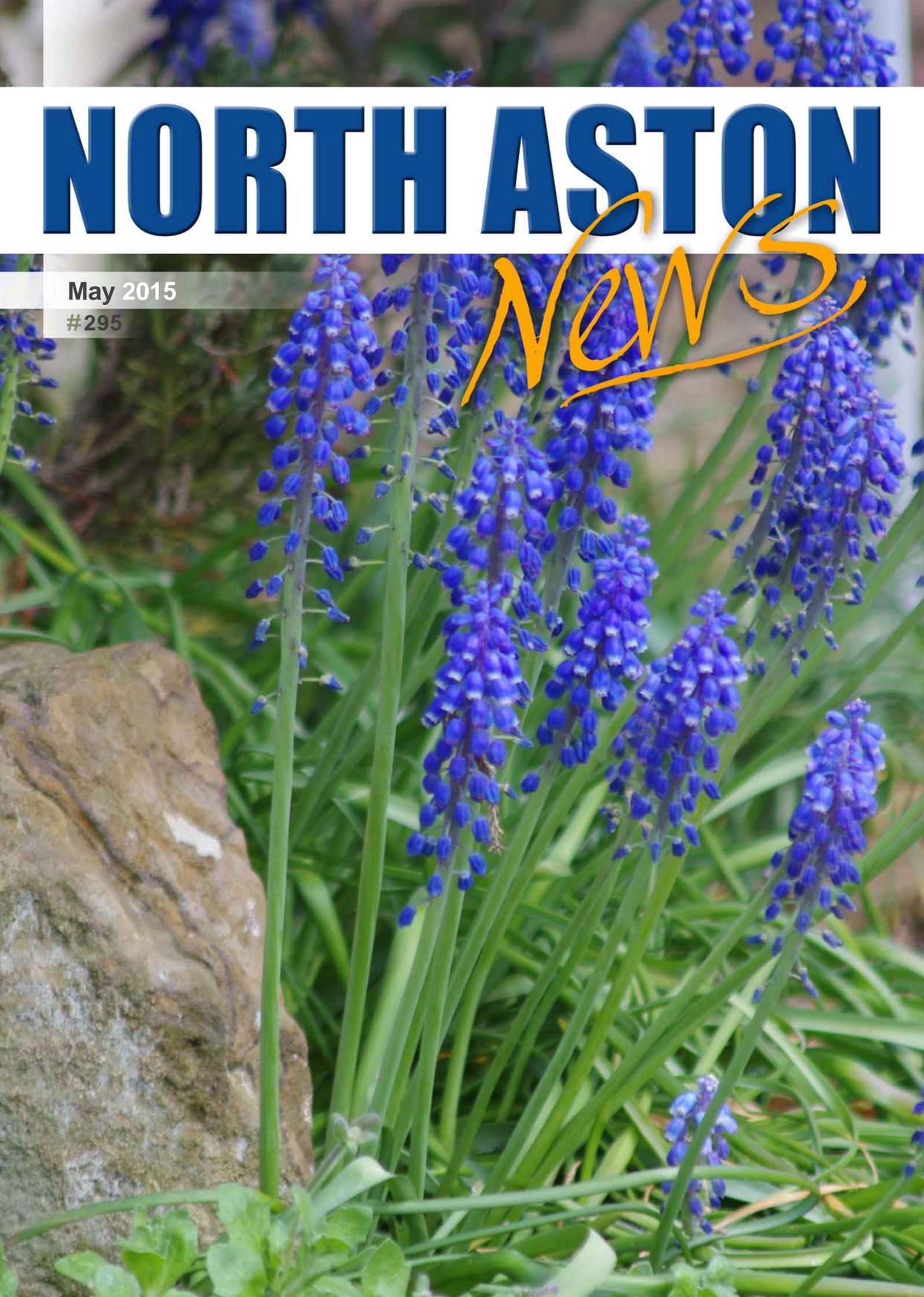


NORTH ASTON

May 2015

#295

NEWS



NORTH ASTON NEWS

MAY 2015, No: 295

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Your Village Chairman

The Easter Egg Hunt

I can't think of a more heart-warming sight than the Green on Easter Monday morning when 50 people from our village hunted for the precious eggs, 20+ children running, 30 grown-ups strolling and chatting. It was sunny and warm, Spring was beginning to spring, there was laughter and jollity after our long winter, and every child left with enough eggs to keep them happy at least until lunch-time. Thank you Vicky for organising it this year, and to Oscar and Susie for helping out with the tinies. There may be a few eggs still out there, so keep your eyes open.

Neighbourhood Plan.

The boundary and concept has finally been approved by the CDC executive committee so now discussions and decisions can be made about the structure of the Plan and our own part in it. Hopefully James will have given us a report on the first of these meetings at our Village Meeting.

The Election

I'm sure that nobody needs reminding that Thursday May 7th is Election Day, both for our new MP and for our District Councillor. Tony Baldry, our MP (Conservative) for over 30 years is standing down, making way for Victoria Prentis of Somerton as the new candidate. Will she hold the seat or will it go to another party? We'll all know on May 8th. Voting as usual in the Old Bakery, and do please thank the tellers, who have a really slow and boring long day, even if they do get paid for doing it.

Away

Sarah and I will be away for the whole month of May. We're swapping houses with some friends who live in the Languedoc, south of France. Sounds nice, and it will be, but we will really miss seeing all our village friends and North Aston in May - to my mind easily the most beautiful month of the year. See you in June I hope.

Kildare BB

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

Loko walks alone for eight hours a day, to gather and sell firewood so she can feed her children. Her shoes are so thin that thorns repeatedly pierce through to her feet. Loko is frightened of being attacked by hyenas, because there's no one around to hear her screams. So she prays as she walks. Her faith pushes her on.



In the Borena community, girls are expected to fetch and carry wood and water to provide for their family. Denied a good education and the respect of their community, women are trapped in a life of poverty.

This **Christian Aid Week, 10-16th May**, please support women like Loko by giving whatever you can in our door to door collection. Thank you

We will once again be delivering the Christian Aid envelopes on the weekend of the 10th May and calling to collect them during the following week. North Aston has always been wonderfully generous in the past and as the plight

of so many has increased over the past year your help is sadly still desperately needed. Thank you in advance for your generosity. If we miss you please remember envelopes can be handed to Clive or Kildare to pass onto us. Thanks, Paul and Jenny Martin.



For letters, comments and contributions to the News please email to: info@north-aston.co.uk

Announcements & Events

A Wedding

The Woodhead family will be celebrating their daughter's wedding on Saturday 16th May and have asked to make the following announcement:

We hope to have a splendid day and night and apologise in advance for any noise which might escape from Follyfield. We will of course try to keep the wedding guests as quiet as possible as they come and go through the village.

Deddington Farmers' Market

The traditional Farmers' Market in Deddington takes place every 4th Saturday of the month. This month's will be on 23rd May. Our own North Aston Organics will have a stall.

Mobile Library

A reminder that the Mobile Library stops by the Fountain in North Aston every alternate Thursday, between 09:20 and 09:50.

Fête, Big Lunch & Mikron

Don't forget these important dates! This year's Village Fête will be on Saturday 18th July, followed the day after by the Big Lunch. The Mikron Theatre Company is then set to take to their stage on the Green on Monday 27th July.

100 Club



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

First Prize (£100): Dick Smeaton (#16)

Second Prize (£5): Lisa Holloway (#53)

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, safeguard your existing one, or withdraw from the 'club', then please let him know as soon as possible. New members are urgently needed! Renewal slips and an envelope are now available.



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

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

Our Swallows are well and truly back after their epic journey from Africa. It amazes me the miles some migratory birds make, some even going back to the same spot year after year.

The Chiff Chaffs are back too; one of the first migrants to return and sing their pleasant song, *chiff chaff chiff chaff* from high up in the hedge. The Chiff Chaff is a little pale green bird which looks exactly like a Willow Warbler, and the only way to tell them apart is by their song. Fred's Dad calls them *one of those little brown and green jobs*.

We have an unusual sight on the farm at the moment. Ten to twelve Mallard ducks have taken up residence at the cow sheds just below our house. In the morning, when I go past with Penny, they are laid asleep in the straw, but later they come out and waddle about in the field looking completely out of place.

The Swallows make a wonderful sight in the early evening, skimming along just six inches above the grass, in and out of the sheep as they graze and disturb insects for the Swallows to catch. Last year, as we walked through the long grass, they would fly all around us close enough to touch, catching the flies and insects that we disturbed.

My Mum used to say "Have you heard the Cuckoo yet?" so that, when I was young, I used to think there was only one and it lived in North Aston. I personally haven't heard one yet this year but it's still plenty early enough. The Cuckoo is a parasitic bird, the only one in Britain. It lays its eggs in other birds' nests for them to hatch and rear, with the eggs resembling the host bird's eggs, a thing that no one

understands how. The young birds fly back to Africa in September on their own and unguided, but I have no idea how they manage it.

I'm not very good at recognising different types of bats, but we have quite a few down here which are just starting to get active in the evenings. When we sit down at the bottom of our garden with our wine in a summer evening we play a game. We take it in turns to throw a pebble up in the air when we see a bat and watch them as their radar picks it up and they come swooping in, thinking it's a moth. We've definitely got Pipistrelle bats, but I will make an effort to find out what and if we have any other types.

The Hawthorn, Cherry and other hedgerow trees are well and truly in leaf and blossom, making a wonderful sight and even better smell, so that should help the bees along.

One bit of sad news. We found the remains of a dead Barn Owl. How it died we are not sure - hopefully of old age - but the Buzzards had cleaned it up leaving lots of beautiful feathers. Someone else found another dead Barn Owl in the river below the organic field.

The nights are drawing out well now and the mornings are very pretty but still frosty. Roll on the warmer weather. *Steve*



The new lakes in The Park are starting to attract regular visitors in the form of wetland birds. A pair of black swans was spotted recently, while Mallard, Mute Swans, Mandarin ducks, Coot, Dabchick and sizeable flocks of Canada Geese have also been seen. There's a great view from the footpath through the woods.



On the Land

Nicholsons

Well what an April it turned out to be! I do not remember a period of weather such as this in April. We have been in shirt sleeves and enjoying the sunny weather for weeks now, although the night frosts have been keeping a check on some of the plants.

But as typical British gardeners we are never happy and always talk about the weather – so we are desperate for rain. Here at the nursery we are fine, with a full reservoir which we are able to use at will and so can water all the newly potted plants as they need it. Out on site it is a different story. We have been planting all the way through to the end of March with bare-rooted plants and with the lack of rain these are all now struggling – they are trying to grow and are already showing signs of stress. We need rain in good quantities and soon – the little bit towards the end of April was lovely but not enough. (In fact, all it did was to help my seeds in the veg garden germinate and now I need to keep them watered too!).

Another Old Wive's Tale – "*Ash before Oak we are in for a Soak*". This year though I think it is "*Oak before Ash we are in for a Splash*". If we believe it then we are in for a dryish year. Who knows?

May is a madly busy time of year for us. Having finished the bare-root planting we have all the other planting to do, a full work load in the general landscaping, weed spraying to do in the tree plantations (don't tell the Organics in the village!), and gardening is at full pelt with grass and weeds growing as fast as they can. But with nature waking up as it is this is the best time of year too. Do go and see the Bluebells in the woods - they are stunning.

Happy Gardening

Niel

North Aston Organics

Tilly has been busy in Mill Field, Firstly, most of the green manures have been chopped down with a flail which, despite being a heavy duty piece of kit, could only just cope with the lush sward of ryecorn and vetch. Next in was a set of heavy-duty spring tines to open up the soil and drag out some unwanted perennial weeds like docks and couch, and finally the power harrow to create a tilth. Power harrowing cannot be rushed and is a very tedious affair. The one consolation is that the disturbing of the ground attracts many different birds who come as close as they dare in order to ensure they get the tastiest morsels. They include the ever chipper Pied

Wagtail, the occasional Black Headed Gull that has mooched over from the canal, a pair of Magpies that will nonchalantly hop out of the way as the tractor passes, Rooks that act the playground bully but if the sun is low in the sky will reward you with a flash of purple sheen on their black feathers and finally a Red Kite may swoop low and might even land ... but I fear I am straying into Stephen's territory!

If you are driving past on your way down to Somerton you may notice a large patch of yellow. This is not Oil Seed Rape but last winter's brassicas (Rape is also a brassica) left deliberately to flower, partly as a food source for pollinators but mainly to attract the Cabbage White caterpillar parasite mentioned in a previous edition.

In the polytunnels the French Beans have had a tough time with daytime temperatures that probably made them think they really were in France only to be plunged into near freezing conditions by night. Next to them are the much hardier Mangetout peas, which are in full flower and full of promise! We have already started harvesting fresh garlic (the immature plant is used whole, chopped finely like a herb) and I hope we will be pulling much-anticipated bunched carrots by the end of the month.

Mark

North Aston Dairy

The day-to-day care of the animals is much easier now that they're outside all the time, but the time we were spending each day mucking out and feeding is easily taken up by other tasks.

The return to grass has given us a boost in production that means milk galore and it seems like we spend an inordinate amount of time at the bottle filler. Nettles, docks and thistles are growing fast and since the cattle won't eat them, we need to keep them in check to stop them dominating our pasture. The straw bedding in the barn that we were building up week on week over the winter to keep the cattle clean and comfortable needs piling up in windrows to heat up and compost ready to boost our fields. We also need to graze the cattle in a way that gives them maximum nutrition whilst allowing the grass adequate time to re-grow before being chomped again. Essentially this means that the cows are given only one day's worth of grazing at a time, turning our fields into an intricate network of electric fences.

There is always more work to be done, but this time of year, sunshine and new life make it such a pleasure to be on the land.

Josh

North Aston Gardening Club

We've had perfect growing weather in April and it's been lovely to soak up that late afternoon sunshine up on the allotment. There is a spare plot available so if you think you'd like to give it a go, get in touch with Norman West.

This year's Flower & Produce Show schedule is published alongside. There are a few changes and some new categories but most of the stalwarts remain. Club members have decided to include a *Women's Only* cake category to mirror the existing *Men's Only* cake category. All other categories are open to both genders!

In response to last year's success, we are having the *Spud-in-a-Tub* competition again, as well as ornamental gourds. You should have your gourd seeds by now. If not please see Norman or Lynn to get them: there's still time to sow them now if you haven't already done so.

The annual F&P Show is a great occasion to showcase home grown vegetables, flowers, cookery and craft in the village. Of course in North Aston, our F&P Show is special in that all classes (except cookery) are judged by YOU. Show day is Saturday the 29th of August and further details including entry forms and deadlines will be published in the July newsletter.

The Gardening Club will be meeting next on Thursday June 18th at 8pm, hosted by Chris and David Hazle (19 The Green). We will be finalising the organisation for the F&P Show at this meeting, so please come along if you can help.

In the meantime, happy gardening!

Lynn



The following residents celebrate birthdays this month ...

Richard Boss Linda Brown
 Clive Busby Hal Busby
 Holly Busby Iris Busby
 Deirdre Oakley
 Matthew Rees
 Joseph Martin Oscar Taylor

and congratulations to
Stephen & Wendy Rees
 on their wedding anniversary

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

2015 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 | 15. One of each of six different vegetables in tray/trug or basket |
| 2. Three Carrots | 16. Mixed vegetables in a tray/trug or basket (unlimited types of veg, unlimited numbers: but size limit of container 15x23inches) |
| 3. The Longest Carrot (for the <i>Tuffrey Cup</i>) | 17. Three of a kind of other vegetable (any vegetable which is not included in other specified categories) |
| 4. Three Potatoes | 18. Three Eating Apples |
| 5. Three Onions | 19. Three Cooking Apples |
| 6. Six shallots | 20. Six Soft Fruits |
| 7. Three Beetroot | 21. Spud in a Tub * |
| 8. Three Courgettes | |
| 9. Longest Cucumber | |
| 10. Four Runner Beans | |
| 11. Longest Runner Bean | |
| 12. Four French Beans | |
| 13. Five Cherry Tomatoes | |
| 14. Four Tomatoes (non-Cherry) | |
- (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

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 22. One Single Stem Rose | 28. Flower arrangement in an unusual receptacle |
| 23. One Spray of Roses | 28. Arrangement of wild plants or flowers |
| 24. Six Sweet Peas | 29. Three Dahlia Blooms |
| 25. Five blooms from your garden | 30. Ornamental Gourd competition * |
| 26. Flowering Plant in a pot | 3 gourds grown from distributed seeds. (No entry fee) |
| 27. Geranium in a pot | |

Section C: Cookery *

Section rules: All jams, marmalade, chutneys etc must have been made by the exhibitor since September 2014. **They must be displayed in 1lb (360 – 400g) jar with a screw top.**

31. Jar of Jam *
32. Jar of Chutney *
33. Best Decorated Sponge Cake * (4 eggs. Filling may be any of the following: jam, fruit curd, buttercream)
34. Fruit Cake * (traditional rich fruit cake)
35. Three Scones, Plain or Fruit
36. Savoury flan or quiche *
37. Men's Only Cake *
38. Women's Only Cake *
39. A loaf * (guide weight ~800g)
40. 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 2014. Maximum 2 entries per class per person.

41. Something made from Wood
42. A Picture made from any medium of any subject
43. A Traditional Limerick (any format or subject)

Photographic Classes:

44. Open: Photograph on the subject 'Weather'
45. Open: Photograph on the subject 'Yellow'
46. Open: Photograph on the subject 'Lines'
47. Ages 13-19: A photograph on the subject 'Animals'
48. Under 13s: A photograph on the subject 'Animals'

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 2014.

49. Four Cupcakes*
50. Four biscuits*
51. A creature made from vegetables
52. A single, decorated, Wellington Boot
53. 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.



The Church MATTERS



Are you enjoying the Election?

There, the Rector has done it now. Raised politics on the church page. Never should mix the two...

Of course, that's a terrible attitude. Politics is fundamentally about about people, and so is the heart of God. When we choose what leaders we want to govern us, we (often inadvertently) choose what kind of people we want to be too. Christianity is all about facing up to what kind of people we are, and seeing if there's anything can be done about that.

Better luck next time, says friendly advice.

Let's try a clean slate - genuine forgiveness, says God.

So: are you enjoying the Election? Is it the kind of thing that excites you? Or are you bored stiff by endless white men in suits saying the same nothings?

All my adult life I've worked hard at being politically neutral. I have no party allegiance. I think it's very important that a Rector is engaged with politics, understands the issues and (from time to time) points out some of the flaws in things being said, especially when they are said to the detriment of his flock. But it's absolutely crucial a Rector have no party chip on his shoulder. I've been presumed to be pretty much every colour in the political spectrum in my time; recently I overheard someone saying they felt a sermon of mine was "coming close to preaching socialism". I have friends who'd be thrilled to hear that - and friends who'd be aghast!

It's not my job to tell you where to put your cross on the ballot paper (though I sincerely hope you do put one somewhere) because it's my job to tell you about a completely different cross.

That cross was about God choosing to believe in people. God choosing to forgive. God choosing to grant us more and more and more chances in life. It was a cross that, like so many crosses we have seen in our lives, spoke of mistakes and sins - but rather than demand austerity or borrow credit from elsewhere to get us past the effects of our mistakes, this cross exists to erase the past. Your past. Mine. The things we want forgetting are wiped away.

That cross was not a matter of pencil on paper but nails on wood and blood on flesh. It wasn't a popularity contest, offering the spoils to the name with the largest number of followers. On the day, the name the crowd cried out for walked away and never saw this cross. But Jesus stayed on his cross so that we could walk away too, with more hope in our hearts than May 8th can bring us no matter what the result.

That cross says that God says: People - all people - you - matter.

So when you vote, you use a symbol that brings God into the centre of our democratic process. And when you use that vote, think for a moment about what kind of person you are, you want to be, you want to leave behind. And enjoy joining in God's work - for the Cross of Jesus is his eternal vote, his eternal statement of faith that in Christ we all can be the kind of people we really want to be.

Revd Marcus Green

In addition to Sunday services, Morning Prayer is said in St Mary's every Thursday morning, and Bible Study happens in the Rectory every Monday at 2pm.



Any comments about the above are very welcome. More news is always available on our website: www.sntchurch.com
Please email our Rector Marcus Green: steeplerector@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 340 903
You can also email Clive: casb@north-aston.com (tel: 338 434) or Annabel: annabelbevan@hotmail.com (tel: 345153)
Any other member of the PCC will also be very happy to talk, and they are: Kildare Bourke-Borrowes, Beryl Greenwood, Jenny Martin, Ted Short, Jeremy Taylor and Norman West.

Councillor Calling



Five Year Plan

Planning news brings some good cheer for once! Firstly, we now have a five year housing land supply – just: as at 31 March it stood at 5.1 years. This is vital because, when it is less (last June it was down to 3.4 years) the National Planning Policy Framework more or less forces councils to accept planning applications, almost regardless of how damaging they are, and, if councils refuse applications, government inspectors ram them through on appeal anyway.

More to come ...

Of course, we've been here before and, each time we've jumped to a new height, the bar has been raised. First, we had to have a new housing needs survey on assumptions which pushed up the numbers required to be built each year, then five years became six because of a 20% extra tacked on for safety, then in came the "Sedgefield Rule" that any shortfall couldn't be spread over the life of the plan but had to be caught up within the next five years and then, just when we'd achieved even that level, along came the humungous SHMAA demanding that Oxfordshire takes 100,000 homes in the next thirty years.

Suppressing Urban Spread

We must still keep approving applications at a heck of a rate, just to keep at this level and, of course, if the housing market goes quiet and developers cut back their build rates, we could be back in the dog house. And the bar could be moved again – the next threat is pressure from Oxford to shovel their housing demand out into the districts – but, for now, we're in the clear.

Approving the Plan

The second vital piece of the jigsaw is to have a valid Local Plan which, as you know, Cherwell has been struggling to achieve since before I was first elected thirteen years ago, again stymied by moving goalposts every time we got within reach. This time, the rumour is that the Inspector who examined our Plan before Christmas is only waiting for the election (and, which may be trickier, for a new government to be formed and settle in) to get it signed off by the Secretary of State. After that, there's still a lot of detail to fill in but, with an approved Plan and a 5-year supply, we can decide applications on their planning merits at last.

Setting Boundaries

The third bit of progress is the acceptance of the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan boundary, after months of delay, so we, as parishes, can plan where we want development to go. Encouragingly, Hook Norton have just had theirs, the first in Cherwell, approved by its Inspector and are now having the required local referendum before it can come into force. A single parish is obviously far less complex than multiple, very diverse parishes with a major development site in the middle

but it shows the way and means that Cherwell now have practical experience of the process.

Parking & Riding

Traffic planning, meanwhile and on a related theme, also got a little better, with the new Bicester Village park and ride car park now scheduled to open before the Christmas rush and a reapplication by the Village itself for its extension to have extra car parking spaces, 372 increased to 519. With the new roundabouts and traffic flows promised, there is hope that we might avoid a repeat of last year's traffic mayhem. That all involved cars: in our villages we need to keep vigilant to ensure lorry movements, especially construction traffic, is routed to preserve our peace, safety and roads.

Growth & Employment

Employment will be boosted considerably by the extra jobs in the 28 new shops (this hasn't increased from the previous application), where a formal Employment and Skills Plan has been made a condition of the permission. It was heartening to see that 1,053 new companies were formed in Cherwell in 2014, more than in any previous year. Obviously, we need this, not only to match all the extra houses being built but especially to try and reduce the level of out-commuting which sees 60% of Bicester travelling out of town to work every day.

The 'E' Word

All that, and no mention of the Election! That's, of course, because, by the time you read this the event will be just a few days away and pretty soon we'll know the result. With all the uncertainty, I'm not so foolish as to risk prediction.

James Macnamara

Tel: 01869 340109

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



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In the car park behind the Old Bakery

- Wide variety of fresh seasonal organic veg at affordable prices
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www.northastonorganics.co.uk



CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH WORSHIP IN MAY - JUNE 2015

NORTH ASTON

STEEPLE ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday May 3rd - Fifth Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Revd Marcus Green

5:30 pm
Evensong
**Revd Marcus Green and
Fr Robin Gibbons**

Sunday May 10th - Sixth Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Family Service
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am
Family Service
with Baptism
Revd Marcus Green

5:30 pm
Holy Communion
**Revd Marcus Green and
Fr Robin Gibbons**

Sunday May 17th - Seventh Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Holy Communion
**Revd Marcus Green and
Richard Bailey**

11:00 am
Holy Communion
with Children's Church
**Revd Marcus Green and
Richard Bailey**

5:30 pm
Evensong
**Revd Marcus Green and
Fr Robin Gibbons**

Sunday May 24th - Day of Pentecost, Whitsunday

9:30 am
Morning Prayer
Revd Marcus Green

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

5:30 pm
Informal Service
with Baptism
**Revd Marcus Green and
Fr Robin Gibbons**

Sunday May 31st - First Sunday after Pentecost, Trinity

No Service

No Service

10:30 am
United Benefice Festival Celebration
Blessing the Villages
Open Air Service, with
Tackley Methodist Church

Families are welcome to all Sunday services.

Sunday June 7th - Second Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am
Morning Prayer
Richard Bailey

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Revd Canon David MacInnes

5:30 pm
Evensong
Fr Robin Gibbons

Visit the Benefice Website for further information www.sntchurch.com