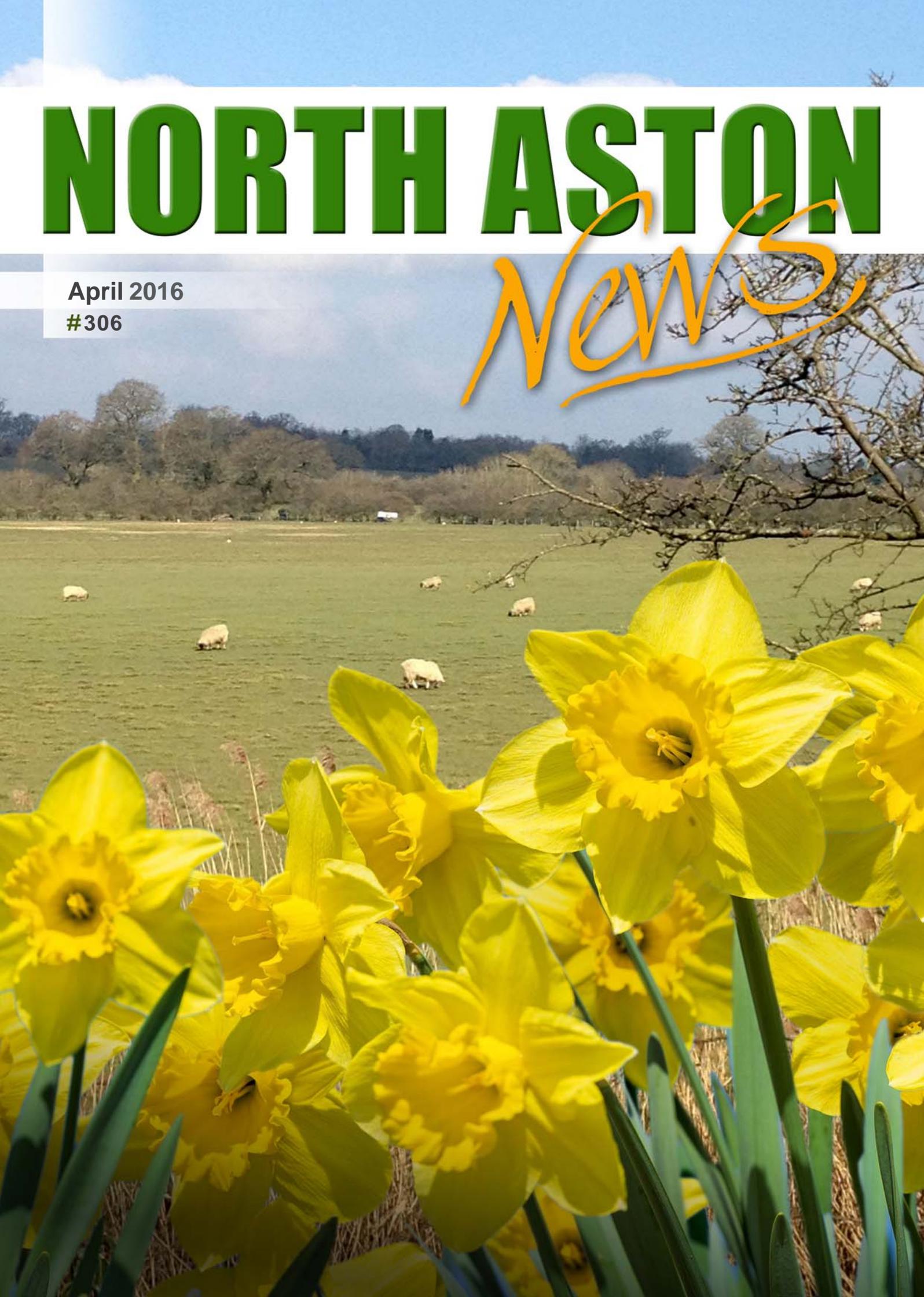


NORTH ASTON

NEWS

April 2016

#306



NORTH ASTON NEWS

APRIL 2016, No: 306

Useful Contacts

North Aston News

Telephone: (01869) 347356

Email: info@north-aston.co.uk

Mark Stay, NAPM Chairman

Telephone: (01869) 347806

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

Niel Nicholson. Tel (01869) 340342 x202

Email: niel@nicholsons.gb.com

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

The Chairman's Mark

Huntin' Eggs

It was touch and go as to whether the Easter Egg Hunt would happen this year. After a night of torrential rain and lashing winds, there was a brief pause at dawn, allowing the Easter Bunny to hop around The Green dropping chocolate eggs before the weather closed in again. Miraculously, just before the ten o'clock start, all was calm and children and parents emerged for the hunt. Apparently, there are still 19 eggs out there but if the squirrels don't find them, Clive's mower certainly will.

Speed Watching

The Community Speed Watch has now started. I had hoped this would be a deterrent but was amazed that several cars have been 'caught' despite big warning signs and fluorescent jackets. Hopefully, with regular sessions each week, the deterrent effect will start to kick in. We could do with some more volunteers to ease the burden on the existing team. If you can help, please get in touch.

The 90 Year Ruler

A couple of people have mentioned the possibility of celebrating the Queen's 90th birthday. If you have any ideas or opinions about this, please make sure you come to the next Village Forum.

Agenda

The Village Forum will take place on Thursday 14th April. The agenda will include discussions about the Village Fête (set for July 16th); the proposed new Noticeboard for the Green; marking the Queen's birthday celebrations; and the visit by Mikron Theatre (July 31st) with an associated Big Lunch. If there's anything else you wish to add, please let me know in advance.

Mark

Telephone: 01869 347 806 ~ email: chair@north-aston.co.uk

Front Cover: Thanks to Annabel Bevan for the photo of the pastures along the Cherwell Valley used as the background to this month's front cover.

North Aston



MidCherwell
Neighbourhood Plan Forum

North Aston is a member of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum and has two permanent representatives; Kildare Bourke-Borrowes and Chloe Woodhead.

This is an on-going process, pending the proposed referendum at which we shall all be invited to vote on whether or not to accept the Plan. The date for the referendum has not yet been set, but is likely to be in late 2017. If you have any concerns that you might like to have raised at the Forum, from matters relating to traffic through to housing and development, you can contact Kildare or Chloe at any time. You are also encouraged to visit the website: www.mid-cherwell.org.uk

Chloe. Tel: 340358 email: cewoodhead@btinternet.com

Kildare. Tel: 340200 email: k.bourkeborrowes@btinternet.com

Announcements

Welcome!

Welcome to baby Eben and congratulations to Josh and Ruth on the birth of their son. Parents and baby doing very well!

Village Forum

The next Village Meeting will take place on Thursday 14th April. This will be a *Village Forum*, adopting the new less-formal approach to community gatherings. It will be an opportunity to plan for future events, such as the Village Fête, Big Lunch and the return visit by the Mikron Theatre Company in July. The agenda is published below, but if you have anything else you'd like raised in discussion, then please email info@north-aston.co.uk or contact our Village Chairman, Mark Stay.

Mobile Library

The Library stops by the Fountain for 15 minutes every 2nd & 4th Thursday, between 10:30 and 10:45 am. It also visits Steeple Aston (Pre-school 10:50 am and White Lion 11:10 am).

Congratulations!

Special congratulations to Oscar Taylor, who recently played his violin at the Chipping Norton Music Festival. He was invited back by the adjudicator to play in the "best of " evening concert in the Town Hall, which concluded the Festival. He was the only string player and it took all of his courage to stand up and play in front a large audience of strangers, but by Jove he did it! It was a wonderful concert which also featured solo woodwind, brass, piano, singing, family ensemble and a great a capella group - (Eight in a bar). Well done Oscar!

From Mum, Dad and Susie xxx

This Month's Birthdays

Tracy Boss
Peter Durnin
Beryl Greenwood
David Greenwood
Liz Hite
Mary Hoare
Olivia Kneale
Franca Potts
Susannah Taylor
Norman West



Congratulations to all the North Aston residents who celebrate special events this month. If you're not listed, or know someone who should be, please let us know.

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

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Tel: (01869) 3477102

visit the website at:

www.northastonorganics.co.uk

Village Forum

April 14th 2016
The Old Bakery from 7:30 pm

The next Village Meeting will be the first of the less formal "Forum" gatherings, when residents are invited to discuss and plan events, voice any concerns they may have, catch up on village gossip, and generally get together for a chat.

Topics for discussion include:

1. Plans for the Village Fête.
2. Final decisions relating to the new Notice Board, to be sited either on the Green or replacing the existing.
3. The Queen's 90th birthday celebrations - should North Aston mark the event?
4. Nicholsons & North Aston Farms' plans for Park Farm.
4. The planned return visit by the Mikron Theatre Co to the Green on July 31st, and the associated Big Lunch on the same day.
5. Looking ahead to the Flower & Produce Show!
....and anything else you care to raise.

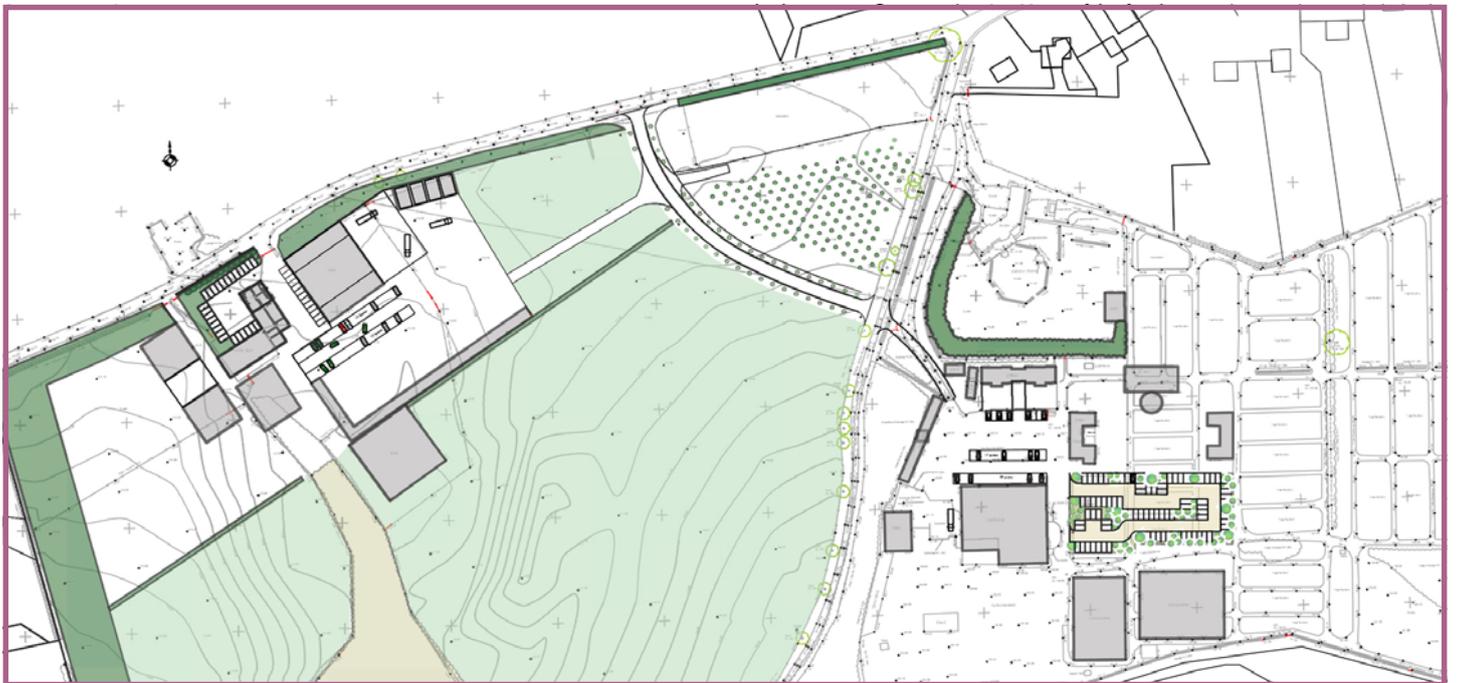
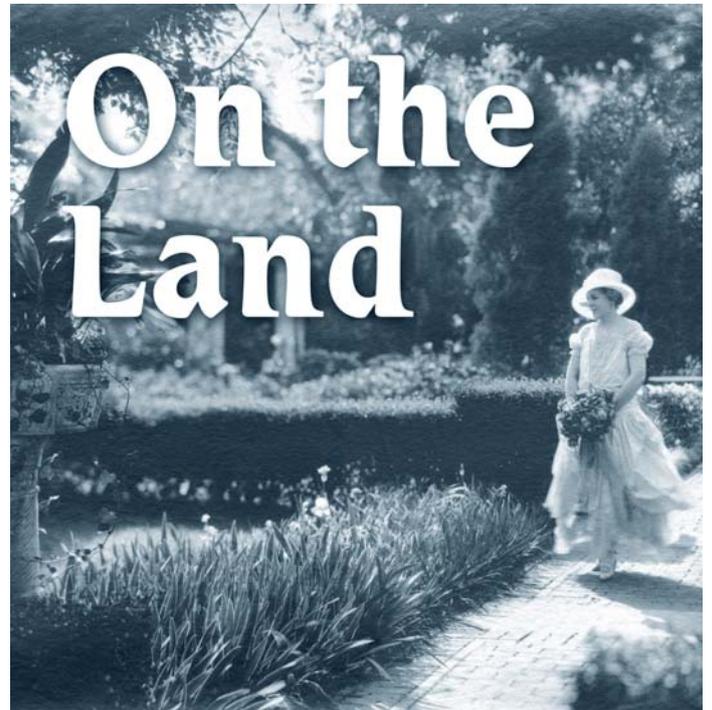
Nicholsons & North Aston Farms

This month we are doing a joint “On the land”, and you will see why as I explain some exciting plans that we have developed together.

Both Nicholsons and North Aston Farms have plans for the future, and when we shared these with each other we came up with a way that would potentially help both, and be an exciting development within the village.

Nicholsons want to increase their retail offering with a Coffee Shop and a Farm Shop. Access to their site is difficult for large lorries coming round the corner by the oak tree and the track down to the nursery is narrow and awkward to pull out of. North Aston Farms want to consolidate their farming operations and make better use of the Park Farm buildings — the grain store is currently underused, the yard could be better used and Peach Pubs need some more space.

The draft drawing below shows the plans we have developed between us.



Starting from the left (of the plan above): North Aston Farms want to build three new cattle/feed store barns in the field to the West of the Peach Pubs office.

Peach Pubs are hoping to extend their offices and incorporate more car parking spaces.

The Park Farm Barn will be reroofed and clad and will be used by the contracting arm of Nicholsons to include offices and increased yard and hard standing. This is where most of the larger vehicles will go to.

A new access road is proposed across the corner, leaving the allotments as they are but creating a corner plot that is being considered as a Community Orchard. The new road will be for all Nicholsons traffic and therefore keep it away from the village and the corner. The route will come across the Middle Aston Lane and straight into the nursery site.

Two further buildings are proposed within the Nicholsons site — a building similar to the current Plant Centre Building to

mirror it and create the Farm Shop. Also we propose a large Yurt to be used as a Coffee Shop. In the process we will also need to create better parking facilities as shown. The Farm Shop would concentrate on and promote local sourcing and work with as many local suppliers as possible (especially from North Aston!).

We are all very excited about the project and very much hope that it will be a way to help both businesses grow, work together to support the local economy, and promote local food.

We have shared these plans in the *News* to invite discussion — please come and see us. We are holding an Open Evening (with Tea/Wine and Cake/Nibbles) for the village from 5-7 pm on Wednesday 13th April for anyone interested to come down to the Plant Centre and see/discuss the plans in more detail. Or you can email me on niel@nicholsons.gb.com with any feedback.

Niel (and Liz, James and Vicky)

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

Our Curlew have come home again. We saw a pair on the flood meadows on March the 7th last year, and we had three pairs in total, so I need to get back down to see if any more have arrived yet. Two days after we saw them we had heavy rains and the meadow did what it is supposed to do, and flooded. I thought the Curlew might move on but they were still there a week later, which is a good sign.

We have had lots of Peewits again this time. They are lovely birds to see and even nicer to hear, but nowhere near as many Snipe as last year, and I have no idea why this is.

For the last two mornings on the trot, at about 6.30, I have seen a Badger in the field just above James's new cattle shed. The first morning I just stood and watched it from a hundred yards away until it went to the hedge and then out of sight. Yesterday morning, on seeing it in the same place, I thought I'd take a closer look.

After telling Penny to lay down I walked slowly down the field, moving across to get the wind in my face and not behind me. I kept going until I was just a few feet away from the Badger which, by this time, I could clearly see was a big old thing; very scraggy and rough-looking, male or female I don't know.

It took absolutely no notice of me at all! It just kept on digging up turf in its search for whatever it was looking for, and so I moved to within a few feet of it. I can honestly say I was

feeling a bit nervous. They are sizeable beasts at that distance and obviously pretty powerful. All of a sudden it must of have smelled me. It turned around, took one look, made a massive grunt and then just walked off, as calm as you like. What a very strange experience! I have seen badgers millions of times at night but this was different and very memorable.



I remember Jeremy telling me once that he'd been walking across hilly ground at night in the dark and came across a Badger pulling his dirty bed out of his set, which they do frequently. He shone his torch on it. The animal looked up, saw the torch, turned around and just kept on doing his work as if he had just gazed up at the moon. Wonderful beasts, scared of nothing but a big problem for farmers with livestock.

Our best 'spot' of the month was in our own garden two weekends ago. I was sat down at the bottom watching the world go by. The little birds were busy collecting moss and feathers to line their new nests for the coming season when a Woodcock suddenly flew right over us and headed up towards the village. We could clearly see his big black eye as he turned his head to look at us. Tony and Billy will both know how strange that can make you feel, as we have put up so many at close quarters in North Wales while pheasant shooting. The Woodcock is such a wonderful bird to see.

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- DO YOU** avoid social situations?

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The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP)

Responses following the Community Engagement Meeting

A report from Kildare and Chloe ...

We presented to the village both in the morning and in the evening to give the best opportunity for the maximum number of villagers to attend. Over 30 people came to hear the presentations from a village of around 80 households. We were lucky enough to get Martin Lipson from the Executive to join us at the evening session to share his knowledge on the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Responses and representations were then collected by the North Aston MCNP committee members both in conversation at the meetings and by receipt of 19 letters and emails over the following week. This is a digest of the views of the village which overall were very well considered, realistic about the housing expansion in our area, open to the positives as well and the threats and constructive in their thoughts.

1. What do you value about North Aston and the Neighbourhood Plan Area?

- Tranquillity, peace and quiet.
- Rural scene, views, river valley and canal side.
- Unspoilt countryside embellished here by organic farming in North Aston
- Village community and village events
- Local and unspoilt building style and individuality in the villages.
- Sense of community safety and knowing your neighbours in a small village.
- Convenient local services in Deddington, Banbury and Oxford.
 - Positive response to the possibilities of new facilities and services in Heyford Park (HP) available to North Aston (NA) residents
- Good local transport links – rail and motorway.

2. What are your main concerns and thoughts for the future of the Neighbourhood Plan area?

- Increase in traffic – already a problem and will only get worse. Western road exits from HP over Rousham bridge/Somerton bridge are weight restricted and unsuitable for further increase in traffic

- Suggestions – roundabouts on A4260 at the Duns Tew/North Aston junction and the Bletchington/Woodstock junction.
- Provide new eastern road link from HP to B430 Ardley road and link to M40 motorway
- Overcrowding of Heyford station car park.
 - Suggestion - Establish a station at Ardley with road/bus service link from HP (Chiltern railways made provision for this when the line was upgraded 15 years ago). This is a much better service than the Heyford/ Oxford line and would take passengers to Banbury/ Birmingham and London.
- Rename HP as already two villages called Heyford. It will become a town as big as Chipping Norton in its own right – Perhaps Ardley could be the town and the station.
- Rat runs through villages – potholes and destruction of verges as too much traffic uses country lanes.
 - Suggestion – design HP to encourage traffic to go east. No right turn from Camp Road towards Somerton.
- Light pollution spreading over conservation areas – there was much concern about the night arc lighting for filming during March. Orange sodium lighting is very intrusive.
 - New low energy and low level LED town lighting solutions.
 - Turn off street lighting at midnight in low risk/ high pollution areas.
- Sufficient provision of services as population increases particularly, medical, schooling, housing for the elderly, housing for starters - 1 & 2 bedroom affordable needed.
 - Suggestions – plan for HP should be for the town it is becoming to include sufficient schooling, medical centre, leisure facilities, small business locations (not just warehousing) for residents to work locally.
- Style of new building – local vernacular has been well protected by the Planning authorities. Village identity should be protected and not absorbed into Bicester/ HP suburbs.
- Creation of local jobs



3. What issues should the Neighbourhood Plan cover?

- Traffic management – coordinated plan for neighbourhood and Heyford Park and road/rail/public transport solutions.
- Preservation of village identities.
- Green belt separation between villages and unassailable green belt round HP.
- Cap on maximum development at HP. Individual villages should have the opportunity for some development.
- No green field development.
- All new housing should be sustainable and eco friendly – use of solar, airsource, and green solutions maximised.
- Nature reserve in the Heritage area.
 - Opportunity for provision for burial ground where village churchyards are full.
 - No real support for Heritage Park from North Aston but keen to move the barbed wiring back from the Upper Heyford village road & security gates.
- Cycle Routes, especially to Oxford.

4. What are the most important issues that the Neighbourhood Plan should address?

- Overall planning approach to include transport, traffic, light and noise pollution, and provision of services, pubs and shops along with housing and business development.
- Green belt protection round HP new town.
- No overstretching of current local services – particularly the medical provision in Deddington. Provision of a cottage hospital and a drop-in medical centre?
- Good public transport – new station at Ardley.
- Preservation of village identities and rural cushion round villages.
- No urban sprawl
- Eco approach to new housing – use of solar and green energy solutions.
- Should strongly consider provision of a district heating system for the whole of HP.
- Really affordable housing for locals – good integrated design and mixed housing stock for all needs.
- Small business opportunities and not just warehousing.



5. Summary

As a result of the Engagement Meetings staged on February 24th 2016, feedback was received from 19 of the 35 residents who attended.

The top concerns and issues recorded were:

1. Increased Traffic Volume and Speed (through villages, lanes, pinch points): 13
2. Adequate Healthcare Provision (for rapidly increasing local population): 10
3. Light Pollution (from Heyford Park across Cherwell Valley): 8
4. Provision of Shops & Services (especially selling local produce to minimise car journeys): 6
5. Provision of Leisure Facilities at or around HP: 6
6. Provision of Public Transport: 5
7. Limit size and boundary of HP: 5
8. Provision of affordable homes: 4
9. Generation of jobs at HP (to limit commuting traffic): 4

6. In conclusion, the issues raised included:

The dangerous junction of Somerton Road and A4260 (traffic lights or roundabout needed); remove unsightly boundary fence and security gates at HP; provide some land for self-build (e.g. Graven Hill, Bicester); no more building on greenfield land; provision of eating-out places at HP to limit car trips out; provision of economic retirement homes; problem with Lower Heyford Station now overwhelmed and examine possibility of providing/rebuilding a rail station at Ardley (closed in 1963); demarcate a Green Belt around HP with footpaths; provision of adequate policing (crime a big problem when Milton Keynes started); provision of adequate burial facilities (and perhaps a natural burial ground such as at Upper Weaveley, Tackley); provision of one or more Cycle Routes out of HP, especially towards Oxford.

A theme running through most representation was that Heyford Park should seek to be a beacon of ecological sustainability, and should in every way possible become a beautiful environment (including landscaping and open spaces) so that everyone within the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan area can become proud of this great development.



North Aston Contacts:

Chloe Woodhead

Tel: 340358, email: cewoodhead@btinternet.com

Kildare Bourke-Borrowes

Tel: 340200 email: k.bourkeborrowes@btinternet.com



I'm sure many of you will have noticed that our Community SpeedWatch programme is now in full swing, and from time to time groups of volunteers will be seen in their Hi-Viz jackets, pointing radar guns at passing motorists.

Amazingly, despite the fluorescent yellow tabards and very prominent notices (far too prominent, some might say!), some motorists are still being trapped as they hustle through the village, going far too fast. Hopefully the message will eventually sink in, but perhaps not until a few of them have received warning notices from the police.

One aspect that has certainly had a very positive impact has been the re-siting of the speed monitor. For years we wanted to relocate the display to the new position, but now that it's finally been done, the effect has been quite dramatic. Those motorists that take notice of such things really do slow down now, long before they reach the Middle Aston Lane, while those that steadfastly ignore them (or deliberately speed up!) will probably never change their habits until enforcement comes with financial penalties.

Between moving the monitor from one post to the other, I had opportunity to download the stored data. Sadly, with the problems we had with the old batteries, the records were incomplete, but enough survived that I was able to carry out some fairly comprehensive statistical analysis of movements through North Aston over the past few years.

Based upon figures from randomly selected seven-day periods I have been able to calculate averages for the total number of traffic movements recorded and demonstrate how through-traffic has steadily increased since 2010. The monitor only records movements one-way (usually west to east), and the figures are therefore suggestive of roughly half the through-flow per week. Note that, due to the battery problems, finding contiguous seven-day stints in 2014 was difficult.

Found

In the woods, a small Playmobil cannon, fully loaded!



Thanks to Angie Hanna for this photo of the male Greater Spotted Woodpecker that visited her garden in mid-March.

2010

Week 1: 3805, Week 2: 3286, Week 3: 3431, Week 4: 3696, Week 5: 3201, Week 6: 3784, Week 7: 3369, Week 8: 3215, Week 9: 3070.

Average of 9 recorded weeks: 3428 per week, or roughly 489 per day. (Note, we acquired the monitor in August 2010, so these nine weeks are from late in the year)

2011

Week 1: 2901, Week 2: 3448, Week 3: 3589, Week 4: 3666, Week 5: 3908, Week 6: 3967, Week 7: 3783, Week 8: 4014, Week 9: 4116, Week 10: 3916.

Average of 10 recorded weeks: 3730 per week, or roughly 532 per day.

2012

Week 1: 3210, Week 2: 3962, Week 3: 4015, Week 4: 4030, Week 5: 3982, Week 6: 3893, Week 7: 4009, Week 8: 3842, Week 9: 4036, Week 10: 3801.

Average of 10 recorded weeks: 3878 per week, or roughly 554 per day.

2013

Week 1: 3352, Week 2: 3266, Week 3: 3441, Week 4: 3500, Week 5: 3339, Week 6: 3670, Week 7: 4146, Week 8: 4213, Week 9: 4247, Week 10: 4164.

Average of 10 recorded weeks: 3734 per week, or roughly 533 per day.

2014

Week 1: 3525, Week 2: 3314, Week 3: 4516, Week 4: 3792, Week 5: 4523, Week 6: 4429.

Average of only 6 recorded weeks: 4016 per week, or roughly 574 per day.

2015

Week 1: 3989, Week 2: 4121, Week 3: 5187, Week 4: 4497, Week 5: 4297, Week 6: 4518, Week 7: 4476, Week 8: 4682, Week 9: 4534.

Average of 9 recorded weeks: 4478 per week, or roughly 640 per day.

Remember, these weekly and daily figures are for one-way traffic only, so assume roughly double this for total movements both ways.

These results would tend to suggest that, over the last five years, the average through-flow of traffic has increased by roughly 23% (almost 1000 recorded movements per week, 2000 both ways). It could be construed that this is almost wholly due to development at Heyford Park, which only truly got underway in late 2013, and it is from 2014 that the average suddenly rises.

It can also be noted that there is a general trend, across all years, for slightly higher traffic numbers during the summer months, and the occasional higher figure usually arises from the seven-day period being taken from a month between June and August.

I haven't had access to the data since the monitor was relocated, but would imagine that recorded movements have increased significantly, as the unit will now include all traffic not only going through the village, but also those turning into the Middle Aston Lane, which it did not do previously.

This is not a comprehensive assessment, but the findings are certainly interesting, and could become more significant as developments at Heyford Park continue. *Marcus*



The Church MATTERS



Christ is Risen! From all at North Aston Church, may I hope everyone in the village had a very happy Easter indeed! After a very strange winter, and the journey of Lent, Easter is a time of great joy. We remember Christ dying for us, we feel the full force of forgiveness, and we sing Easter songs of rising praise. It's a great time of year. The flowers have been with us for quite some time, but we feel their power freshly now; their colours in the fields remind us how Jesus brings life and hope back to our lives even when life and hope seem furthest away.

As I write these words, it's quite a time for my family. Last October, we gathered in great numbers to celebrate my grandmother's 100th birthday. Now we are preparing to gather again; but this time it is for her funeral.

At that 100th Birthday Party, Grandma was surrounded by her children. Those children had all their children with them. Many of those children had their children present - and some of those children even had their own with them too. Five generations in one room. So much life!

So when we gather to mark her passing, there will be an enormous sign of the power of Easter in our midst. For in Jesus' death and resurrection we hear God saying loud and clear that his life is far, far stronger than death can ever be. All our fears are wiped away by the power of Jesus' love. Through our tears we see our loss; but all around us is a life we have been given to share. As I drive up to my grandmother's funeral, with a heavy heart, I know I am going to feel deep sadness but also to see real hope and life rising where hope and life seem furthest away.

This is the story of every family, of every community, of every church. I tell my family story here only because I know that so many of us know this so well. There are moments when (as a human being, never mind as Rector) I hear people's fears that the church's life is in the past. I hear folk talk of aspects of village life, of their work, of their family, of their dreams in the same way.

Easter says loudly - trust God. He has this funny way of making things we'd given up on suddenly become amazing all over again.

That's why we are looking to work on our church building - not to tinker with something lovely, but to make something precious to a few become even more amazing for everyone. God's love and his life are constantly rising, and finding new ways to release them through our building will (hopefully) help us as people better serve our whole village.

And finally, I invite you to our Annual Church Meeting on the evening of April 12th at 7.30pm. Only Church Electoral Roll members can vote on issues, but everyone can come along and hear what is going on. I see this Easter life all around in North Aston, and as Rector I look forward to our church continuing to grow in faith and love and number. I invite you to be a part of this journey of hope.

Revd Marcus Green

More news is always available on our website: www.sntchurch.com.

Bible Study is held in the Rectory in Steeple Aston most Monday afternoons and Morning Prayer takes place in St Marty's church on Thursdays at 10am.



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: Richard Bailey, Kildare Bourke-Borrowes, Beryl Greenwood, Vicky Taylor, Jenny Martin, Ted Short, Jeremy Taylor and Norman West.

From Thames Valley Police

This month's updates and information:

Under Attack!

Those of you who aren't Internet users must either be totally bemused, or merely grin smugly when you read, or hear, of all the problems associated with Cyber Crime, but it's real, it's here, and for the rest of North Aston's residents, it's a regular and genuine threat.

I probably receive a dozen suspicious emails every day, including three or four that actually contain viruses. To combat this I have two antivirus programs, two anti-malware programs, and another independent bot-killer to ensure, to the best of my ability, that none of these threats get through. I also employ a firewall, and once a month I carry out a thorough scan (using several different programs, one after the other) to weedle out all those mildly malicious 'cookies' and other invasive snippets that have crept in under the wire. Touch wood, so far, I've been lucky, but it's a never-ending battle.

On a regular basis I also receive warning emails from Thames Valley Police about new and ingenious threats that the Cyber Criminals have devised. Most are unlikely to come my way, and combatting most is just a mix of common sense and good practice, but it's always wise to be alert.

Extortion

Action Fraud received several reports last month from businesses who had been sent online extortion demands from scammers threatening a cyber attack.

The scammers, who call themselves the "RepKiller Team", send emails demanding payment of between £300-£500 in Bitcoins by a certain date and time. If the demands are not met, the team threaten to launch a cyber attack against the businesses and its reputation by automating hundreds of negative online reviews.

The emails also claim that once started the actions cannot be undone. Although currently calling themselves "RepKiller", it is common for fraudsters to change and adopt new tactics – email names can be made and changed very easily.

What to do if you receive one of these emails? Whether the attack is attempted or successful, you should report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or by using our online reporting tool. Do not pay the demand. There is no guarantee the scammers won't launch an attack anyway, and paying could merely encourage further extortion demands in the future.

Retain all the original emails. Should law enforcement investigate, the information contained within the email headers can be used as evidence. Maintain a timeline of the attack recording all times, type and content of contact.

Duns Tew Break-in

Overnight between 18th and 19th March last month, a burglary took place in a garage at a property on Main Street in Duns Tew. The items stolen included several power tools, pressure washer and two bikes. Did you see anything suspicious?

If you were passing through noticed anything untoward, or have any information which you believe may be connected to this offence, then TVP would like to hear from you. Please contact Thames Valley Police on the on-emergency 101 number and quote occurrence number 43160078437.

Contacting TVP

Should you wish to contact the police about any non-urgent matter, please use the 101 number. In the event of an emergency, use the familiar 999 number.

North Aston Gardening Club

We're getting busier on the gardening front now that Spring is here. It's been an odd sort of winter: mild and wet.

Although we've had earlier colour from some spring bulbs, the downside of the milder winter is that we'll probably have more over-wintering pests. Undeterred, I hope as many of you as possible will join in this year's two growing competitions for the annual Flower & Produce Show, which will be held on Saturday the 27th of August.

Both competitions are great ways to get kids involved in growing stuff. Each household will receive a packet of three seeds (sunflower cultivar 'Giant Single') with this month's *North Aston News*. For first timers, here are some brief instructions:

1. Plant the seeds, one each in a small pot (~3 inch diameter), covering with 1/2 inch of compost. Water and keep them on a sunny windowsill.
2. Once germinated, the seedlings will grow steadily: keep the compost moist but not too wet.
3. When you see some roots peeking out of the bottom of the pot, it's time to transfer into a larger pot: keep doing this using a pot roughly two inches larger in diameter than the previous.
4. The plants can go outdoors late May or early June: don't forget to water especially in warm weather. Feed the plants and provide support for their stems as they grow.
5. Bring your tallest sunflower in its pot to the F&P Show: the tallest plant (hopefully with a flower) measured on the day wins! (Don't forget that sunflower seeds ripening on the flower are edible for humans and birds).

In addition there'll be the ever-popular Spud-in-a-tub competition.

Pick up your seed potato (kindly donated by Mark Stay at North Aston Organics; one per grower please) and regulation tub from outside Norman West's house (22 The Green). They will be available from Tuesday 5th of April.

Grow your spud and bring it to the F&P Show for the weigh-in, aiming for the heaviest crop. Even if you don't win you'll have a tub full of fresh potatoes for your supper.

Good luck and happy gardening.

Lynn



Renewal Time!

Next month's draw will be the last of this 12-month period, and a massive £100 is up for grabs. Too late now if you haven't got your numbers, but a timely reminder either to renew for 2017, or join the scheme now if you've never taken part before. To renew or reserve your number, please contact Norman (340368) as soon as possible.

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

Councillor Calling



A Sad Ending

This column marks a sad parting of the ways after serving the Astons & Heyfords Ward for fourteen years, with a written account to you almost every month of that time.

As I've previously reported, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England decided Cherwell's wards had got out of kilter, with some having over 10% more electors than others. The council decided to stick to our system of electing one third of its members each year, as this had led to continuity and gradual changes of control, avoiding pre-election splurges and post-election policy u-turns.

Unfortunately, the LGBCE insisted this must mean that every ward had to have three councillors. They then imposed their diktat that ward sizes must not be too different, either now or in five years time, so rigidly that all sense of geographical and community links was jettisoned in pursuit of their numbers game. This has led to the creation of unmanageable super-wards containing huge numbers of parishes with no local logic.

Moving the Boundary

The Astons, Duns Tew and, ridiculously, Somerton have been carved out of our former ward and joined on to Deddington. The Heyfords now find themselves in the southern end of an arc stretching round the north of Bicester from Kirtlington on the Cherwell to Finmere on the Buckinghamshire border. As I live in Lower Heyford, this is where I am standing for election – learning my way round, with an armful of leaflets, villages from Fringford and Stratton Audley to Chesterton and Middleton Stony.

Doing the same thing on the western bank of the Cherwell is your own familiar hard-working councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes, which, I'm glad to say, gives you continuity. He is joined by the experienced Bryn Williams from Deddington and new boy Hugo Brown – you get three votes (just X's and not 1, 2, 3).

If you just get their leaflets and they don't catch you on the doorstep, sympathise with the mileage they'll be putting in to get round their huge patch. I used to reckon on throwing away a worn out pair of shoes after an election campaign – this time I think it'll be two pairs!

Fourteen years!

Yet, when I first came to Bodicote House, Cherwell was agonising over the new Local Plan (all those fights over Cherwell Heights in Banbury and the airfield in Bicester – not to mention the Upper Heyford saga) and here we are, with Part 1 at last approved, still agonising over the allocation of sites in Part 2 and where any houses we have to take from Oxford will go: some things never change!

And then there are the planning battles won (Fritwell's giant windmills) and lost (Ardley's incinerator) plus all the fights over individuals' applications. Remember all the fuss over recycling? It'll never work! And now blue bins are a way of life and we recycle 60% of our waste without thinking about it.

(Those long meetings to deal with the Great Ardley Pong from the composting site will not be missed).

Achievements, there have been a few ...

When the Cherwell floods, I take pleasure in having found the first millions for the Banbury protection scheme, which unlocked the rest of the funding that keeps the town dry today. I remember taking on Housing, with 350 homeless families suffering temporary accommodation – so many that some couldn't even be housed in the district – and handing it over with that misery count reduced by 90%. I'm amazed that, having got council tax rises down below inflation and then to nothing, we have still not increased them after seven years – yet satisfaction is up to 80%. So there's a lot I am proud about, to counterbalance the battles lost or yet to be won.

Interesting times, as they say...

At every election count, it comes as a shock to find how many people have trusted me with their X – it is an honour to receive that trust and seeking it keeps one humble. It has been a privilege and a pleasure to serve as your district councillor, thank you and farewell.

James Macnamara

Tel: 01869 340109

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

Classifieds

Deddington Farmers' Market

The monthly Farmers' Market in Deddington takes place every 4th Saturday from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm. This month's market will be on 23rd April, and North Aston Organics will have a stall.

Antiques & Collectables!

We are always looking for interesting items to add to our stock of antiques & collectables. If you're moving, having a clear-out or trying to 'de-clutter' your home, 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.



The winners of the March draw were:

1st Prize (£10): Mrs Walkerdene (#75)

2nd Prize (£5): Sue Hatzigeorgiou (#113)

In a few weeks' time this year's 100 Club season will come to an end. If you'd like to join this worthy cause, raising modest funds for the community, but with a high chance of winning, please contact Norman (340368) for further information.

Better odds than the Lottery!
You've got to be in it to win it!



CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH WORSHIP IN APRIL-MAY 2016

NORTH ASTON

STEEPLE ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday April 3rd - Second Sunday of Easter

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

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

5:30 pm
Evensong
**Revd Marcus Green &
Canon Robin Gibbons**

Sunday April 10th - Third Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Family Service
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am
Family Service
*Followed by Annual
Parochial Congregation Meeting*
Revd Marcus Green

5:30 pm
Compline
*Followed by Annual
Parochial Congregation Meeting*
**Revd Marcus Green &
Canon Robin Gibbons**

Sunday April 17th - Fourth Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Morning Prayer
Richard Bailey

11:00 am
Morning Prayer
Richard Bailey

5:30 pm
Ecumenical Communion
Canon Robin Gibbons

Sunday April 24th - Fifth Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Holy Communion

11:00 am
Holy Communion
with Children's Church
Revd Geoff Hunter

5:30 pm
Informal Service
Canon Robin Gibbons

Sunday May 1st - Sixth Sunday of Easter

9:30 am
Rogation Sunday
Clive Busby

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Canon David MacInnes

5:30 pm
Evensong
Canon Robin Gibbons

In addition to Sunday services, Midweek Morning Prayer is said in St Mary's every Thursday morning at 10:00 am, and Bible Study happens in the Rectory most Mondays at 2:00 pm.

Families are welcome to **all** Sunday services.

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

North Aston News

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