

NORTH ASTON

June 2015

#296

NEWS



NORTH ASTON NEWS

JUNE 2015, No: 296

Useful Contacts

North Aston News

Telephone: (01869) 347356

Email: info@north-aston.co.uk

Kildare Bourke-Borrowes, NAPM Chairman

Telephone: (01869) 340200

Email: chair@north-aston.co.uk

Beverley Rees, NAPM Treasurer

Telephone: (01869) 347434

Email: treasurer@north-aston.co.uk

James Taylor, NAPM Secretary

Telephone: (01869) 347888

Email: secretary@north-aston.co.uk

North Aston PCC

Clive Busby, Church Warden

Telephone: (01869) 338434

Email: casb@north-aston.com

Annabel Bevan, Church Warden

Telephone: (01869) 345153

Email: annabelbevan@hotmail.com

North Aston Gardening Club

Lynn Quek, Acting Chairperson

Email: lsquek@doctors.org.uk

North Aston Pet Alert

Please notify of any Firework Parties

Deirdre Oakley: Tel (01869) 340646

Also email: info@north-aston.co.uk

North Aston Farms

Telephone: (01869) 347865 or 347888

Email Jeremy: jeremytaylor@north-aston.co.uk

Email james: jamesfionn@hotmail.com

North Aston Organics

Telephone: (01869) 347702

Email: northastonorganics@gmail.com

Website: www.northastonorganics.co.uk

Hillcrest Care - Park Farm House

Telephone: (01869) 349922

Email: parkfarmhm@hillcrestcare.co.uk

Nicholson Nurseries

Telephone: (01869) 340342

Email: office@nicholsons.gb.com

Website: www.nicholsons.gb.com

North Aston 100 Club

Norman West. Tel (01869) 340368

Old Bakery Bookings

Mary Healy. Tel (01869) 347702

Email: maryvhealy@googlemail.com

Village Marquee Bookings

Marcus Potts. Tel (01869) 347356

Email: info@north-aston.co.uk

CDC Local Councillor

James Macnamara, Lower Heyford

Telephone: (01869) 340109

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

Thames Valley Police non-emergency: 101

Out of Hours Doctor: 08453 458 995

Your Village Chairman

*Kildare is away this month and will resume his regular offering in July.
If you have any suggestions or comments on village life, please do email him.*

Kildare BB

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



The following residents celebrate birthdays this month ...

Andy Brown Adam Busby
Alex Hatzigeorgiou
Tilly Kneale

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.

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



The lucky winners of this month's draw are:

First Prize (£10): M Davis (#81)

Second Prize (£5): Jenny Martin (#38)

Thanks to all those who have already renewed their subscriptions. This month there's a period of grace for those who haven't, and your numbers have still been included, but they won't be next month! If you still wish to be involved, don't forget to return your subscription envelope to Norman asap.

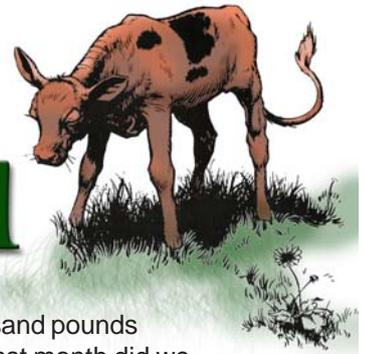


New Members Needed!



Anyone who hasn't previously been involved but would like to join should speak to Norman West or call him on 340368. It's all in a good cause, raising funds for the village, and your chances of winning are far better than they are for the Lottery! If you'd like to join in, reserve a number, safeguard your existing one, or withdraw from the 'club', then please let Norman know.

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



On the Land

North Aston Farms

An amazingly sunny and reasonably warm April has been followed by a cloudy and unreasonably cold May. Lambing is nearly over (only seven left to go) and the lambs are looking well and running happily around the fields. Next year sees a change in farm policy as we enter a sheep share farming agreement with my farming neighbour from Clifton - Chris Fenemore. There will still be sheep on the farm (organic of course) – but no longer managed by us. Hopefully this will allow the flock to expand but give us time to focus on increasing the cattle numbers and improving the productivity of the grassland.

Calving is now in full swing. We calve outside between May and July and so have lots of cows with new-born calves in the fields. Please be aware that cows can sometimes be very protective of their young (They really love them!) so keep your eyes open and dogs under control if walking through a field of cows and calves – however let your dog go if the livestock become threatening! We have bought a new South Devon Bull this year – his name is Oklahoma! I could easily have bought him on his name alone but he also looks to be a fine well-fleshed beast.

Way back in the winter we had three cows abort – losing four calves (one had twins). Losing a calf is a serious blow – each

potentially worth over a thousand pounds further down the line. Only last month did we have the confirmation that these were caused by a disease called *Neospora Caninum*; a protozoal organism transmitted to cows via contaminated dog faeces. Once in the herd this disease can be transmitted *in-utero* from cow to an apparently healthy calf – which will in turn abort her calf if kept as a breeding replacement. This is a real worry to us – there is no cure or vaccine for this condition and no real way of knowing where the source of infection is coming from. Maybe bagging and binning dog poo on footpaths - even in the fields is not such a bad idea!

Here's to a warm June!

James

North Aston Organics

May has been as manic as ever with a seemingly never-ending queue of crops waiting to be planted or sown.

Most of the market garden area has been filled up with the summer vegetables and already the cucumbers and tomatoes are needing their weekly training up the strings - why can't they do it themselves like the beans? Mill Field is only just getting started as most of the crops there are for autumn, winter and even spring next year. Anything we plant at the moment will have to be irrigated as significant rainfall cannot be relied upon. However, experience tells me to be careful what you wish for!

Mark

Mikron Theatre in North Aston

The Mikron Theatre Company will be returning to North Aston in July and enacting a performance of their new show, *Raising Agents* - a celebration of 100 years of the Women's Institute.

For a change, the Theatre will be moving onto the Green, where the marquees will be erected (in case the weather turns inclement) and refreshments will be available. Bring your own chairs or a blanket, a picnic, and a sense of humour!

The story so far ...

Bunnington WI is a bit down-at-heel. Dwindling membership means they can barely afford the hall, let alone a decent speaker. So when a PR guru becomes a member, the women are glad of new blood. Initially, the milk of WI kindness begins to sour when she re-brands them the Bunnington Bunnies. They're hopping. With stakes higher than a five tiered cake stand, a battle ensues for the very soul of Bunnington, perhaps the WI itself!

On the threshold of one century into the next, this tale of hobbyists and lobbyists asks how much we should know our past or how much we should let go of it. Above all else, like the WI itself, *Raising Agents* is a story of friendship.

No tickets required. Cash collection after the show.

RAISING AGENTS

100 YEARS OF THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

North Aston Village Green
Monday 27th July 7:30 pm

North Aston Village Meeting

Thursday 30th April 2015 ~ The Minutes

Officers Present: Chairman Kildare Bourke-Borrowes, Treasurer Beverley Rees, Secretary James Taylor

Those present: Mary Healy (MH) Jeremy Taylor (JT) Tony Godwin (TG) Chris Hazle (CH) David Hazle (DH) Clive Busby (CB) David Hanna (DHa) Mark Stay (MS) Jan Liberadski (JL).

Apologies were received from: Sue Hatzegiorgiou, Niel Nicholson and Marcus Potts.

Village Meeting

1. Welcome & Apologies

KBB welcomed the Meeting. Apologies were received from Sue Hatzegiorgiou and Niel Nicholson. KBB also said that Marcus Potts was sorry not to have been able to be at the meeting and had sent some correspondence to share with the Meeting.

2. Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the Meeting of Thursday 8th January, published in the February issue of the News, were approved. Proposer CB seconder DHa

3. Treasurers Report

Village Fund Accounts, 1/4/14 to 31/3/15

There had not been many changes in cashflow since the last report. There had been some money in and some money out for the 100 Club and a payment of £217.24 on Christmas presents for the senior residents. The balance in the bank at 31/3/15 was £5,831.21 – almost £1000 up on the beginning of the year.

MS asked why we had all of this money in the bank and not being used? JT asked what made up the £589.70 Misc in expenditure. BR revealed it to be £404.20 for work on the village fountain, £60 molecatcher, £36 BDO – auditors, and £89-50 for Mulled wine at Carols on the Green.

Village Meeting Accounts

BR reminded the meeting of the annual ins and outs of the accounts. Income being £600 precept £7.89 interest and £20.71 grant. Total income £628.60

Expenditure consisted of £566.15 insurance and £22.18 subscriptions. Total expenditure £588.33

The balance in the bank at 31/3/15 was £2669.25

JT commented that the insurance seemed very high just to cover the fountain, bus shelter, marquee etc but assumed it also covered public liability.

BR informed the Meeting that the accounts were ready to go to audit. BR read out to the meeting two sections from the Annual Return for the financial year 14/15 sent by the BDO. Section one – Accounting statements 2014/15 and Section two – The Annual Governance statement 2014/15.

The Meeting unanimously approved Section One and Two. BR informed the meeting that North Aston Meeting had been randomly selected (5%) to complete an Intermediate Review questionnaire which had to be submitted by 3rd June.

4. Neighbourhood Plan

JFT gave the meeting a very quick overview of the situation to date having just attended a Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Planning Forum meeting at Upper Heyford.

The main development was that the Neighbourhood Plan had had its boundary accepted by Cherwell Executive Committee. The plan now had to be structured and once adopted will form part of the statutory development plan. This should allow those parishes within the NP to have some say over planning proposals within the district which the District Council will have to take into consideration before coming to any decision. JFT told the meeting that Kirtlington was under threat at the moment from an aggressive planning proposal on a green field site and that the NP would have to be formed relatively quickly if it was to stand a chance of defending Kirtlington from this threat. (It was always assumed that the NP would favour development at Heyford Park over unwanted development at smaller surrounding villages. A number of working groups had been formed at the meeting and

JFT had put North Aston forward for the Transport mitigation group as he and KBB felt this would be the single most issue affecting the village.

5. Village Fête

KBB reminded the meeting that the Fête was set for 18th July and that he would be happy to organise it. A Fête Planning Meeting was set for June 11th at 7.30 pm in the Bakery.

KBB said he planned to use a new tannoy system. A discussion was held as to the benefits of the “commercial” stalls for example the sweets and the children’s roundabout. MH suggested that they took away from the “homespun” nature of the fête.

DH was concerned that the fête had become merely about fund raising and was no longer an event for “the village”. KBB disagreed. CB wondered whether we might just have the roundabout. TG said the current feel of the fête was just right – the more homespun the better and suggested going to see the Charlbury Beer Festival which was very charming – low key and homespun. KBB commented that these suggestions could be refined at the fête meeting.

6. Mikron Theatre

A discussion was had emphasising the need to get friends and family to come and support this venture. MH voiced her concerns over toilet facilities if it were held on the green. MS volunteered to contact Marcus regarding promotion of the event.

7. The Big Lunch

Date set for July 19th. Marcus Potts to advertise in the *North Aston News*. A brief discussion was had about numbers – not many came last year but didn’t seem to be an issue for those that did attend. MH suggested a welcome drink funded by the village at 12.30 pm. Desserts would be bring and share.

A vote was taken to supply up to a dozen bottles of bubbly for the event. 8 in favour 1 abstention.

8. Harvest Festival Lunch

CB said that Harvest Festival was set for the 27th September. Lunch venue to be confirmed.

9. Any Other Business

KBB had received an email from Marcus Potts. He wanted to raise the issue that **dog fouling** was continuing to be an issue in and around the village and that **parking on the pavement** opposite the green was continuing to be a concern. A general discussion over dog fouling ensued not only covering Marcus’s concerns but also the problem caused by those who bag and hang! The meeting agreed that dog fouling is totally unacceptable but felt that notices or bins would not be right for the village.

JFT said that Marcus Potts had left him to liaise with BR over the ordering of the solar charger for the **Speed Monitor**. JFT hoped to get it sorted in the next month.

JT raised the issue of the **signs** at the North Aston crossroads advertising let property in Duns Tew. JT asked if he could contact the agents. The Meeting gave him the green light.

CH asked if something could be done about the **saplings** growing under the sweet chestnut on the Green. JT and CH volunteered to chop them down and clear the area.

MH commented that the main road verges were full of wild flowers at the moment and wondered whether we could recreate the same within the village. JT asked who was responsible for the “**safety mowing**”? CB said the council were responsible but subcontracted it. JT said he would try to find out who did the mowing.

CB said he would pester highways about replacing the damaged **kerb stones**. This concluded the Village Meeting.

Village Fund Meeting

1. Minutes & Treasurers Report

The Minutes from the last Meeting as published in the February issue of the *News*, were approved. Proposer CB seconder DHa.

2. Village Sign

KBB read out an email from Marcus Potts supporting the idea of a village sign and the possibility of running a design competition.

A general discussion was held over the merits or not of a village sign. KBB insisted he still thought it a lovely idea and MH was in favour of the idea however the meeting voted not to pursue the notion of a village sign for the moment.

3. War Memorial

KBB tried once more to engender some enthusiasm for the concept of a war memorial in the Village however the meeting decided not to pursue the idea of a war memorial for the moment.

4. Village Map

TG raised the idea of a village map. A discussion ensued over the possibility of having a village map designed and put in its own display – possibly somewhere near the phone box.

5. Noticeboard

KBB told the meeting that the Hall had requested whether they could rationalise the various noticeboards etc at the entrance to St Mary's Walk. KBB was waiting for some proposals from Trevor Green Parkes but had not received any to date.

6. Any Other Business

CB said that he had repaired the **fountain tap** so that it works – though without the delay mechanism.

KBB informed the meeting that Marcus Potts, having designed, edited and published the **Newsletter** for ten years, wished to hand over this responsibility at the end of the year. MH raised her concern that Marcus has set such a high standard it would be hard for someone to follow. It was agreed that this item of news be put on the Agenda for the next Meeting.

Date for Next Meeting. The date of the next Meeting was set for **Tuesday 1st September 7.30 pm** in the Old Bakery.

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

May truly the month for blossom, and it still looks lovely. We had a wonderful show of Dandelions for a couple of weeks before they changed from orangey-yellow flowers to the silver balls of seed that scatter for tens of yards in the breeze as you walk through them. In the flood meadows they have been replaced with swathes of Buttercups that give an amazing display of yellow with lots of different grass heads giving shape and different sizes to go with the colour.

The wild fruit trees look stunning in blossom. Cherry, Plum and Crab Apples are all in blossom with displays that are well worth a long walk to see. The Horse Chestnuts are also in blossom with large white cone-shape flowers. The Hawthorns are white and pink flowers, and much prettier than anything



grown in the garden. All along the bottom of the hedgerows Cow Parsley is in flower looking very pretty and is one of Wendy's favourite wild flowers.

I have just got back from a walk around the Fox dens to check them and saw three cubs outside one den and four cubs and a vixen outside another, so they seem to have done okay this season. Three cubs were trying very hard to catch a full-grown rabbit that kept running up to them then running away when they chased it as seven young rabbits stood watching. They had no chance of catching any of them but it was all good practice. At the next den I was watching four cubs annoying their mother, jumping on her and each other. I see this Vixen most mornings. She is a bit old and scraggy and I'm surprised she has done so well. James walked over the hill as I was watching them and we stood together - watching the old Vixen who was also watching us. We wondered if they were going to be a problem for the calves and lambs. I still haven't heard the Cuckoo although Fred did yesterday down the canal and there seems to be very few House Martins this year. I have only seen two so far this year.

Our bird boxes that James asked us to put up are doing well with Great Tits and Blue Tits occupying most of them. We also have Bat and Owl boxes up, so will keep you posted as to their progress.

Thanks to Stephen for the front cover photograph this month.

From Thames Valley Police

This month's updates and information:

Cherwell Crime Figures

The number of house burglaries in Cherwell and West Oxfordshire has fallen by 18.2% following a year of police work focussed on tackling the crime.

House burglaries were reduced from 318 in 2013/14 to 260 in 2014/15, while the overall number of burglaries was also cut by 7.8% (from 905 incidents to 834).

Crime across the Local Policing Area (LPA) fell by 4.6% in the last year, from 10,926 overall incidents in 2013/14 to 10,421 in 2014/15.

The figures were released at the end of April as part of Thames Valley Police's annual crime statistics report.

Other improvements in Cherwell and West Oxfordshire in the last year include:

- Robbery has been reduced by 47.9% (from 48 incidents to 25)
- Drug offences are down 16.2% (from 789 incidents to 661)
- Vehicle crime is down by 16.4% (from 968 incidents to 809)

However, reports of rape have increased in LPA in the last year – up from 65 incidents in 2013/14 to 112 in 2014/15. In almost a third of all the reported rapes (34 out of the 112 incidents) the incident took place before April 2014 – i.e. more than a year ago in many cases. This highlights the increased confidence that the public has, particularly after recently high-profile sex abuse cases, to report these crimes to police.

Cherwell and West Oxfordshire officers have also focused on tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) since the Oxford child abuse case, *Operation Bullfinch*, which launched in 2011.

This has seen reports of CSE increase from 14 incidents in 2013/14 to 36 in 2014/15 and successful convictions, including of six men for CSE offences in Banbury as part of Operation Reportage.

Overall, there were 41.41 crimes per 1,000 people in Cherwell and West Oxfordshire over the last year, compared to 52.33 crimes per 1,000 people across the Thames Valley as a whole.



Superintendent Kath Lowe, area commander for Cherwell and West Oxfordshire, said: "These statistics show that Cherwell and West Oxfordshire is a safe place to live. Crime continues to fall year-on-year and the prevention work we are doing with partners across our communities is paying dividends."

"I am particularly pleased that the hard work has resulted in a fall in the number of burglaries. We know that having your home invaded and your property ransacked can be a traumatic experience to go through, and it is for this reason that it is one of our priority areas."

"The number of rapes and incidents of Child Sexual Exploitation reported to us has increased in the last year. Rape and the sexual abuse of children have historically been underreported crimes and we are pleased that people are now turning to the Force, knowing that we can help."

"These figures prove that police officers and staff are working hard to catch criminals and make Cherwell and West Oxfordshire a safer place. They also prove that if you are a victim of crime you can trust us because we will help you."

Criminal Damage in Heyford

Chris Kidd (Police, Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), Cherwell LPA) reports that, on 3rd May 2015, offenders caused damage by spray painting several items along the canal path that leads from Lower Heyford towards Tackley.

If you have any information or witnessed this incident please contact YVP on 101 and quote occurrence number 43150122325.

The Village Scene

Introducing 'The Village Scene' (working title). How can we foster North Aston's sense of community?

A few Northastonites want to start a group committed to encouraging the social life of the village. It would support existing events such as the Harvest Supper and Mikron Theatre (see separate advert on page 3) and help other events to happen such as quiz nights, film nights, singing, marking significant historical anniversaries, etc.

If you are interested/intrigued please come to a first meeting in the Bakery. Bring a bottle!

Friday 26th June, 8.00pm

Announcements & Events

Donations Please!

This year's Village Fête will be on Saturday 18th July. Please start looking out items for the White Elephant, Book Stall, Tombola and Raffle. More information and appeals next month!

Big Lunch & Mikron

Don't forget these important dates! The Fête will be followed the next day by the Big Lunch (19th July) and The Mikron Theatre Company takes to the Green on 27th July - see page 3.

Deddington Farmers' Market

The traditional Farmers' Market in Deddington takes place every 4th Saturday of the month. This month's will be on 28th June. Our own North Aston Organics will have a stall.

North Aston Gardening Club

A reminder that you should be preparing for this year's Flower & Produce Show, and the schedule is repeated alongside. If you're hoping to join in with the Ornamental Gourds competition, you should have planted your seeds by now, but it's not too late. Ask Norman or Lynn for a packet.

The date for the Show is Saturday the 29th of August and full details and entry forms will be included in next month's *News*.

The Gardening Club will meet on Thursday June 18th at 8pm, hosted by Chris and David Hazle (19 The Green), when details for the F&P Show will be discussed. Please do come along if you can help. In the meantime, happy gardening! Lynn

Please support the Mobile Library



The Mobile Library that has, for generations, visited North Aston, is under pressure to make savings, and the times (and duration) of the fortnightly visits are due to change. From the beginning of July the Library will arrive later every second Thursday morning, and stay for just fifteen minutes. The revised timetable for North Aston and Steeple Aston is as follows:

- 10:30-10:45 North Aston – Telephone Box/Fountain
- 10:50-11:05 Steeple Aston School –Pre-school
(This stop can also be used by public)
- 11:10-11:40 Steeple Aston - White Lion

Reading between the lines, it would appear that the future of the service is now in the balance. If visitor numbers cannot be increased, then it is possible that smaller communities, like ours, may be cut from the route. If you already value the Mobile Library, then please continue to use it, but if you've never given it a try, then please do. Children will be especially welcome to enjoy the novelty of borrowing books (or DVDs) from the library, but there are lots of titles for adults as well.

Note: The Mobile Library is off the road 15 June until 3 July.

Antiques & Collectables!

We are always looking for interesting and good quality items to add to our stock of antiques and collectables. If you're having a clear-out or want to 'downsize' or 'de-clutter', then please give us a call or drop us an email. We'd be pleased to have a look and offer a fair price. Old School Antiques. Telephone: 347356 or email sales@oldschoolantiques.co.uk.

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
 2. Three Carrots
 3. The Longest Carrot (for the *Tuffrey Cup*)
 4. Three Potatoes
 5. Three Onions
 6. Six shallots
 7. Three Beetroot
 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)
 15. One of each of six different vegetables in tray/trug or basket
 16. Mixed vegetables in a tray/trug or basket (unlimited types of veg, unlimited numbers: but size limit of container 15x23inches)
 17. Three of a kind of other vegetable (any vegetable which is not included in other specified categories)
 18. Three Eating Apples
 19. Three Cooking Apples
 20. Six Soft Fruits
 21. 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

22. One Single Stem Rose
23. One Spray of Roses
24. Six Sweet Peas
25. Five blooms from your garden
26. Flowering Plant in a pot
27. Geranium in a pot
28. Flower arrangement in an unusual receptacle
28. Arrangement of wild plants or flowers
29. Three Dahlia Blooms
30. 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 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



The church is about people and God. Forgive me - this month I'd like to focus on two or three of our people, and their story with God. Kildare has a kindness to him which is a deeply spiritual and generous thing. I have watched as he meets countless people, in church or at a gathering, or in his home over a meal or a coffee, and his interest in others is constant and unfeigned.



There are those of us (guilt as charged, m'Lud) who are endlessly happy to answer questions about ourselves. There are very few with the gift of asking the questions without any thought of wanting the spotlight reversed. Kildare is such a man. His kindness in welcoming people, in being interested, in being hospitable and caring is a thing I see and love. It's all the richer for being so free of any hint of religiosity or hand-wringing false modesty. A smile, a dry word, and if we veer towards a compliment - a re-direction and we are done. And all complete with a dog as his shadow everywhere, even in church. What more is there to recommend a man?

At the recent Bach and St John event, he did his best to embarrass me by speaking of my involvement in the new organ project. But who gets things done in North Aston more than Kildare? In the village meeting, in the church, in the fete? Every Rector needs good wardens, and I have been blessed with the best. Kildare, as you come to the end of your time as church warden - thank you.

Now Annabel Bevan joins Clive in taking up this mantle. Annabel needs very little introduction, and all who know her know her hospitality, her kindness, her strength and faith, especially through this last year since Nick died. We also know her own special time-keeping, and are beyond impressed at how she has so far coped with the extra burden being warden has placed on this! Annabel - it's a delight to have you as part of the team. We are blessed to have you take this role.



Of course, we also have a further new member of the team. On Palm Sunday - which seems an age ago, but I didn't reflect on this last month so I will now - Richard Bailey was re-licensed as Lay Reader. The official title these days is 'Licensed Lay Minister' or LLM. Richard is another star in our firmament. He shares the kindness that both Kildare and Annabel personify; he has an easy grace which belies the depth of his faith and his life with God.

Richard and I recently attended a diocesan conference on helping churches grow - grow in faith, in how they help care for communities, and in number. We led worship together at this event, and were both struck by the teaching we heard and by the faith of others around us. I am often struck in this way: there are stories of life and faith all around us, bursting to get out. Richard's story has had a sometimes uneven path, so I was especially glad that we were able to have the service for him on Palm Sunday. Easter week is always a time of new beginnings, and I very much pray that this will be a wonderful season of new beginnings for Richard as he finds his feet in his renewed role among us.

None of us is perfect; but all of us come to Jesus as we are, and as we are live our lives letting his hand hold ours so that we might be a little better, a little stronger, a little more loved and loving today. That's the story of our church. Come and join us and make it your story too.

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



The Casting of Votes

Elections are probably something you've had enough of right now, after the Fixed Term Parliament Act produced the longest campaign in memory and now almost every losing party is carrying on the motion with a leadership contest. At least the national result, catching almost everybody by surprise, woke us all up with a moment of drama.

Locally, there were some Parish Council elections as well and we really must salute all those who volunteer to meet, month after month, in draughty halls and chilly churches, struggling to exercise influence where they have no power, with neither reward nor glory for the benefit of their, often unthanking, neighbours.

One of the marvellous things about PCs is that, though they all must conform to strict rules and regulations (I am about to send off a multi-page form to account in the greatest detail for my PC election expenses, where every single entry is "nil" or "not applicable"!), the variety in what they do and how they operate is infinite, reflecting only their personalities and their parish, and no two bear the slightest resemblance to one another – long may diversity reign!

On the District Line

At District level, where one third of the seats were up for election, the only change was a seat in Kidlington which went from Lib Dem to Conservative, reflecting the national swing (and, indeed, constituency result, as Kidlington is – unlike the rest of Cherwell and surprisingly for geographers – part of Oxford West and Abingdon). So we now have 41 Conservatives, 7 Labour, 2 Lib Dem and 1 Independent – until next May when all the ward boundaries change, councillor numbers are reduced from 50 to 48 and the whole lot are up for election.

Ward-wise, this means that in the Astons & Heyfords, where you kindly re-elected me last year, Mike Kerford-Byrnes will continue his sterling work, while Ardley, which lies in the Caversfield ward, is now represented by Ian Corkin. Ian, while on Ardley with Fewcott parish council, campaigned powerfully on the wind turbines, the incinerator, the composters, M40 traffic, the local and neighbourhood plans – more serious issues than most PC's would get in a couple of decades – and will clearly make a formidable district councillor: we need more like him!

Nationally, we are now represented in Parliament by Somerton's very own Victoria Prentis and, as a council, we wait to see how the Department for Communities and Local Government, which rules much of what we do, will change now Greg Clark has taken over as Secretary of State after five years of Eric Pickles. We are certainly not expecting funding pressures to ease! Hence we looked anxiously at council results in South Northants and Stratford to ensure our joint

working with the former is securely anchored as we continue to explore jointery with the latter.

Planning is Key

We await sign off of the Local Plan, as future funding is likely to depend crucially on the "New Homes Bonus", which requires continuous growth in Bicester and Banbury, and a share of Business Rates, which demands a strong local economy. Sensible words are coming from the new Energy Secretary, Amber Rudd, who is promising to devolve powers over wind turbines and, more importantly (as there's little joy in being given the power to implement bad policy!) to remove their subsidies. But, as nobody expected there not to be a coalition, it's early days for the new regime and there's doubtless lots of new stuff to come.

Housing, meanwhile, is an area where Cherwell has just been named as the country's best local authority! This will, no doubt, get a mixed reception in Steeple Aston, as the Rural Exception Site allocations policy has been reviewed in the light of their experience and is still not right – so, with a new council and a new government, there's still plenty for me, Mike and Ian to get stuck in to.

James Macnamara

Tel: 01869 340109

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

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CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH WORSHIP IN JUNE - JULY 2015

NORTH ASTON

STEEPLE ASTON

TACKLEY

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

Sunday June 14th - Third Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am
Family Service
with *Open the Book*

11:00 am
Family Service
with *Open the Book*

5:30 pm
Evensong
Fr Robin Gibbons

Sunday June 21st - Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am
Morning Prayer with Baptism
Revd Marcus Green

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

5:30 pm
Summer Songs of Praise
**Rev Marcus Green and
Fr Robin Gibbons**

Sunday June 28th - Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Church Patronal Festival
Revd Marcus Green

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

Sunday July 5th - Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

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

Families are welcome to all Sunday services.

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

St Mary the Virgin, North Aston

St.Mary's is a small and beautiful church, tucked away down St Mary's Walk and well worth the detour. The church is in very close proximity to North Aston Hall and dates from the 14th century, although a church has existed on the site since the mid C12th.

An interesting interior feature is an ornate and detailed alabaster tomb of Sir John and Lady Alicia Anne dating from the C15th. A guide to the churchyard is on display and includes reference to the graves of two civil war soldiers who died after a local skirmish in 1644. The church features a nave that is broader than long, and a chancel which doubles the overall length of the building. The Anne Tomb has recently been restored, the South windows are soon to be repaired, the Lytch Gate is to be renovated (enhancing disabled access) and a new organ was installed earlier this year.

