

NORTH ASTON

NEWS

March 2020

#353



NORTH ASTON NEWS

MARCH 2020, No:353

Useful Contacts

North Aston News

Telephone: (01869) 347356

Email: info@north-aston.co.uk

Lucinda Fuoco - NAPM Chair

Telephone: (01869) 340588

Email: chair@north-aston.co.uk

Sue Hatzigeorgiou, NAPM Treasurer

Telephone: (01869) 347727

Email: treasurer@north-aston.co.uk

Annie Savage, NAPM Secretary

Telephone: (01869) 347767

Email: secretary@north-aston.co.uk

North Aston PCC

Clive Busby, Church Warden

Telephone: (01869) 340470

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

Eileen Gilmore: Tel (01869) 347210

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

North Aston Farms

Telephone: (01869) 347865 or 347888

Email James: jamesfionn@hotmail.com

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

North Aston Organics

Telephone: (01869) 347702

Email: northastonorganics@gmail.com

Website: www.northastonorganics.co.uk

Hillcrest Care - Park Farm House

Telephone: (01869) 349922

Email: parkfarm@hillcrestcs.co.uk

Nicholson Nurseries

Telephone: (01869) 340342

Email: office@nicholsonsgb.com

Website: www.nicholsonsgb.com

North Aston 100 Club

Beverley Rees. (01869) 347434

Old Bakery Bookings

Mary Healy. Tel (01869) 347702

Email: maryvhealy@googlemail.com

Village Marquee Bookings

Niel Nicholson. Tel (01869) 340342 x202

Email: niel@nicholsonsgb.com

CDC Local Councillor

Bryn Williams, Deddington

Telephone: 07836 271998

Email: Bryn.Williams@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Thames Valley Police non-emergency: 101

Out of Hours Doctor: 111 or 08453 458 995

Notes from the Chair

Spring is in the air!

Well as slow as January felt, February made up for it by zooming by! Little signs of spring are popping up everywhere and I for one cannot wait until Spring is in full swing!

A date has been set for a quick village spring clean. It will be at 10.30 on the 4th April, meeting on The Green (see below). So, if you are free that day, please do come along ... many hands make light work and all that jazz!

Training

A reminder to anyone wanting to do the training on the defibrillator that all you need to do is let me know, so that I can arrange a time and date that is convenient for everyone.

Post Office Progress

Lastly, I have been in discussions with the Graham Simmons from the Post Office and he has offered us a manned Post Office within the village for two hours, once a week and free of charge. Hopefully, by the time the April issue of the North Aston News comes out, I will have a firm date, location and time of this commencing.

Enjoy the sunshine. Fingers crossed, it lasts!

You can telephone Lucinda on 340588
or email: chair@north-aston.co.uk

Lucinda

North Aston Spring Clean

Call for help! Can you spare an hour or so on the morning of Saturday 4th April? The village is holding a Spring Clean and volunteers are needed to help clear the verges and public spaces of any rubbish. Sacks and gloves will be provided.

Meet on the Village Green at 10.30 am. It would be useful if you could let Annie Savage know if you might be able to join the group. Call her on 347767 or email anniesavage0@gmail.com. Many thanks.



New Opening Times!

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Announcements

Belated Best Wishes!

Last month we missed a very important occasion, and would like to make amends by wishing Mia Obinna a very Happy (if belated) Birthday. We hope she had a wonderful day on February 9th, enjoyed a scrumptious cake, and is thrilled at being ten! We wish her all the best for the years ahead

Christmas Leftovers ...

A conical glass bowl was left in the tent after *Carols on the Green*. It has been enjoying a mini-break in Middle Cottage but is now ready to go home and be reunited with its family. If you recognise this, call Annie on 367767 or knock on the door.



Notices & Events

Deddington Farmers' Market

With Deddington now promoting itself as another *Gateway to the Cotswolds*, the importance of the monthly Farmer's Market shouldn't be underestimated. The March market will be on the Saturday 28th. As well as bread, crafts, beer, eggs, fish, flowers, fruit, meat, preserves and ready-made meals, there will also be excellent organic vegetables from our own North Aston Organics! Buyers are encouraged to use their own containers for things like fish, cheese etc, and bring a bag! Runs from 9 am to 12:30 pm, although it may take you that long to find a parking space.

March Birthdays

Jos Busby
Arthur Hathaway
Niel Nicholson
Stephen Rees
Wendy Rees
Joseph Stay



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

Upcycling & Thrift

Think Green! Advertise your unwanted but serviceable items in the *News* for free. Recycle, upcycle, or just looking for a new home.

Ceramic Tiles

A collection of 19 hand-made ceramic floor tiles, 290 x290mm, in terracotta brown. Sufficient for approx 1.7 square metres, so might suit a porch area. Free to a good home. Call 367767.

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NORTH ASTON ORGANICS Vegetable Stall

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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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visit the website at:

www.northastonorganics.co.uk

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

February turned out to be an interesting month, one way or another, so I thought a few notes might be in order ...

We have seen the first Blackthorn blossom in the last few weeks, and the Snowdrops have come up, as well as lots of Crocus and early Daffodils too. We planted a Walnut tree a few years ago and that's doing really well too.

The weather has been unusual, to say the least. We had two major storms, one after the other, with ridiculous amounts of rain, and wind strong enough to uproot trees and blow you off your feet. Flipping heck ... roll on spring!

On the Sunday afternoon of the first storm (*Ciara*) the wind was from the West. Our summerhouse was quite sheltered, so I wrapped up and took a cup of tea down to watch the curtains of rain sweep through the valley. It was amazing to watch, but I wasn't alone down there. The hedge next to our summerhouse was absolutely alive with birds.

I counted seven cock Blackbirds, all pecking about on the grass. We've seen a group of seven together in the field behind us for two days on the trot, so maybe they're a family group. In the hedge itself there was a lovely family of Long-tailed Tits, and they are one of the few birds species to spend their whole lives in a family group. They were all busy jumping from branch to branch, pecking away at lichen and bits and bobs of greenery. Also flying from tree to tree were several Blue Tits and Great Tits; the whole hedgerow just seemed to be alive with wildlife and things to watch. Then, for my money,

the star of the day turned up and sat on the top of a branch as clear as day; a wonderful male bullfinch, as proud as punch, watching over the whole show. What a real treat.

We've had Roe Deer in the field, and a few Foxes too, but we have not seen many Sparrows this winter. We see a few in the chicken run every morning, but nothing like as many as other years. We have also not seen a single Woodcock, and that's the first time in many years. I checked, and James hasn't seen one either. On the other hand, we've had two Sparrow Hawks in and around our garden all winter, so maybe that's why the Sparrows aren't about as much!

Wendy saw a Hare while out on her bike last week, running along the side of a hedge. I hadn't seen one around North Aston for years and years, yet there were a good few when we were little, and the beagles used to come here regularly. I remember on occasion when Dad and I were standing in the old gravel pit watching the beagles chase a Hare round and round Bestmoor, but they didn't catch it!

Well that's about it. Me and Penny are getting on a bit now, and not walking far at the moment. It's too blooming muddy and wet, with water just laying on top of the ground. Yuk.

Regards, Steve, Wendy Wifey and Penny the Dog



The North Aston Discussion Group will meet in Middle Cottage, St Mary's Walk on Thursday March 19th at 7.30pm. The topic this month will look at *Humour*. Performers, and comedians in particular, have a long history of social commentary and holding public figures to account. We will be asking *Should any subject be off limits?* Do come along - everyone welcome. Call Tony for more details: 01869 347767.

NICHOLSONS

Spring Festival

Saturday 28th March | 10am - 3.00pm

More information coming soon - keep an eye on our website and social media for updates.

www.nicholsonsgb.com

Steeple Aston Choral Society



Haydn "Nelson Mass" & Mozart "Solemn Vespers"

Sunday 29th March ● 7pm to 9pm ● Steeple Aston Church
Professional Soloists ● Wonderful Music ● Wine & Nibbles

Tickets £12 on the door or £10 in advance
from 01869 347346 or the Village Post Office
www.facebook.com/steepleastonchoralsociety

News from Park Farm

The girls at Park Farm have been busy over the last couple of months. They've been digging around in our garden, planting herbs and vegetables for the summer months. We have also been out in the woods behind our house to learn how to identify different plants and trees. The girls have enjoyed seeing the sun again and are looking forward to planning lots of activities over the Easter break. They have been doing various activities since Christmas, such as make-up master classes, indoor skydiving and workshops! Now that the weather is picking up, we are also hoping anyone who might benefit from our free dog-walking service might get in touch!

Park Farm Free Dog Walking

Stuck for time? Let the Park Farm Girls help out with their reliable, friendly and professional dog-walking service. (Weekends only). Please call us on 01869 349922 to set up a dog-walking appointment.



The winners of the February draw were:

1st Prize (£10): Marcus Potts (#69)

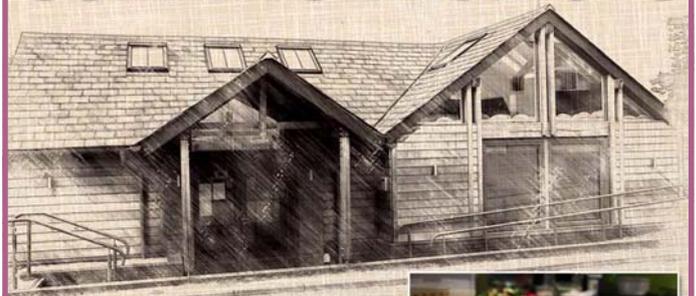
2nd Prize (£5): Stephen Rees (#5)

It seems making regular contributions to the *North Aston News* can bring good luck! This year's 100 Club is nearing its end, and renewals will be sent out next month. If you don't already take part, then please consider subscribing. It's all in a good cause, and even if you don't win, you can still feel good about taking part.



Contact Bev (347434) for further information. Remember
...You've got to be in it to win it!

SOMERTON POP-UPS



At intervals through the year the enterprising residents of Somerton stage a pop-up dinner in their Village Hall. If only we had a similar communal building we could use!



This month there will be a special Mother's Day Lunch with two tempting menus.

Sunday March 22nd @ 12 – 3pm

Meat Option

Crayfish Marinière on Heyford Sourdough
with Leaves & Lemon

Barbecued Leg of Lamb with Croquettes of Shoulder
*accompanied by Dauphinoise Potatoes, Artichokes
Tomato Jam and Salsa Verde*

Vegetarian Option

Aubergine croquettes with Parmesan and Feta
served with Aoli

Indian Lentil Burgers with a Dill Yoghurt Sauce
served with Crisp & Golden Roast Potatoes

Dessert

Warm Chocolate Brownie
with Cherry Compote, Mascapone Cream & Honeycomb

Bar: £1.50 Lager/Spirits, Bottle of Wine from £10
The cost for two courses (Starter & Main) is £18/pp Meat or
£15/pp Vegetarian, with Dessert at £3/pp

**Tempted? Book by calling Alisa on 07584 436 379
or email alisamstef@gmail.com**

Future Dates: Dinner July 24th, Dinner Nov 27th

Doubling Tree Cover by 2045

A motion proposed by Cllr Hugo Brown and seconded by Cllr Sean Woodcock at the Full Council Meeting on 24th February has committed Cherwell DC to a policy that will lead to a significant increase in tree cover within the district. They will:

- Commit, as far as possible, to double tree cover within the District by 2045.
- Request that Officers identify and secure funding opportunities from Central Government and other sources in furtherance of the commitment.
- Require developers to demonstrate how they will be improving biodiversity, including through the planting of more trees.

The Motion was passed unanimously. Currently, tree cover in the District accounts for approximately 3,000 hectares (around 5.2% of the District's land area). By comparison, the County's tree cover is approximately 9% and the UK figure is 13%, both of which are below the EU average of 35%. A doubling of the District's tree cover would allow for a further 3 million trees to be planted over the next 25 years. The twin ambitions of "doubling" and "2045" are in line with those of Tim Stevenson, Lord-Lieutenant for Oxfordshire, OCC and Oxford City Council.

This is not as easy to do as it may sound. For a start, CDC does not own a spare 3,000 hectares, waiting to be planted. We will need to work with landowners, farmers and other owners of land to persuade them to view tree planting as a viable economic option when many would prefer to "plant" new housing. We would also need to allocate land for planting through Local Plans in the same way we currently allocate land for housing and employment. We would need to build into the planning process a mechanism by which developers

would contribute towards the cost of planting trees, and then maintain them, in addition to CDC's current requirement that developers increase by 10% net bio-diversity on their sites.

"There are many competing interests for the available land mass, including housing and development for economic regeneration, but these need not be mutually exclusive. They can co-exist, and tree cover should be encouraged to shield building developments from view, masking light and noise pollution, and absorb many of the emissions generated by those economically necessary developments – and, as importantly, providing habitat for wildlife, aiding with flood management and enhancing the beauty of the environment."

Hugo Brown

Ward Councillor for Deddington, Cherwell District Council
Hugo.Brown@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

With on-going bad weather, OCC has issued some guidelines on what to do when Nature strikes ...

To report fallen trees or other debris which pose a risk to safety, call 999. If there is no immediate or high risk, but the situation still needs to be dealt with, call 101. If a power line has come down (or you lose power) call 105.

If you are concerned about flooding, visit the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit at www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com for advice. If you encounter a flooding emergency, with threat to life, contact Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service on 999, but if the situation is not life-threatening, call TVP on 101.

To report a flooded roadway, call OCC Floodline on 0345 310 1111. To report flooding from a major waterway, contact the Environment Agency through the Floodline: 0345 988 1188 or 0800 80 70 60, or contact them via their website.

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Who we are

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Comment

We have run this feature a number of times over the years, and occasionally someone takes up the batten, and has their say. We've had another anonymous contribution to the News that fits the criteria ...

Hitting the Buffers

Last month (February 11th, with Royal Assent granted 23rd February) the government announced that they are definitely going ahead with HS2, cutting through thousands of acres of meadows and ancient woodland and SSSIs – *Sites of Special Scientific Interest*.

I know we need better trains and have to move forward in life, but all that HS2 is going to achieve is to get a few thousand people from London to Birmingham twenty-nine minutes quicker. Really? That sounds like fantastic value for money!

And talking about money, the previous week they announced that HS2 is going to cost £106 billion. Can I just say that again, for effect: one hundred and six *billion* pounds. You could send Donald Trump to Mars for that and still have enough change to build ten major hospitals, put another lane on the A34, and re-tarmac the track around the Village Green.

Two years ago the Royal Navy, once the pride of our nation and respected around the world, took delivery of the first of two new massive, beautiful aircraft carriers; the *Queen Elizabeth*, followed this year by the *Prince of Wales*. Guess what ... they cost just six billion for the two.



So let's have a dozen more! That would employ thousands in the dockyards and aboard ship for years, and then keep them all going around and round Britain, deterring terrorists and allowing everyone to sleep peacefully at night.

Rolls Royce, another of England's great engineering companies, have announced that they want to build a series of affordable nuclear power stations, called Small Modular Reactors, that each will be powerful enough to supply a city the size of Sheffield, yet cost only ten billion per unit. Okay, let them build ten! I say we need nuclear power.

So maybe we do need a new fast train link from North to South, but I think someone needs to by a new calculator first and work out if it's really value for money. Either that, or just employ the Chinese, who claim they can build it for half the cost in a fraction of the time. Go on then, let them.

Anonymous of North Aston

The editor's ha'penny-worth on this subject ... At roughly the same time that HS2 was first mooted, some ten years ago, the French suggested they'd build a new high-speed link between Paris and Bordeaux. It would be 210 miles long, compared to HS2's 330 miles. In February 2020, the UK Government finally gave the go-ahead for HS2. By comparison, the French line, LGV Sud Europe Atlantique, became fully operational in July 2017 at a cost of 9 billion euros (some £7.5 billion). The service shaves an hour off the journey time. However, the proposed extension from Bordeaux to the Spanish border has now been shelved, permanently, as being both uneconomic and unnecessary.

Why unnecessary? It will be rendered redundant by other technologies. HS2 is not expected to become operational between London and Birmingham before 2030, and Phase 2, to Manchester and Leeds, will arrive (perhaps) 10 years later. By that time, the line's principal customers, stressed businessmen and women wanting to save time getting to and from critical meetings, won't be going to those meetings at all. They will sit in an air-conditioned virtual boardroom surrounded by virtual colleagues and business partners from across the globe ... each sitting in their own virtual office, and just a few strides from their own regular desks ... assuming they even need one of those at all. They certainly won't be going to meetings by train.

Bridge

Bicester Bridge Club

Join us for a friendly, fun afternoon of bridge on Thursdays from 2:00 pm to 4:0 pm at Ardley with Fritwell Village Hall, Ardley Road, OX27 7PA

A relaxed session of duplicate with an offer of help if you want it.

More details at:
www.bridgewebs.com/bicesterlearning

Please call Ken Langdon
on 07850 616069



The Village Defibrillator

The defibrillator is located in the porch at 4 Somerton Road, opposite the post box. CPR & Defibrillator training sessions are arranged from time to time. For more information, and to book a session, please contact Mark on 347806



District Councillor Update

CDC officers are making substantial progress with their OCC counterparts to deliver improved efficiency and cost savings. Here is a summary of the progress to date on housing.

Extra Care Housing – An event organised by CDC and attended by nine housing providers was used to present OCC's position on ECH. The outcomes were: greater understanding about the demand for ECH in Oxfordshire and an increased interest among some providers to develop schemes, including on sites in Cherwell. The event also contributed to the debate about what CDC's policy on ECH should be in the new Local Plan due for completion in 2022.

The panel for allocating ECH in Cherwell has been re-launched, reflecting new Adult Social Care team structures. There is now one panel for all six schemes in CDC in order to improve coordination and manage total demand against vacancies. OCC has recruited a Care Brokerage post which will assist Adult Social Care in accessing ECH placements and reduce void times. Persistent voids in shared ownership units at one scheme in Cherwell are now being tackled with the housing provider and intervention by OCC/CDC Housing Team.

The Relief Plus protocol continues to be implemented in an attempt to **Tackle Homelessness**. This initiative diverts vulnerable families away from the likelihood of being found 'intentionally homeless' by offering an extended period in temporary accommodation, supported by Children's Services and Housing. We have had success with several families who have been able to work towards becoming tenancy-ready and accepted into accommodation through the housing register.

The commissioning of **Young People's Accommodation Services** led by OCC, utilising a pooled budget. While this is not specific to the OCC/CDC partnership, CDC Housing Team has strongly supported district council contributions and the move to a model of smaller clustered accommodation units rather than larger hostels. CDC is talking to partners about how we could potentially re-purpose any decommissioned provision to meet other housing needs.

A county-wide **homelessness strategy** for rough sleeping and homelessness that delivers systems change has been adopted that will put the person who is at risk at the centre of how services are delivered. It will inform the re-commissioning of the existing *Adult Homeless Pathway* through a new needs-assessment and complete system redesign.

Help for potential **foster carers** and family/friends ('kinship') carers. The OCC/CDC protocol for assisting carers to move to a more suitable property in order to facilitate their responsibilities has been in place for a number of months. We have reviewed the priority given to foster carers in CDC's Allocations Scheme and are working on cases across the county where foster carers need alternative housing.

Keyworker Housing was passed across to Housing in December and will be re-scoped to prioritise future actions. CDC led the production of a *Keyworker Accommodation Guide* which sets out housing options for those workers in essential services who are struggling to find affordable accommodation. The guide is available on OCC and CDC websites. Research into barriers faced by keyworkers is being collated and will inform a partnership event to be held in Oxford on 2nd March.

Together with OCC, CDC is running a commissioning process for the provision of **Debt & Money Advice** in Cherwell, with specialist services for vulnerable people. A composite needs-assessment is being prepared and there is a saving in time and back-office support to the process.

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We are working on proposals that will allow us to offer better help for **older and more vulnerable people** on health and housing issues. We need to identify and reach more older and disabled people living in poor quality homes. Part of this is a project that will help us to identify people in poor quality PRS accommodation and recommend what interventions we can take to help them improve their property.

In December OCC delegated powers to enable CDC to carry out enforcement of **Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)** provisions under The Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012. This enables the CDC Housing Standards team to add EPC enforcement to the range of powers we already have at our disposal to improve the standard of housing in the private rented sector.

Commissioning arrangements are under way to secure support services for the new Global Refugee Scheme from April 2020. In terms of the current Syrian VPR Scheme, family 11 will arrive soon. Family 12 will arrive in February/March 2020 and a property is being secured for them. We are already positively working with private landlords to secure properties in advance for the new scheme from April.

Finally, Channel 4 has commissioned a second series of Grand Designs to chart the progress of families building their dream homes at Graven Hill. The response to the first series was immensely positive, and whilst the housing sector has slowed due to Brexit, it is now expected to increase again now that the exit has finally occurred.

Bryn Williams - District Councillor - Deddington Ward
Bryn.Williams@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk



The Church MATTERS



Love, Kindness & Generosity

Lent is already upon us. Ash Wednesday has been and gone, and the season of 'giving up something' has begun. But Lent is about more than 'giving up something'. It is about giving in the bigger sense - about giving our hearts to others, so that we might be ready for the great gift of Easter, where God gives everything that we might receive his love. If we can't give what we have, we'll struggle to receive from others. If we can't receive from others, we'll struggle to generously give what we have.

As a church, we've been thinking a lot about giving and receiving over the last couple of years. In part, this has been because we have been trying to kickstart our 'St Mary's For Everyone' projects. We've needed to give and receive money for these projects - for restoration, for access, for better interior facilities. And as we started to look at these projects, Nicholas Kneale came to me and said he'd like to offer a new stained glass window for the church, as a thanksgiving for all that his family has received through living in North Aston.

Any artwork will always please some people and bemuse others. So I was delighted when the PCC's initial response was to accept Nicholas' generous offer - and then to let the Church of England's tortuous processes that exist for looking at such gifts to churches take over. Which means that while Nicholas, as donor, had a huge say in what the window would look like, the PCC and others in the Diocese also participated in the design process, and eventually everything then gets submitted to conservation and specialist bodies. In this way, a gift is a gift to a community, not an imposition from one person.

And when one person decided very properly to use the formal channels that exist to lodge an objection, as a PCC and as a church we were again left thinking through what giving and receiving were all about, and how we felt. It's OK to support friends. It's OK not to agree with everyone over everything. It's not OK ever to be less than kind or generous about anyone else. It's very OK to be grateful that we aren't left to our own devices when things are difficult, because the Church of England has processes that exist to help us give and receive well.

While we continue to wait for the machinery of the Diocese to do its work and give us a final decision on this one (and hopefully that decision will come to us soon), I think that Lent and the things we have been learning as a church about giving and receiving (and the wonderful intent of Nicholas' donation) continue to be true: all of us remain thankful for the gift of living together in this village, all of us remain open to giving and receiving, and all of us remain open hearted to each other and determined to be kind.

For God's gifts are wonderful things. And they are for all of us. Through these weeks of Lent, however we mark it, none of us should ever stop being thankful or give up generosity. We choose to live life this way because we follow Jesus. And through Lent though we know the Cross is coming, afterwards comes Resurrection.

Also: **Mothering Sunday** is on Sunday March 22nd. We will be holding a lovely Morning Prayer service at 9.30am, with flowers for everyone, and Revd Stephen Pix will be returning to North Aston to lead us in worship. Do come and join us - it's terrific to give thanks for all in our community who mean so very much to us, especially mothers and those who are as mothers to us, young and old, here and gone before.

Revd Marcus Green



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: 340 470) 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, Beryl Greenwood, Vicky Taylor, Ginny Stay, Ted Short, Jeremy Taylor and Norman West.



CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH WORSHIP IN MARCH-APRIL

NORTH ASTON

STEEPLE ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday 1st March

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 and Canon Robin Gibbons

Sunday 8th March

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 Canon Robin Gibbons

Sunday 15th March

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Revd Marcus Green

5:30 pm
Informal Service
Revd Marcus Green and Canon Robin Gibbons

Mothering Sunday 22nd March

9:30 am
Morning Prayer
Revd Stephen Pix

11:00 am
Morning Prayer with Children's Church
Revd Marcus Green

9:30 am
Family Communion
Revd Marcus Green

Passion Sunday 29th March

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
Canon Robin Gibbons and Richard Bailey

Palm Sunday 5th April

9:15 am
Palm Sunday Procession
& Family Service
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am
Palm Sunday Family Service
Revd Marcus Green

10:30 am
Joint Service with
Tackley Methodist Church

Easter Week, Thursday 9th - Saturday 11th April

Maundy Thursday, No Service

Maundy Thursday, No Service

7:30 pm
Maundy Thursday Communion

Good Friday, No Service

12:00 noon
Good Friday, Reflection at the Cross

Good Friday, No Service

Holy Saturday, 7:30 pm
Bach & St John

The Story of the Cross from St John's Gospel, with music by Bach

Holy Saturday, No Service

Holy Saturday, No Service

Children and families are always welcome. Bible Study happens most Mondays at 2pm at the Rectory. For further information visit the website: www.sntchurch.com

North Aston News

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