision if you feel they are mature enough to do so. (\*or who will be 16 by the end of June 2012)

For more information visit [www.oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk/healthrecords](http://www.oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk/healthrecords) or contact the information lines at:

- Summary Care Records, Telephone **0300 123 3020**
- Oxfordshire Care Summary, Telephone **01865 428886**

Better access to reliable patient information means safer, quicker decisions to support your care



## Do you care?

Are you a carer? If so, we have received application forms in PDF format and also a checklist for a *Leisure and Learning Grant for Adult Carers (2011-12)* in MS Word format, either of which we can pass on to anyone who thinks they may be eligible for help.

This is a particularly difficult time for many people, but nobody more so than those dedicated to offering full time, or even part-time care to elderly or disabled relatives. Help is available from Carers Oxfordshire.

We have recently been advised of a £350 grant that may be available to eligible carers to help them cover the costs of transport, specialised IT equipment, extra help at home, counselling, massage, holidays and so much more in order to support them in their caring role.

In order to receive this grant, carers need to be 18 years old or over, providing unpaid care for 10 hours per week or more and not have received a GP break or similar grant since April 2011. Could this include you? If so, email [info@north-aston.co.uk](mailto:info@north-aston.co.uk) and we can forward the necessary files to you, or call in at Two School Cottages and copies can be printed out for you.

After months of work, Carers Oxfordshire is delighted to announce the launch of its new website. The site offers valuable information to carers covering many aspects

of their caring role, and has an intuitive navigation system that makes it easy to find the information relevant. Features include: a 'Find the Nearest Carers Support Group' search box; an Events and Activities calendar that lists all upcoming events for carers in Oxfordshire; a benefits calculator; up-to-date news; access to an archive of information; factsheets on caring; links and contact details of useful services for carers.

[www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk)

### News for Blue Badge Holders

Do you own and display a "Blue Badge" to help you find a parking space? If you do, then you need to be aware that the regulations applying to their issue and use have changed.

In February 2011 the Government announced plans for wide-ranging reforms to the scheme, and as of January 2012, some of these came into effect.

The requirements for eligibility for a Blue Badge parking disk have been updated. The process is on-going and will see the introduction of a new badge with standard nation-wide regulations and an attempt to address issues of misuse and abuse. Users still apply locally, as before, but new cards are issued from a central office. The cost has increased to £10 per year. Old cards will no longer be valid, and their use could incur a fine.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Oxfordshire County Council Social and Health Care Team on 0845 050 7666.



## Announcements

### Happy Birthday!

All Best Wishes to  
Stephen Rees (March 6th)  
and Wendy Cox (March 11th)

from Mum, Bev, Tony and Matt

### Village Clean Up

Each Spring we attempt a tidy-up of the village, mainly by collecting rubbish from along the verges and hedgerows. In the past this was an organised 'event', staged on a Saturday, but in recent years support for this has dwindled. This year we'd like to try a different approach.

Many residents take walks around North Aston, to stretch their legs or exercise dogs. If that includes you, could you head out one day in March with a bin bag, or even a carrier bag, and collect some litter? Please wear gloves, and place the rubbish into your green wheelie bin. One year JH-L found a £20 note, so it can be worth your while!

### Belated Best Wishes!

Happy Birthday to Mary Healy  
who celebrated a rare occasion on  
29th February. Still a teenager!

## This Month's BIRTHDAYS

Jos Busby

Wendy Cox

Stephen Rees

Joseph Stay



Many Happy Returns to all the North Aston residents who celebrate birthdays this month. If you're not listed, or know someone who should be, please let us know.

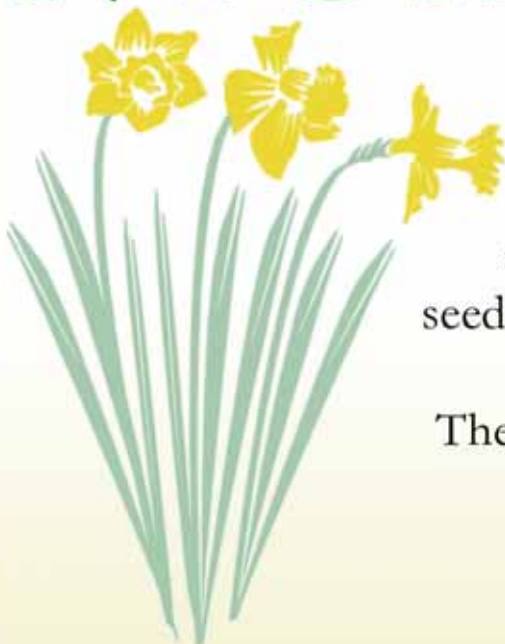
~\*~

**Congratulations to**

**Niel & Liz Nicholson**

on their 20th Wedding Anniversary!

# NICHOLSONS



Don't forget to visit your local Plant Centre  
this March for beautiful blossom trees,  
seeds (including a wide range for vegetables),  
seed potatoes, rose bushes, shrubs & herbaceous.

The Plant Centre will now be open on Saturdays  
between 9.00 am and 12.00 noon.

The Park, North Aston, Bicester, Oxfordshire.

01869 340 342

Open weekdays 7.30 - 4.00 & Saturdays in March, April & May 9.00 - 12.00.

[www.nicholsons.gb.com](http://www.nicholsons.gb.com)



# Councillor Calling

**Cherwell**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Follow-ups to a couple of recent items seem a good way to start this month:

## **Bicester Parking**

This has changed radically now the digging has begun in earnest for the town centre redevelopment. Some of the Market Square places are now reserved for the ShopMobility scheme and others have been taken over by the temporarily relocated bus stops. Twelve new disabled bays have been designated in the remaining parking areas to offset those lost to the building site. Although parking remains at Franklins Yard (77 bays), the main places to go now are round the back at the Cattle Market (278 bays) and Claremont (171 bays).

## **Section 106**

Contributions for single new houses have been suspended pending further consultation – so those affected who made strong representations have been listened to. The old s106 scheme applies as before until any changes have been fully tested (and probably until the new Community Infrastructure Levy “CIL” comes into force in a few months time and replaces s106).

## **Bicester's Future**

This is on the agenda, as you might expect with current buildings all along the Middleton Stoney Road, permission granted at Gavray Drive, the Airfield and the first part of the EcoTown, the revitalised Oxford-Bicester railway, and so on plus, now, proposals from the MoD for major development of their Graven Hill depot for both housing and industry, with the possibility of a further stretch of relief road. How to make sense of all this?

The answer is to develop a new Bicester Masterplan, which is now out for consultation. I've stressed to those organising the consultations for Cherwell that our villages within a wide radius of the town have as important a stake in it – in jobs, schools, shops, leisure facilities, etc – as any town resident and need to be fully involved. So, when you see consultation events advertised, don't hesitate to have your say: Bicester is just as much your market town as anybody's!

## **Budgets**

Always near the top of the list at this time of year. With the considerable help of savings from sharing management with South Northants Council, we've doubled our target of £1m cost reduction this year, making a third year of nil increase in Council tax possible, despite record 5% inflation, continued improvement in services and the rapid shrinking of Central Government

grants in support of the national austerity package. This makes for a substantial cumulative real decrease in costs, especially benefiting those, such as many pensioners, whose incomes increase in line with inflation.

In the current circumstances, it would be unwise to predict what will happen next year, especially as the grant regime is due for major and, as yet, unknown change. However, the course of cost reduction through sharing is still in full flood – the latest target is joining up both councils' computer operations – so this seam will continue to be mined for all it's worth in the interests of squeezing out all the efficiencies we can find.

## **Collecting What's Due**

One benefit of having a friendly neighbour on our side is that we can shamelessly crib what they do well: it seems that South Northants have a particularly effective Council Tax collection team, for example. Cherwell collect some 98.6% of what's due, which is excellent by national standards, but SNC pull in an astonishing 99.3%, which is not only fairer to the law abiding majority but keeps costs down for all so, by combining forces, we should be able to raise our game substantially. (There's an interesting twist: 90% of the Council Tax is, of course the County Council's share, so they will be the overwhelming winner from any extra Cherwell pulls in – I foresee some fascinating negotiations over who pays for the improved service...)

## **Backtracking**

Interestingly, though, it's not all a one-way street: we recently back-tracked a little by reinforcing some areas where we'd squeezed a bit hard, such as adding project management resources to ensure the huge programmes of Bicester Town Centre, the EcoTown, Bicester SW Sports Village, Banbury Canalside, etc continue to run smoothly, on time and on budget. I'm happy to see that we can be realistic and not stick rigidly to a fixed plan, risking millions to save thousands. The trouble is, of course, that you only see what you might have saved after it's all gone wrong if you haven't invested the extra resource!

So, it's all *Planning* and *Money* this month: not too cheering in the depths of Winter so I hope Spring will have begun by the time you read this.

**James Macnamara**

Tel: 01869 340109

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## **NEXT VILLAGE MEETING**

The next Village Meeting will take place on Thursday 19th April at 7.30pm in the Old Bakery.

A full agenda will be posted on the Village Noticeboard nearer the day. If you have any items you would like discussed, please send or email brief details to: [info@north-aston.co.uk](mailto:info@north-aston.co.uk).



# CHURCH SERVICES

## PARISH WORSHIP IN MARCH 2012

### STEEPLE ASTON

### NORTH ASTON

### TACKLEY

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#### Sunday 4th - Second Sunday in Lent

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11.00 am  
Holy Communion  
Fr Mark Clavier

8.00 am  
1662 Holy Communion  
*Fr Mark Clavier*

9.30 am  
Holy Communion  
*Fr Mark Clavier*

9.45 am  
Children's Church

6.00 pm Evensong  
*Fr Robin Gibbons*

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#### Sunday 11th - Third Sunday in Lent

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No Service

11.00 am  
United Benefice Communion  
*Fr Mark Clavier*

6.00 pm  
Evensong  
*Fr Mark Clavier*

6.00 pm  
Evensong  
*Fr Robin Gibbons*

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#### Sunday 18th - Mothering Sunday

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11.00 am  
Holy Communion  
*Fr Mark Clavier*

9.30 am  
Family Service  
*Fr Mark Clavier*

10.30 am  
Family Service  
*Rev'd Geoffrey Hunter*

6.00 pm  
Evensong  
*Fr Mark Clavier*  
*Fr Robin Gibbons*

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#### Sunday 25th - Passion Sunday

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11.00 am  
Holy Communion  
*Rev'd Mervyn Puleston*

9.30 am  
Village Praise  
*Mr Kildare Bourke-Borrows*

11.00 am  
Holy Communion  
*Fr Mark Clavier*

6.00 pm  
1662 Holy Communion  
*Fr Mark Clavier*

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Families are welcome to **all** services.  
Father Mark provides a children's sermon for children 4+ during the service.

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#### Other Events this Month

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Bible Study at the Rectory every Monday 1.30 - 2.30 pm  
Thursdays in Lent – 8.00 - 9.00 pm Lenten Study Group at Tackley Methodist Church

Morning Prayer: **Mondays** 9.15 am, North Aston; **Tuesdays** 9.30 am, Steeple Aston; **Wednesdays** 9.15 am, Tackley  
1662 Holy Communion: **Thursdays** at 12.00 noon in Steeple Aston church

7th March: 10.30 - 12.00 pm Coffee Morning at the Old Bakehouse in North Aston

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