

NORTH ASTON

News

May 2014
#283



*On North Aston Land this Spring
Upcoming Events - Plant Sales & Swaps, Elections & Meetings*

NORTH ASTON NEWS

MAY 2014, No: 283

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Out of Hours Doctor: 08453 458 995

Your Village Chairman

May I cover this month a few things that might/will come up at our Parish Meeting on May 1st.

Line Painting at Fox's Corner (the North Aston turn) - The lines, and most especially the arrows, have worn off, and the turn is now more hazardous than usual. Highways have promised to re-line them by the end of May.

The Horton - Our hospital, as most of us know, has for many years been part of the Oxford Hospitals NHS Trust. There have been rumours in the Press that the Trust might view it as an annoying northern outpost, and there might again be a move to close it. Our MP Tony Baldry has again weighed in to assure us that this is not the case, and that 'there are more consultants at the Horton today than at any time since the establishment of the NHS in 1948'.

The Fête and the Big Lunch - Our Fête will be held on Saturday July 19th. Can you already start thinking about (a) what changes and improvements you would like to see, (b) how you might help both before the day and on it, (c) what items you can put by for the Raffle, Bric-a-brac, White Elephant and Book stalls, and (d) whether and how we can give more space and prominence to our Japanese student visitors (yes they ARE coming again).

It's been proposed (by me) that we might hold another Big Lunch the following day, July 20th; some people like this idea, but I think we need to feel that this would be a well-supported event – like it has been in the past.

Jubilee Bench unveiling – Saturday June 7th? - It's time to get Daniel's lovely bench positioned on the Green and unveiled. For this we need to get a foundation laid, and the supporting slabs positioned (volunteers?). This ought to be a good reason for a celebration with a Marquee nearby and drinks on the house. Can you make it on Saturday June 7th, and what would be the best time of day?

World War 1 and D-Day Remembrance - June 7th is very close to the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings. This year is the 100th Anniversary of the start of WWI, in which nine men from our village died and 43 other men and one woman served. Do we want to commemorate this, and if so how and when?

Footpaths - The notices that suddenly appeared round the village are simply a confirmation of the official footpaths that exist, and James is writing about them. The paths are so lovely to walk along, especially at this time of year. They've been there since time out of mind and of course their existence is enshrined in law.

Our Easter Egg Hunt - This was a really lovely occasion in beautiful weather, attended by 19 eager children. So a really huge thanks to Jane McArdle for organising it, and to Deidre for helping the Easter bunny hide them.

Church Website - Our Church Services continue to be popular, with congregations way above the national average. Now there is a Benefice website at www.sntchurch.com with all up-to-date service details – in case you can't find your North Aston News.

Election - Thursday 22nd May is Election Day for our Cherwell District Councillor. James Macnamara, a Conservative, is offering himself for re-election again. CDC is important, they make decisions that affect all our lives, so do make a note of the date and exercise your right to vote.

Our Parish Meeting will be at 7:30 pm on Thursday May 1st in the Bakery. Come and join in!

If you have any suggestions about Village life, please do call or email me.

Kildare

Telephone: 01869 340 200 ~ email: chair@north-aston.co.uk



Letters

Mail to: info@north-aston.co.uk

Gopal Hari

I am sad to report the passing of Gopal Hari who for twenty four years lived at Manor Farm. He lost his remarkably brave battle with cancer on Good Friday.

Shortly before leaving North Aston, Gopal was diagnosed with an advanced brain tumour and given three months to live. Gopal and his family then moved to Glastonbury where he astounded Doctors by refusing to give up and became known locally as the "miracle man".

Sadly he suffered a stroke a few months ago from which he never really recovered. Some of you will remember Gopal as a dignified and deeply spiritual figure often to be seen out walking with his wife Ambika and their two sons Shambu and Veda. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.

James Taylor

To See a Fine Lady

Some of you may recall that Peter Barton, a wartime child refugee here in North Aston, published a children's book a few years ago entitled *To See a Fine Lady*.

Coloured by his own experiences here in the 1940s, when he spent many happy months living in The Hall with the Hitchens family, the novel tells the story of a group of children who uncover a miraculous time-travelling Roman mosaic. The ancient wonder takes them on a series of fantastic adventures, visiting far-away times and places.

Now, after three years hard work, Peter has transformed his story into an animated film. The project has been a true labour of love, and he has done all the work himself. Running to around 5 hours in total, the film is based in North Aston, and includes many familiar scenes.

He is giving away copies of the film in exchange for donations to the WaterAid charity. If you would like to support this worthy cause, and receive a free copy of the film, visit the website at: www.crowdfunder.co.uk/user/pablo/projects/ and click on the projects image link for more information.

Peter will be 80 this year - congratulations!



This Month's BIRTHDAYS

Richard Boss

Linda Brown

Clive Busby Hal Busby

Holly Busby Iris Busby

Deirdre Oakley

Matthew Rees

Joseph Martin

Oscar John Taylor



Congratulations to
Stephen & Wendy Rees
on their wedding anniversary

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.

Meeting Agenda

Village Meeting - May 1st 2014 The Old Bakery from 7:30 pm

VILLAGE MEETING

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of Last Meeting
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Broadband
5. Upper Heyford
6. Kerbing the Green
7. Speed Monitors
8. Middle Aston Lane
9. Any Other Business

VILLAGE FUND

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Minutes of Last Meeting
3. Treasurer's Report
4. The Village Fête and the Big Lunch
5. Installation of the Jubilee Bench
6. Commemorating World War I and D-Day
7. The Fountain lettering
8. Any Other Business
- Decoration of the Meeting Room
9. Date for next Meeting



This year's Wallingford Blues and Beer Festival is on 30 and 31 May and is "arguably one of the best line-ups for a two day blues festival ever seen" (*Black Eel Music*). The event will include chart-topping, thoroughbred musicians **The Blockheads**, who will headline the Friday night. Also top marks for the quality of all the bands this year, including *Tensheds*, *Papa George Band*, *Ian Parker*, the *Larry Miller Band* and *Big Boy Bloater*, covering a range of blues-based sounds to suit all tastes.

As well as some wonderful music there will be a great range of over 20 award-winning real ales, ciders, a drop of lager, some wine and soft drinks are all available - along with our famous BBQ to soak it all up.

The event is supporting two local charities; **Oxfordshire Young Diabetics** (for children with Type 1 diabetes) and **National Orchestra For All** (Oxford branch) so, fill your ears and your glasses and empty your pockets – all in a good cause of course.

Tickets: Friday Evening: £15, Saturday Afternoon: £5, Saturday Evening: £15, Full Weekend: £30. Available from Wallingford Town Office, Bloomers Café, The Coach & Horses, The Coachmakers Arms, on the door (subject to availability), online at www.wegottickets.com, or by post by sending a cheque (made payable to Wallingford Blues and Beer Festival CIC) to: Blues and Beer Festival Tickets, 17 Brookmead Drive, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 9AZ.

You can find more information at the website: www.bluesandbeer.co.uk

Volunteer Lock Keepers

For the last three years volunteers have been assisting staff on the Thames at the 45 locks between Lechlade and Teddington, and this year the Environment Agency is seeking another batch of Assistant Lock Keepers for a fourth season on the river.



Volunteers need to commit to working at least one day a week between May and the end of September. Volunteers can agree their hours with lock keepers but need to be available at least from 11 am to 5 pm. Volunteers are particularly needed along the river between Reading and Lechlade.

The volunteers work alongside paid lock keepers. They help boats pass through the lock safely: taking ropes, directing traffic, and operating sluices and lock gates. They help maintain the site and provide information to visitors so that they can make the best of their time on the river.

Applicants are invited to an assessment where they will have the role explained, their ability to meet the physical demands will be determined, and appropriate sites may be selected. Chosen volunteers then attend an induction course which focuses on safety and preparing them for working lock-side.

There is a fully documented training programme before volunteers take charge of a lock on their own, although this will only be for short periods while the keeper is at lunch, for

example. Volunteers are there to augment the regular staff rather than to replace them. Some elements of uniform are provided and volunteers can claim a mileage allowance, subject to a daily maximum. They also receive a monthly newsletter which keeps them in touch with what is going on along the river and other activities of the Environment Agency.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering on the Thames and to receive an information pack and application form, please contact the Volunteer team. You can telephone on 01491 828360 or send an email to:

thames.volunteers@environment-agency.gov.uk



2014 Annual Church Meeting ~ an Invitation

The Rector, Churchwardens and PCC of
 Saint Mary's North Aston
are very pleased to invite you to
The 2014 Annual Church Meeting
at
7:30 pm on Tuesday 29th April 2014,
followed by refreshments.

On the Land



April - May 2014

Continuing our series that looks at what's happening on the land around the village, this month we have submissions from **Mark Stay** of North Aston Organics, **Neil Nicholson** from the Nursery and **James Taylor** of North Aston Farms.

North Aston Organics

Our tractor is a Massey Ferguson 265 and I feel like I'm driving a Dinky Toy when the huge agricultural contractors' big beasts pass by. Tractors going through the village are a common sight but do you know what implements they are carrying?

We start the spring with a 'topper', which has horizontal rotating blades to cut down green manures and crop residues. Next comes the muck spreader which we use for compost and looks like a trailer but with rotating teeth and blades at the rear to chop it all up and fling it out. Then we plough it in. To get the soil in a state for planting and sowing we use a power harrow - vertically arranged spikes that spin round and break up the clods. On Easter Saturday the potato planter was in action - this plants two rows at a time - opening up a furrow, dropping the spud in and covering them over. All I have to do is keep the hoppers filled and be on the alert for 'stoppages' Oh yes and driving the tractor in a straight line helps too! Our tractor is called 'Tilly' by the way. *Implements Part 2* next month. *Mark*

Nicholsen's

As we move from April to May we have the true changing of the seasons. From bare twigs to blossom and the flush of fresh growth – a lovely time of year. But new plants need to be looked after:

All the plants are starting to grow now that we have had some sun, but what they do need is a steady supply of water. We had a little rain over the Bank Holiday weekend after a dry spell, but may need this topping up with irrigation. So keep an eye on any new planting.

Here at the nursery we have primed our watering system and are fully up and running. Almost all the water we use is from our barn and polytunnel roofs. True recycling and reuse. We collect this in the reservoir at the end of the nursery and it is then filtered and chlorinated to ensure it has no nasties before we use it. We have had the reservoir for seven years, and it has now paid for itself!

One of the other main reasons plants fail is that they have too much competition from weeds. It is therefore vital to keep the

base of all the plants free from weeds. This can be done chemically or there are other organic ways of doing it!

Spring is also a time for all the birdlife to start nesting and one of the divisions we have here is Tree Surgery. At this time of year we have to be very careful to ensure that we are not cutting any trees that may have nesting birds, so this adds an extra layer of complexity to what we do. But with the amount of trees we do plant – and this winter we planted and sold approximately 400,000 trees and hedging plants - we are certainly creating more habitats than we cut down! *Neil*

North Aston Farms

Well May is almost upon us. I have today noticed the oak is out in leaf - definitely ahead of the ash so maybe we are in for a splash and not a soak this summer. We have managed to get the barley and peas sown before the recent rain with the help of a contractor and now we need it to be dry for a few days in order to get the grass planted. As I write lambing is underway and going well and the cows are about a week away from calving.

We have vaccinated our yearling weaned calves for lungworm. Lungworm can cause a horrible cough in the summer and can make cattle quite ill. Vaccinating them involves pouring a 25ml bottle of live but non-viable lungworm larvae in aqueous solution down their throats! It is quite expensive but works well in our organic system and means we don't have to worm them later on - hopefully!

Every year the RSPB comes to us and our neighbour George to do a breeding wader survey on the water meadows. They have just done their first survey and as well as noting our breeding curlew reported this . . .

"I noted a total of 29 bird species, including most of the summer migrants now returned, such as blackcap, swallow, chiffchaff, sedge warbler and lesser whitethroat. The reed buntings were also in good voice, and there was a peregrine overhead at one point."

Finally a number of people have asked about the rather incomprehensible notices that have gone up around the village regarding footpaths. There is no need to panic - there are no changes afoot. On the contrary - everything is staying the same and these notices are merely reflecting North Aston Farms formally acknowledging the Statutory Public Footpaths that run across the estate. *James*

Upcoming Events

Deddington Farmers' Market

The traditional Farmers' Market in Deddington takes place every 4th Saturday of the month. This month's will be on **25th May**. North Aston Organics will have a stall.



Visit the new website & blog:
www.northastonorganics.co.uk

The 35th Annual Otmoor Challenge

The annual Horton-cum-Studley Village Fête and the gruelling (depending on your approach!) Half Marathon "Otmoor Challenge" takes place on Saturday 7th June 2014.

Why not make 2014 your personal Challenge? Have you always said that one day you would run a half-marathon? This is the year to do it! Run solo or form a team of four and take part in the Challenge, running a half-marathon round Otmoor on roads and trails. Start at 2pm.

If that sounds like too much hard work, then there are 13 or 5 mile walks, starting 9am-12 noon.

Horton-cum-Studley Village Fête

Concurrent with the Challenge is the traditional village fête, from 12 noon. This year the event will feature the The Bletchingdon Silver Band, Teas, BBQ, Bar, Games & Stalls and Electric Go-Kart rides for children. Free entry & parking.

Early evening (from 6pm) there will be a Pig Roast, Hot Dogs, Vegetarian Dish, Bar, Music & Games.

Tickets £8 - phone Sara Mander 07850-231293

www.otmoorchallenge.co.uk

North Aston Plant Swap & Sale

The annual North Aston Gardening Club's Swap & Sale meeting will take place on the Village Green on Saturday May 24th, between 2pm and 4pm. Bring along your own seedlings and pot-plants to swap, or buy (very cheaply!) from the stock on offer.

Middle Aston Plant Sale

This takes place on 10th May. See advert elsewhere for details.

North Aston Fête and Big Lunch

Just a reminder that the date for the North Aston Fête has been set for Saturday July 19th, with the Big Lunch to follow on Sunday 20th, the day after. Please make a note in your diary, and start hoarding stock for the tombola and other stalls!

Become an Allotmenteer

Whether you're looking to take up the challenge of self-sufficiency, or just fancy growing some stuff for fun: please come and have a look around the allotments (opposite Nicholson's) and speak to Norman West if you're interested in taking on a bit of space. There is a small plot perfect for beginners (approx. 25x12ft) currently available.



Developments at Ardley

The new incinerator seems to have gone up in a no time at all, and in just a matter of weeks now, it will become fully operational.

The recently distributed *Newsletter* from the operators Viridor offers some information and dates. The first delivery of waste, simply to test the efficiency of cranes and other handling equipment, has already been made. Additional and more regular deliveries will begin in early May. The main boiler has already been checked for seals and leaks, and has now entered the next phase in its preparation, that of 'curing' the lining, by being brought up to working temperature.

Some signs of this activity, with steam from the main stack, may have been seen by now. The next procedure prior to becoming fully operational is 'Steam Blowing'. This will commence in early June, and will involve flushing out all the residues of construction from within the pipework using high-pressure steam. Fifteen minute 'blows' will result in more steam being seen and, for those living or passing nearby, a certain amount of noise. This will be completed by mid-June.

Once this has been done the facility will be ready to go online and start processing waste and producing sufficient energy to power around 38,000 homes. Under normal operating conditions there should be no noise from the incinerator, and steam will only be seen during cold periods when the ambient temperature falls below 5 degrees centigrade.

More information is available on the website:

www.viridor.co.uk/ardley-efw

If you have any questions or would like to report an incident, please email ardley@viridor.co.uk or call 0800 975 3029.

Announcements

Road Works

The long-term roadworks along Camp Road through **Upper Heyford** are expected to persist throughout most of May (provisionally until the 25th) and, similarly, the traffic lights along the B430 between the site of the new Ardley incinerator and Middleton Stoney will also be around for a while longer yet. As always, there may be some night-time lane closures scheduled for the **M40** this month, but any disruption is likely to be minimal.

Brass and Jewellery . . .

We are always looking for interesting, quirky and quality items to add to our stock of antiques & collectables. We're particularly interested in pre-1940s porcelain and glass (including "blue & white" china), brassware, postcards, boxes and other small items made from wood. We are also pleased to consider small items of silver, cutlery and Edwardian or Victorian jewellery, including rings and brooches. Contact Old School Antiques (347356) or email sales@oldschoolantiques.co.uk.

North Aston Gardening Club

Spring is truly here and everything seems to be growing rapidly (especially the weeds!). We've all been too busy working away in our gardens and allotments to have a club meeting this month but here are some useful reminders:

If you haven't already done so, please pick up your seed potato and tub for the **Spud-in-a-Tub** competition from Norman West's house on the Green. Take it home and plant it now.

Also this year's **Plant Swap & Sale** will take place on Saturday May the 24th from 2-4pm in front of the fountain. Come along and get some bargains.

If you're interested in taking on a 'real' allotment plot instead of a sanitised version in a walled garden, please get in touch with Norman. There's still time this growing season to make a little piece of well cultivated ground your very own veg patch. Come to the Swap & Sale and you'll have plenty to plant in it!

Next Club Meeting

Wednesday 14th of May @8pm hosted by the Hazle's.

Annual Flower & Produce Show - Saturday the 30th August. Categories listed alongside. Start planning now!

100 Club



The very lucky winners of this month's draw are:

First Prize (£100): Norman West (#44)*

Second Prize (£5): R Brown (#95)

Annual membership of the North Aston 100 Club is up for renewal. Anyone who hasn't previously been involved but would like to join should speak to Norman West or call him on 340368. If you'd like to reserve a number, or safeguard your existing one, then please let him know as soon as possible. Renewal slips and an envelope are now available.



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

* In all the years that Norman has been organising the 100 Club, this is the first time that he has ever won a prize. Congratulations!



A reminder to dog owners and those new to the village - please do not allow your pet to foul on or close by any of the footpaths in the parish. Please "bag it & bin it"! This is especially true of The Green and the signed footpaths through and round the Park and Banbury Grounds. Thx.

2014 North Aston Flower & Produce Show

Section A: Vegetables & Fruit

Section rules: ALL exhibited vegetables and fruit must be home-grown and where appropriate displayed on plain white paper plates*.

1. Oddest Shaped Vegetable
2. Four Carrots
3. Four Potatoes
4. Three Onions
5. Six shallots
6. Three Beetroot
7. Three Courgettes
8. Longest Cucumber
9. Four Runner Beans
10. Longest Runner Bean
11. Four French Beans
12. Four Tomatoes
13. One of a kind of six different vegetables in tray/trug or basket
14. Mixed vegetables in a tray/trug or basket (unlimited types of veg, unlimited numbers: but size limit of container 15x23inches)
15. Three of a kind of 'exotic' vegetable (any vegetable which is not included in other specified categories)
16. Three Eating Apples
17. Three Cooking Apples
18. Six Soft Fruits
19. Bowl of five Fruits
20. Spud in a Tub *

(No entry fee required)

Section B: Plants & Flowers

Section Rules: All plants, flowers and herbs must be home-grown. Exhibitors to provide their own container. All exhibited pot plants must have been in the exhibitor's possession for at least 3 months

21. One Single Stem Rose
22. One Spray of Roses
23. Six Sweet Peas
24. Five blooms from your garden
25. Flowering Plant in a pot
26. Geranium in a pot
27. Flower arrangement in an unusual receptacle
28. Arrangement of wild plants or flowers
29. Ornamental Gourd competition * 3 gourds grown from distributed seeds. (No entry fee)

Section C: Cookery *

Section rules: All jams, marmalade, chutneys etc must have been made by the exhibitor since September 2013. They must be displayed in 1lb (360 – 400g) jar with a screw top.

30. Jar of Jam *
 31. Jar of Chutney *
 32. Victoria Sponge *
- (3 eggs, any jam or lemon curd, castor sugar on top)
33. Fruit Cake * (traditional rich fruit cake)
 34. Three Scones Plain or Fruit
 35. Savoury flan or quiche *
 36. Men's Only Cake *
 37. Three muffins *
 38. A loaf * (guide weight ~800g)
 39. Alcoholic beverage made from hedgerow produce * (in a bottle)

Section D: Arts & Crafts and Photography

Section rules: Photographs must be unmounted and must not be larger than 18cm x 13cm. All entries must have been made or taken since September 2013. Maximum 2 entries per person.

40. Something made from Wood
 41. A Picture made from any medium of any subject
 42. A limerick starting "There was a(n) from"
- Photographic Classes:*
43. Open: Photograph on the subject 'Seasons'
 44. Open: Photograph on the subject 'Pink'
 45. Open: Photograph on the subject 'Circles'
 46. Ages 13-19: A photograph on the subject 'My World'
 47. Under 13s: A photograph on the subject 'My World'

Section E: Children's Categories

Rules for Sections E & F: These will be judged in 2 groups: under 8 years & 8-16 years. All entries must be wholly the work of the children themselves, and to have been created since September 2013.

48. Four Cupcakes*
 49. Four biscuits*
 50. A creature made from vegetables
 51. A miniature Garden on a Plate
 52. A painted picture of a Monster (for under 8s only)
- *Paper plates will be supplied by the organisers. Children may also enter all other sections. Judging will be by ballot except those categories marked with a '*', which will be judged by an independent adjudicator.
- Entry fees:** 30p adult per exhibit, 20p per exhibit for children.
Additional Entry Forms & full rules will be distributed in July/August.



It's Christian Aid week again from the 11th May and we will be distributing and collecting donation envelopes during the week. North Aston has always been enormously generous in its donations to support the vital humanitarian work going on in areas of desperate need throughout the world. Here is just one story that illustrates where Christian Aid makes a difference . . .

South Sudan: A traumatic trip to safety

Apada began as a camp for people returning to South Sudan following independence. It is now a settled community of 40,000 people and continues to grow as others return to the country. Many of these people have suffered terribly. Margaret Nangok Deng's story is stark and shocking. It shows the damage war and poverty causes.

Margaret fled to northern Sudan during the war. With peace in South Sudan, she wanted to return with her children, so she sold her house and took the money with her to start afresh. But on the way, her convoy was ambushed. They were shot at. Terrified, they ran from their vehicles into the bush, leaving all their belongings behind.

Margaret hid for almost two weeks, drinking only stagnant water. During this time, she saw terrible things.

'A child died and the people who stole our vehicles ran the child over. They also drove over the leg of a man we were travelling with. They tried to come and take our boys and girls for sex.' Around 700 petrified people sought refuge in a barracks in northern Sudan. Margaret continues: 'We were rounded up, and we thought that we were going to be shot. We were crying and our bodies shivering. I prayed to God, I did not want to die. I said to myself, "Margaret, be brave". I stood up and prayed. I feared they were going to kill us.'

Margaret's prayers were heard: one of her leaders came and saved them. They were put on trucks and NGOs came to collect them, bringing them water, while local people gave them grains to eat. The NGOs took them to a port, and put them on a boat to the capital, Juba. Then from Juba, they were flown to Aweil, which is close to Apada.

'If the NGOs had not supported us, our lives would be very different,' said Margaret.

Our Work

Since 15 December 2013, over 700,000 people have been displaced inside South Sudan, forced from their homes amid escalating violence. The UN estimates that considerably more than 10,000 have been killed. Our partners are supplying food and essential medical supplies where possible, but as the rainy season approaches we need to act fast. With your help, we can reach more vulnerable people.

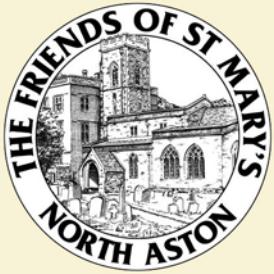


A Recipe for the Church

It's not too late to submit your favourite recipe ideas for inclusion in the PCC's *Window Restoration Appeal Recipe Book* - see previous editions of the *News* for further details.

Categories will be: *Starters, Mains, Desserts, Cakes and Biscuits*. If there are enough contributions there may also be a *Children's Section*. Local businesses will be invited to advertise in the book. If you know anyone that may be interested, please let the publishers know.

Please forward recipes to janechenies@hotmail.com, or alternatively give them to Beryl Greenwood or Jane McArdle. Don't forget to include ingredients and cooking temperatures in electric, gas and, if available, Aga.



The Church MATTERS



Charity Begins?

For a while, I worked as a fundraiser. One thing never ceased to amaze me: the generosity of people.

I mean, I'd meet some folk who heard what I was doing and presumed it must be the hardest thing on the planet to do. And seriously - it was not. People are generous - if we can be, and sometimes all of us struggle because of where we are and the things that come crowding in to our lives. But all you have to do is look at the figures raised by Comic Relief and Sport Relief and the various other "Big Name" event charities.



The economic downturn has hit charities in the last few years. Everyone has had to be careful. And yet, people still try to help. In this I find one of the most wonderful things about humanity: Jesus tells us that the greatest command is to love God and to love our neighbour, and most people really do want to do something to show love to fellow human beings in trouble.

For some, it's about doing something amazing. Sailing the world. Cycling huge distances. Working in far-flung places with folk in terrible circumstances. People from our villages are doing these very things - and I for one want to cheer them on.



For the rest of us, it's about playing our part. **Christian Aid Week** is coming up in May. Traditionally our villages have been huge supporters of this week: I hope that will be true again this year. The Christian Aid Campaign is sending out all kinds of information about Sudan, and how in the past four months nearly three quarters of a million people have been displaced. Christian Aid and their partners are feeding and providing medical aid to this unseen human tragedy. Our gifts can help.

Of course, there are other ways to help. Each of us should be aware of friends and neighbours, especially those who might be more vulnerable. The winter is (hopefully!) over, but people can still struggle - with food bills and loneliness, and giving a meal or some extra time can save lives in Oxfordshire too.

Community activities in our villages rely on us all to participate in all sorts of ways - from using the village shop to supporting local sports teams, school projects, arts and (yes, I'm going to say it) the church too. Time, actions, money. These are the things with which we can all be generous in different ways.

When I was a fundraiser, someone said to me: there's no real culture of giving in our country is there? Rubbish. People are generous to a fault.

Perhaps if there is a problem, it's that there's no real culture of asking. And when we ask - so many people do their best to help. So I'm asking: why not give something that will make a difference? And go on giving? To a charity, to a local sports club, to the church, to a neighbour. Give your time, your skills, your money, whatever is the thing you can give.

Jesus said: "It's better to give than to receive". It sounds odd, but actually, I think he was on to something.

Revd Marcus Green



Any comments about the above are very welcome.

Please email our Rector Marcus Green: steeplerector@hotmail.com or tel: 340 903

If you wish you can also email Kildare: k.bourkeborrowes@btinternet.com or tel: 340 200
or Clive: casp@north-aston.com or tel: 338 434

Any other member of the PCC will also be very happy to talk, and they are: Bill Adams, Richard Bailey, Beryl Greenwood, Jenny Martin, Jane McArdle, Ted Short, Jeremy Taylor and Norman West.

From Thames Valley Police

The Community Policing Awards 2014

The annual award seeking to uncover the member of the local Force who's gone above and beyond the call of duty has been launched and has already received over 150 nominations.

There is still time to vote before the closing date for nominations on 15 May. Do you know of a neighbourhood officer or Police Community Support Officer who goes that bit further to help? Do you know of a Special Constable or volunteer who gives up their time to carry out important duties in the community and deserves to be recognised for their efforts?

If so, why not nominate them for an award? The *Community Officer of the Year Awards* recognises those who have made the greatest contribution to addressing the concerns of local residents over the past year. Nominations will be open until 15 May. The categories you can vote for are: Community Police Officer, PCSO, Volunteer and Special Constable.

If you'd like to nominate someone you can do so by submitting a nomination form on the Thames Valley Police website at www.thamesvalley.police.uk or by emailing to this address: communitypolicingawards@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

Crime Figures

Crime across the board continues to drop in Cherwell & West Oxfordshire. Between April 2013 and March 2014 the LPA has achieved a 5% reduction in all crime, meaning there were 630 fewer victims of crime than last year.

Supt Colin Paine said: "This success is, in large measure, down to effective partnerships with West Oxfordshire District Council and Cherwell CD in running excellent local initiatives to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Social, economic and demographic changes have also made a difference."

"I am pleased to see a 7% reduction in the total number of burglaries, which means there have been 73 fewer victims of burglary this year. I know the devastating impact burglary can have upon the victims and my stomach still turns every time a burglary is reported. One burglary is one too many."

"I am especially delighted to see an overall reduction of 14% (263 offences) in violent crime this year, while there has been a 19% reduction (369 fewer) in drugs-related offences. Our detection rate for drugs-related crimes has risen by 4.8%, and we have had considerable success in identifying and arresting those involved in the supply of drugs. The LPA has also seen a 13% reduction (234 fewer victims) in arson and criminal damage offences."

"Areas where we have seen a slight increase include non-violent domestic reports, which have risen by 7% (150 instances), and sexual offences, up by 59. However, this highlights that more people are coming forward, and have the confidence to report offences to the police, giving us the opportunity to intervene. The detection rate for serious sexual offences has increased this year by 6.6%, which means we are bringing more offenders to justice. There has been an 8% reduction in domestic violence offences this year."

"I would like to reassure the public that Cherwell & West Oxfordshire remains a safe place to live where these crimes are extremely rare. It is important for us that not only are we reducing the number of crimes taking place, but we are also making sure fewer people are becoming the victims of crime."

Contacting TVP

Should you wish to contact the police about any non-urgent matter, please use the 101 number. They want to hear from you, no matter how trivial you think the incident may be. In the event of an emergency, use the familiar 999 number.

MIDDLE ASTON PLANT SALE

**Saturday 10 May: 10.00 – 4.00
Westcott, Middle Aston, OX25 5PZ**

May Woods is co-ordinating the annual Middle Aston Plant Sale again this year. For sale will be: a variety of perennials, with the occasional shrub and climber, a wide range of *pelargoniums* and some silver *Plectranthus*.

Annuals, including *Ammi visnaga* and *majus*; vegetables (ranging from Black Russian tomatoes, sweetcorn, and butternut squash to courgettes) and hopefully a few other interesting donations from local gardeners will also be on offer.

Professional nurseryman **Andrew Busby** is bringing *Aquilegia*, *Delphiniums*, *Lavender*, *Geum*, *Heuchera*, *Viola*, *Lithodora*, *Salvia* and *Gaillardia*.

In addition **Christopher Compston** will be selling second hand books and there will be bric-a-brac - and marmalade and jam, of course!

A donation will be made to Steeple Aston Church.

Any queries to May Woods

Telephone: 020 7736 3210

Email: may.woods17@gmail.com

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NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

On the Election Trail

I am rather regretting having to come inside and write this as it has been such a beautiful spring day. My election leaflets were ready this morning so I made a start with two of our smaller parishes and one other community – not bad for the first day. Actually, I'm not one of those political animals who relishes fighting elections but I do love the chance to get round every corner of this perfect place and enjoy, once again, being surprised by its unexpected beauties.

Walking every yard of every road is also a practical lesson in the detailed geography of each parish, which comes in useful when judging planning applications. So, when you find my face smiling up from your post, it's not the postman who delivered it – they only do MP's and MEP's, humble councillors have to do their own. That will also explain reports of a suspicious individual lurking round your property playing "hunt the letterbox" – you may think it's obvious but, trust me, a lot of them aren't and some I never find at all. I make up for that in the more confusing developments by unwittingly delivering to the back and front doors of the same house. If you get none of my leaflets or too many, now you know why!

Developing Change

It's also a lesson in the right sort of development, comparing each village that I tramped round twelve years ago to now. Every one is slightly larger, with barns converted, farmyards turned to houses, infilled gaps and the odd extra close. Almost all of it fits in as if it had always been there, proving to me that slow, steady, incremental development can house a lot of new residents (often the children of the old), support villages schools, pubs and employment and yet not devalue the characteristics we treasure: it's the big bulldozers I fear.

The election process also gives time to reflect on the point of it all, all those hours spent in meetings, writing emails, talking, arguing and, like today, wearing out shoes at elections (actually, that's an exaggeration as I use a pair of trainers already worn out by marathons!). I'd headline my work on housing, drastically reducing the numbers of families in temporary accommodation, on finance, cutting costs and holding down council tax, on the Local Plan, protecting our villages for the future, and my policy to protect homes from overbearing wind turbines. Then there are ongoing fights for me, or whoever you elect, on rural affordable housing eligibility, Heyford Park affordable homes for all residents, the proposed Neighbourhood Plan and a policy to minimise the impact of solar panel arrays.

That's the big stuff. But the real pleasure is in the individual victories: the drain I got unblocked, the home I got through planning and the overbearing development I helped prevent, the neighbour nuisance I got resolved and the benefits muddle I helped sort out.

The Doorstep Challenge

Back in the real world, of course, neither the big victories or the little triumphs matter at election time when, whatever you do as an individual, it's national issues that count. So, though Cherwell is fighting the blight of HS2 and opposes Pickles's devastating planning rules wherever we can, the Conservative label on my leaflets makes me to blame for this and every unpopular government action down to and including Maria Miller's dodgy expenses claims. Some robust conversations on the doorstep have left me in no doubt about that!

The problem is that we need Party groups to form an effective council administration. If all councillors were Independents, trying to get any policy agreed would be like herding stray cats (we're quite cussed enough as it is!) and there'd be no chance of consistent, long term thinking. So it's the very same Party labels that deliver you an effective, efficient and cheap local council that make it difficult to get re-elected. An impossible conundrum, but beyond my power to resolve – so I'll just go out into the sunshine and stick some more leaflets into letterboxes. It's your choice who writes this column next month!

James Macnamara

Tel: 01869 340109

cllr.james.macnamara@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Local & European Elections

The 2014 United Kingdom local elections will take place on Thursday 22 May. Normally these elections are held on the first Thursday in May, but they have been put back this year in order to coincide with the 2014 European Parliament Elections, already scheduled for that date.

All 32 London boroughs, 36 metropolitan boroughs, 74 second-tier district authorities, 20 unitary authorities and various mayoral posts are up for grabs all across the country, including one-third (17) of Cherwell DC's seats.

North Aston

The polling station in North Aston will be open between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm in the Old Bakery. Postal votes must be received by CDC at least 11 working days before the election, and the deadline for requesting a postal vote is 7th May. More details on-line at www.cherwell.gov.uk.



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CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH WORSHIP IN MAY 2014

NORTH ASTON

STEEPLE ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday May 4th - Third Sunday of Easter

8:00 am
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green

11:00 am
Holy Communion with Baptism
Rev Marcus Green

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green

6:00 pm
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green and Fr Robin Gibbons

Sunday May 11th - Fourth Sunday of Easter

9:30am
Family Service
Rev Marcus Green

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green

9:30 am
Morning Prayer
Richard Bailey

6:00 pm
Evensong
Rev Marcus Green

Sunday May 18th - Fifth Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green

11:00 am
Holy Communion
with Children's Church
Rev Marcus Green

9:30 am
Holy Communion

6:00 pm
Evensong
Rev Marcus Green and Fr Robin Gibbons

Sunday May 25th - Sixth Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Rogation Walk with Songs of Praise
Kildare Bourke-Borrowes

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer
Rev Marcus Green

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green

6:00 pm
Evensong
Fr Robin Gibbons

Sunday June 1st - Seventh Sunday of Easter

8:00 am
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green

11:00 am
Holy Communion
D-Day 70th Anniversary
Rev Marcus Green
followed by the Big Lunch

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green

6:00 pm
Holy Communion
Rev Marcus Green and Fr Robin Gibbons

Families are welcome to all Sunday services.

New Benefice Website

The new Benefice Website for the parishes of Steeple Aston , North Aston and Tackley has now gone 'live'. The site not only includes the latest information and amendments to the calendar of services for the coming weeks, but also includes brief histories of the three principal parish churches of St Mary's, St Peter & St Paul, and St Nicholas. There is also information regarding regular activities within the Benefice, a "What's on" page, and contact information.

Visit: www.sntchurch.com