

NORTH ASTON

NEWS

April 2026

#426



NORTH ASTON NEWS

APRIL 2026, No:426

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Notes from the Chair

While national and international news is focused on Conflict, concerns closer to home are dominated by Planning & Development.

After months of anticipation, and from a shortlist of twelve, the Government eventually selected just seven locations for the creation of New Towns in England. Heyford Park is **not** one of them. As explained by our local councillors (Page 5), this is a mixed blessing. While it may mean that Heyford Park is not fast-tracked through to becoming one of the largest towns in North Oxfordshire, it will continue to grow. The current plans for 9,000 additional homes (plus about 1000 more by other developers) look set to go ahead and, given the scale, may still be decided by central government. However, the requirement that all these new houses are supported by the appropriate infrastructure – including new roads, rail and bus services, healthcare, sports and education – will not now be afforded the same priority.

Added to that, in the next few weeks, perhaps days, the formal application for the Ardley rail freight interchange (OxSRFI) is due to be submitted as a Development Consent Order. That will be decided by central government and, if deemed a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, it will probably go ahead, no matter what local residents may feel about it.

Finally, I have been asked to raise the matter of drones. There was an instance in March of a small aerial drone being flown above homes and gardens along St Mary's Walk, across Somerton Road and around the margins of The Green. While I'm sure – or hope – it was all perfectly innocent, it was almost certainly illegal. Anyone thinking of flying a drone in the village must be registered with the Civil Aviation Authority, even if it's small, and they should also contact neighbours to obtain their permission first. The CAA publishes an excellent Drone Code document that explains everything, and can be downloaded here: <https://www.caa.co.uk/drones/>
Now the clocks have moved forwards,

Spring has sprung ...

Enjoy!

You can phone Marcus on 340296 or email: chair@north-aston.co.uk

Village Fête - July 4th

A regular reminder between now and July. Please could you start setting aside items for the various stalls at the Fête, including:

- Books and DVDs in good condition
- Top quality Bric-a-Brac
- Bottles & Cans for the Bottle Stall
- Plants for the Plant Stall
- China plates, bowls and ornaments for the China Shy

The committee is also appealing for high-value prizes for the raffle, ranging from personal donation to something special via your workplace or a local business. Please watch out for messages on the village WhatsApp group.

This month's "Baker's Arms" will take place on Friday 10th April, from 7pm.

Bring your own drinks, a selection of your favourite nibbles, and enjoy a convivial evening of chat with neighbours and friends in The Old Bakery.



Cover: Spring blossom, and a close-up of a Ladybird. There seem to be swarms of them! MP.

Planning

Again, no new applications relating to the village this month. To examine past applications in detail, or check for new ones, search for "North Aston" on the CDC Planning Register web page at www.planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/

Rosemary Cottage, Somerton Rd, OX25 6HX. The application to install new underground broadband cabling has now been approved. Ref: 25 / 02926 / LB.

Please see the feature on Heyford Park on Page 5 ...

Recycling

A request has been made to clarify the situation regarding recycling and garden waste.

As of 30th March, a new country-wide policy known as *Simpler Recycling* has been introduced that is intended to balance out the various policies relating to recycling and waste disposal. Previously there was something of a postcode lottery that meant residents in one council area were permitted to recycle some household waste kerbside, like glass bottles, while those in neighbouring authorities could not.

Cherwell DC has stated that, from April 2026, residents can have the following materials collected kerbside: Blue bin for paper, cardboard, cans, some plastics, bottles and glass; Green bin for non-recyclable waste (goes to landfill); Silver bin for food waste recycling and, for those who pay the annual subscription, a Brown bin for garden waste.

Acceptable plastics for recycling include plastic bottles, pots, tubs, and food-trays. Items must be empty and rinsed, caps still on. Not acceptable include black plastic bags, plastic and metallised film (such as crisp packets) and rigid plastics, like toys. These should go into the Green, general waste bin.

In the guidelines, there's a paragraph that states that paper and cardboard will, at some stage, be collected separately (from plastics, tins and glass) and this will require residents to have a fourth wheeled bin. It's not clear when this will come into effect, but 73,000 new bins will be needed.

Under the terms of the *Simpler Recycling* proposals, plastic film will be collected kerbside, but not until next year. The Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) on drinks containers, whether plastic or metal, is also to be implemented in 2027. This will see a deposit being taken at the point of sale, refundable upon return. Who remembers the Cresta Bear!

Calling all runners!

The annual Deddington Four Farms Challenge is coming up on Sunday May 17th, so there's still plenty of time to prepare.

There are options on 5k, 10k and 20k distances, with various routes around the parish of Deddington. All start from the old Castle Grounds, and follow a mix of road, pavement and bridleway. The event is open to runners of all abilities, from experienced athletes through to fun runners and families. Any profits go to local charities.

See website for further details: www.fourfarmschallenge.run



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Traffic Update

The temporary chicanes anticipated for the Somerton Road did not appear in March, although they had been expected during the second half of the month. Howard Ionascu has been in touch with OCC Highways to query if there's any further news. Billy Evans from OCC Highways admitted to having had difficulties organising the necessary contractors, leading to the delay, but he hopes to have progress soon.

While the chicanes did not materialise, a road closure based on Somerton caused several days of confusion, not least because there was no warning and the "road closed" signs did not always match the real-life status. OCC Highways was contacted about the dangerous positioning of the closure signs on the main road, including the cones that effectively blocked off the exit sliplane southbound. They were moved quite promptly, but turning remained awkward.

On a more positive note, the potholes alongside the Green were patched, as promised. Thanks to Gareth Epps, OCC Councillor, for expediting the work. Further repairs and top-dressing from The Lodge to Somerton is proposed for April. The dates set are 15th to 19th, with day-time closure from 04:00 through to 18:00, but the works are weather-dependant and could over-run. It is anticipated that trial placement of the chicanes could follow soon after completion of the resurfacing, suggesting a date towards the end of April.

OCC proudly repaired over 2000 potholes last month, but there are thousands more that need attention. The situation down the hill from The Manor to The Lodge remains dire, and looks unlikely to be tackled during this month's scheduled work. Please keep pestering the council using www.fixmystreet.com or download the dedicated phone App.

Yard Sale

There will be a Yard Sale at Tustain Carriers on Clifton Road, out of Deddington, on Sat 25th April. Items on offer include furniture, glass, homewares, antiques, vintage, books and garden items.

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

I was just looking out of our kitchen window and spotted a Blackbird hopping around on Wendy's garden, catching worms. It was leaning its head over to one side, listening for the sound of worms moving about, and then sticking its beak into the ground and pulling the worm out.

This really does happen. My big brother Tony has seen it too, so we know that that Blackbirds can hear worms moving in the ground. On the other hand, our Thrush is an expert snail finder. He pulls up the moss from our path and from the edge of our stream, finds a snail, and takes it to his special stone, called a Thrush's Anvil. There he smashes the snail against the stone until the shell breaks open, and he can eat it.



Photo: David Element

The young of that thrush will use the same anvil, as will their young in turn. Folklore says a good thrushes' anvil can be used for a thousand years.

Our Dad was a good fisherman. He was the bailiff on the river through the valley, and won many competitions. He taught my two brothers how to fish and then he taught me. He even stopped winning matches to teach us. First he taught us how to fish, and then he taught us how to be fishermen. There is difference. I still thank Dad for teaching us, and I hope I taught my boys the same.

I mention this because it's the same with many animals, with the parents passing on their skills to the youngsters. Stoats are known for teaching their young to hunt, as are Kestrels. Their young will watch and learn from their parents, and from making mistakes. It was watching the Blackbird that set me onto this train of thought. How did it know to do that? Well, just the same as I learned how to be a fisherman, from my Dad. We all learn as we go on.

I'll admit, I learned nothing much at school. I was a rubbish pupil! I just kept thinking that the stuff they were trying to teach me was useless, and not for me. Now I feel sorry for those teachers, who were only trying to help me.

Some animals are different. Percy, the bigger of our two cats, is the most amazing mouser. Almost every day he catches a mouse. He doesn't have to. He isn't hungry, that's for sure, seeing how much Wendy spends on cat food! He does it anyway, because it's in his genes. He knows how to do it by instinct, and he just does it for the sake of doing it. No-one taught him, but perhaps he polished his skills with practice.

In the same way, some birds know when to migrate, and where to go. They are born with a built-in genetic "map and compass" that tells them when to set off, which direction to fly, and how long to travel. In the next few days, hopefully, our Curlew will come back to the same flood meadows that they came to last year. It's always a big competition between us to be the first to hear their beautiful call. A week or possibly two later and we should see our first Swallow, down on the river. With luck, a few House Martins will follow, though sadly they seem to have deserted our village these past few years.

Then, before you know it, we'll be playing Aunt Sally on the Green again, and enjoying a beer in the summer evenings. Life goes on, in and around North Aston, and long may it last!

Steve & Wendy

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Heyford Park and Local Development

What Next?

Heyford Park was on the short-list for adoption as one of the Government's "New Towns", but an announcement at the end of March confirmed that it didn't make it through to final selection. David Rogers, CDC Councillor for the Deddington Ward, considers what this means for the future ...

There has been considerable discussion recently about the future of Heyford Park and surrounding development. While often described as a "new town", the reality is now somewhat different. Current proposals, including a major application by Dorchester Group for nearly 9,000 homes alongside several smaller applications, are progressing through the standard planning process rather than as a single, coordinated "New Town" scheme.

This matters because infrastructure such as roads, water, sewage, and electricity is unlikely to be delivered in advance. Instead, it could well follow development. Given existing pressures in the area, particularly around utilities, this is something residents will understandably be watching closely.

A recent planning change means that large applications (over 150 homes) recommended for refusal may be referred to the Secretary of State. As a result, the Heyford Park proposals are likely to be determined at national level.

One consequence of the New Town decision is that all the developments near Bicester risk being assessed individually rather than collectively. There is strong local support for considering the cumulative impact of multiple schemes, and it is important that district and county councils work together to achieve this.

Questions also remain about how different developers, including those behind proposals at Baynards Green and elsewhere, might coordinate infrastructure contributions where there is no obligation to do so.

Separately, the proposed *Strategic Rail Freight Interchange* is expected to be decided by central government, though local authorities will have opportunities to make representations.

As ever, these are evolving issues, and I welcome residents getting in touch with their views.

*Cllr. David Rogers - david.rogers@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Cherwell District Councillor for the Deddington Ward*



Photo: Heyford Park

Gareth Epps, David's counterpart on OCC, adds:

For those who didn't want *the New Town status* to happen, there is still a 9,000-home speculative application with Cherwell District Council. For those who did, this is frustrating. The advantage of New Town designation over an ordinary planning application is that the infrastructure that's difficult to secure is made easier. That includes transport, such as Ardley Station, GP surgery provision and utilities including water and energy. For existing residents, amenities and meeting existing planning obligations are high on the agenda. It means more affordable housing than the developer is willing to provide. It also means a locally accountable body can help shape the place in the future.

These things will now not happen.

The Oxford Growth Commission and New Towns Task Force both cite transport as a major challenge at Heyford Park - and independent studies confirm the development would double traffic around M40 Junction 10, without serious public transport and active travel mitigation.

Ultimately, the communities I represent want clarity and certainty. The reason I'm disappointed with this news is they have neither. People in Heyford Park want a plan for the future and an end to unkept promises. People in surrounding villages want clarity to the character of their communities and certainty on infrastructure provision, regardless of their view on the planning application.

*Cllr. Gareth Epps - Gareth.Epps@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
Oxfordshire County Councillor, Deddington Division*



The City of Oxford, in a post on social media, has announced that, from 1st April 2027, residents there will be required to separate out all their recycling into colour-coded bins ...



PCC Meeting

At their Meeting on 17th March, St Mary's PCC discussed, among other things:

Safeguarding and H&S: We had no issues to report.

Repairs: Various works are ongoing, following instructions from the architect.

Lychgate: Progress *is* being made toward dismantling this as planned as soon as weather permits, and it will be completely repaired and rebuilt using beautiful English oak.

Finances: Tony Godwin our Treasurer was abroad, and accordingly nothing much to report. The PCC has gratefully received a generous donation from the NA Village Fund, being 50% of the net profit of the 2025 Fête.

Events: We're planning a few of these including

A sung preparation for Easter on Maundy Thursday April 2nd at 6pm in Church. Miranda Doggett and the wonderful North Aston choir.

Another Fundraising tea on 7th June to help contribute towards the new village Gazebos. You will be most welcome. (*Subsequently, in light of world events, the PCC has decided that moneys raised will now go to the Disasters Emergency Committee.*)

Harvest afternoon tea to thank everyone who contributes to the life of the Church.

Sadly the Jarisel concert has had to be cancelled, but an alternative will be announced.

The **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**, to which everyone is invited, will be held on Wednesday 13th May at 7:30 pm in Church. KBB

North Aston Gardening Club

The Gardening Club will be meeting this month to decide the exact date for this year's Flower & Produce Show, but it's likely to be towards the end of August.

That means it's now time to start preparing for the Show. Pots for the Spud-in-a-Tub and seed potatoes will be available for collection outside Tony and Bev's house on the Green later this month – keep an eye out as you walk or drive by.

There is an allotment space available to any resident of North Aston. If you'd like to take this on, please contact Sue or Tuck at Meadow Cottage.

Please be aware that the **Blandford Flies** are already biting.

Watch out for more information in the coming months. If you're not signed up to the NAGC WhatsApp group, please ask to be added. Get growing and make the most of the sunshine!

Worms

... or *Ways of Raising Money!* A few years back, when North Aston was trying to build a village hall, we all worked hard to raise money. The Village Fund coffers grew significantly, but those grand plans were ultimately scuppered. That left money in the bank which we've been enjoying ever since. Today the balance is wearing thin, but the demands have been growing, so we need to think of ways to restore the fund to health.

Can you suggest some fundraising activities that residents of the village would support? How about a Quiz Night, a Car Boot Sale, or an Auction of Promises? A Village BBQ? If these appeal, or you have any other suggestions, please drop an email to: info@north-aston.co.uk

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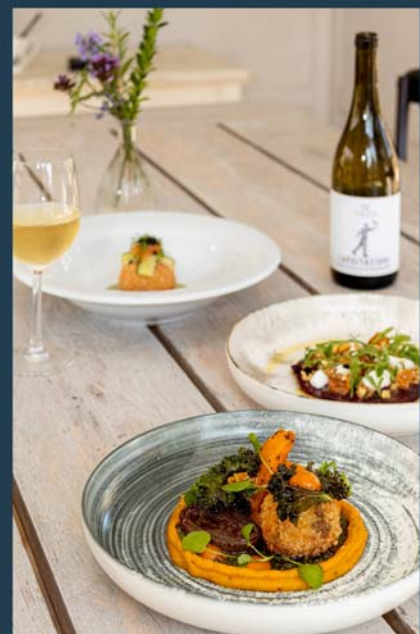


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The Church MATTERS



Easter

This coming weekend we celebrate Easter, and Jesus' resurrection and his gift of new life to us all. During March we saw the weather begin to warm up, there were even days when I could venture outside without a coat! Another of the wonderful signs of spring has been the plethora of flowers especially the bright yellow daffodils.

During the winter the weather is grey and dull and there are times when life can be like that too. The wonderful burst of colour that comes with all the new growth in spring brings us joy, brightening our lives.

There are times when we can feel that we are living under a cloud, that our world and personal lives feel grey and dull. On Easter Sunday morning when Jesus rode from the grave, he gave us the gift of new life. Washing away all the dirt and grime, the greyness and revealing the beauty of what was hidden underneath in all its glorious technicolour.

Years ago as we were furnishing a student house. We went to an auction to buy a table, there was a lovely pine table which we decided we would bid for, unsurprisingly it actually ended up going for far more than we'd been wanting to pay for it. However earlier in the auction there was another table, the Auctioneer started at £20 dropped it to £10, then £5 and eventually £2, at which point mum put in a bid. It had been hidden under a pile of chairs, was so scruffy and marked that we had dismissed it. Once home as we cleaned it up, sanding it down and varnishing it we discovered how well it was made. That it could be extended (from 4 to 10 at a squeeze). We have shared so many wonderful meals and celebrations round the table, it is part of our family's history, and is still our dinning table today.

Thanks to what Jesus did at Easter, dying on Good Friday and rising again on Easter Sunday, we have life! Life in vibrant colour. We don't need to be ashamed of our scratches, and marks, because God was washed them away and made us whole again, giving us new life.

This Easter as we celebrate life, I pray we all may know the gift of life in full colour, vibrant and joyful. Happy Easter!

God bless, Harriet

Please note – my usual day off is a Monday.

The Reverend Harriet Orridge is Rector of the Parishes of Steeple Aston, North Aston and Tackley.

You can contact the Rector by phone on **01869 932224** or by email: harriet.sntchurch@gmail.com. You may also contact members of the North Aston PCC: Church Wardens: Clive Busby, (casb@north-aston.com, Tel: 340470) and Richard Bailey, Tony Godwin (Treasurer), Vicky Taylor (Secretary), Annabel Bevan, Ginny Stay, Jeremy Taylor, Kildare Bourke-Borrowes, and Sarah Godwin.



Photo: Marcus Potts

Church Services in April 2026

NORTH ASTON	S.ASTON	TACKLEY
April 2nd - Maundy Thursday / April 3rd - Good Friday		
6:00 pm on the 2nd Holy Communion with Choir	2:00 pm on the 3rd An Hour at The Cross	No events Planned
Sunday April 5th - Easter Day		
9:30 am Holy Communion	11:00 am Holy Communion	9:30 pm Holy Communion
Sunday April 12th		
9:30 am Morning Prayer	11:00 am Family Service	5:30 pm Holy Communion
Sunday April 19th		
9:30 am Holy Communion	11:00 am Holy Communion	5:30 pm Evensong
Sunday April 26th		
9:30 am Morning Prayer	11:00 am Morning Prayer	9:30 pm Family Communion
Sunday May 3rd		
9:30 am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	11:00 am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	5:30 pm Evensong
Sunday May 10th		
9:30 am Rogation Sunday Meet @ Allotments	11:00 am Family Service	5:30 pm Holy Communion

This schedule is reproduced in good faith. The Editor cannot be held responsible for any errors or changes. To be sure of all this month's services, please visit: www.sntchurch.com

Announcements

Deddington Farmers' Market

The next Farmers' Market will be on Saturday 25th April from 9 am to 12:20 pm. The ongoing Thames Water roadworks will again cause some difficulty for access and parking. If visiting from the south, head for Hopcraft Lane OX15 OTD and park behind Orchard House (W3W ///: guests.gliding.astounded).

Dog Walking Service

Evelyn's Dog Walking Service is still available evenings and weekends @ £5 / hr. Message or call Lucinda on 07869 282227.

Easter Egg Hunt and Coffee & Cakes

The traditional Easter Egg Hunt will take place on Easter Monday again this year, thanks to Sarah and Fred. There will also be Coffee & Cakes for the grown-ups.

Please watch out for updates on the village WhatsApp group. Not a member yet? Then let us know at the *News* and we can have you added to the group.

Pop-up Pub

The North Aston Pop-up Pub will meet in the Old Bakery on Friday 10th April this month, from 7pm. See Page 2 for more details.

Getting Arty!

A heads-up that North Aston will be much more involved in this years **Oxfordshire Artweeks** programme —2nd to 25th May.

Several local artists will be displaying their works, and there will be an exhibition in the new North Aston Community Hub, above the Farm Shop. In addition, there will be a private viewing for North Aston Residents - date to be announced.

Artists taking part include Ed Hathaway and Annie Savage. We look forward to publishing more details in next month's issue.

Road Closures

The road between North Aston and Somerton will be closed for several days this month for repairs and top-dressing. The dates proposed are 15th to 19th April, but could possibly over-run, and will be subject to weather conditions.

The Fritwell Road out of Somerton will also be closed, at roughly the same time: 16th to 20th. This is likely to be a daytime closure, with access possible after 6 pm most days. The road from Fritwell to Souldern is also subject to similar closures at the same time. These closures are for surface redressing.

Hudson Street in Deddington is likely to remain closed until mid-April. Thames Water will continue to move steadily southwards along the High Street, and traffic delays seem inevitable throughout April and into May.

Looking further ahead, major works are scheduled for the A4260 between the Middle Aston turn and The Fox towards the end of May, and further disruption and diversions are expected.

The North Aston defibrillator is located in the porch at 4 Somerton Road. CPR & Defibrillator training sessions are arranged from time to time. For more information or to book a session, please contact Mark Stay: 347806



April Birthdays

Tracy Boss Evelyn Fuoco
Harry & Tony Godwin
Liz Hite Mario Lemme
Franca Potts Annie Savage
Susannah Taylor
Dawid Waszynski



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.



March winners were:

1st Prize (£10): Niel Nicholson (#47)
2nd Prize (£5): Pat Parry (#74)

Congratulations! You too could be a winner! Learn more about the 100 Club by contacting Sue: 347727 or email info@north-aston.co.uk.

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North Aston News

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