

NORTH ASTON NEWS

FEBRUARY 2013

No: 268

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NORTH ASTON NEWS

FEBRUARY 2013, No: 268

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Upcoming Events

Coffee Morning

Wednesday 6th February 10:30 am, Old Bakery

Gardening Club Meeting

Wednesday 20th February 7:30 pm Nether Cott.

Village Hall Forum

Thursday 21st February 7:30 pm, Old Bakery

Your Village Chairman

Becoming your new Village Chairman at the January AGM to replace Chris did not occur by mass popular demand or amid feverish competition - there was no-one else who was willing to be it. I don't really understand why; it seems to me that if you love your Community (and we do), why would you not accept to chair our Village Meeting and to take on the quite small amount of work and responsibility that it entails? I think there are a number of shy violets out there who we need to uncover and allow to flower - next time hopefully.

Meantime, it's a pleasure and an honour to be your new Chairman. I won't attempt to follow Chris's flamboyant and robust style (and let's all thank him most warmly for doing it for these five years), but I will do as much as I possibly can to improve our lives together and represent your best interests.

The reason we HAVE to have a Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer is that without them our Parish Meeting would be deemed to have lapsed, and we could then be shunted into a neighbouring Parish Council, become item 10 on their Agenda, and have to abide by their Councillors' decisions. We don't want that, do we?

An alternative way forward would be for us to form our own Parish Council, and I will investigate that possibility and report. I know already that it would involve big change, and would have financial and other implications. Just the official 'Governance Toolkit for Parish & Town Councils' runs to 125 pages. What we have now in our Meeting is direct democracy, with every elector able to attend, speak and vote. In Councils you have representative who do that on your behalf.

One thing that arose at the Meeting is that we weren't quite sure exactly how many households we have in the village. I've counted and I make it exactly **80 households**, including Bradenstoke Barn; any advance on that? In the 2001 Census we had **212 residents** (I don't think the 2011 figures are available yet at village level).

I think we can agree that CDC did a very good job of keeping most roads clear in the recent severe weather. However if you had gone up the Somerton to Ardley road ... well it was like Ice Truckers. But you didn't, because it's blocked due to the tedious re-furbing of the railway bridge. This work is due to complete on February 24th, after 3 months.

Hope to see lots of people at the next Meeting (18th April, put it on your Calendar). Meantime if there's anything you would like me to do, or you have any suggestion about how we can improve our Community life here, please do call or email me.

Kildare

Tel: **01869 340200** ~ email: k.bourkeborrowes@btinternet.com

The cover illustration this month uses a pastel-effect photograph of one of the elephants at The Hall to inspire you to get creative as we issue a "call for entries" in this year's "Spirit of North Aston" exhibition, to be part of the 2013 Oxfordshire Artweeks Festival.



Mail to: info@north-aston.co.uk

From Father Mark

My time as your vicar will, unfortunately, be far briefer than I ever anticipated. Late last year, I was invited to apply to become the new Dean of Residential Training at St Michael's College, Llandaff (on the northern outskirts of Cardiff) and a lecturer at Cardiff University. I was offered the job after interviewing in early January and am slated to begin the new role in April.

As Dean, I will be responsible for overseeing the training of all future full-time clergy in the Church in Wales. I have long wanted to be involved in the teaching of clergy and university education, and so I am very excited about this opportunity. But it has come too soon after my arrival here in the Benefice and I'm keenly conscious of leaving much unfinished work behind.

It has been a tremendous privilege and joy to work among you during the past 19 months, and I've developed a great affection for North Aston. Bishop Colin hopes and believes that a new vicar can be in post by autumn, and so the interregnum ought not to be too long.

Please keep Diane, Paul and me in your thoughts and prayers as we make this transition. Hopefully, I can return occasionally to fill in for my successor and, therefore, remain in some contact.

God Bless, Fr Mark

I am sure there will be many in the village who will miss Father Mark. He has not only made an enormous contribution to the community in a remarkably short time, but has also become a firm and valued friend to many in his parish. I am sure we all wish him every success and happiness in his new position. Please read the transcript of his poem from the recent Carols on the Green, re-printed opposite.

North Aston Illuminations

Over Christmas we raised £357.36 for Katherine House Hospice and sold £67.55 in merchandise at our Christmas Lights Switch-on event on Saturday 1st December. We would like to thank all who came along and supported us.

Many thanks, Liz Hite

We have not heard yet how much Andy and Linda Brown raised for Help for Heroes, but will publish details as soon as we know them. Many congratulations to everyone for such a worthy cause, and for such illuminating entertainment!

Welcome

. . . to Carla and Peter McKay, who have just moved into Justices, next to Folly Field House. We hope they enjoy their time here in North Aston, and look forward to welcoming them personally to the village.

Announcements

This Month's BIRTHDAYS

**Nick Bevan
Nicholas Kneale
Jocelyn Parsons
& Dick Taylor**



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.

Carry on Singing!

Currently, our community singing seems to be limited to the Christmas period. A few of us thought it would be good to try and keep it going all year round.

We will meet in the Bakery on Mondays between 7.30 pm and 9.00pm, starting on 11th February.

Singers of all abilities will be very welcome, and please bring along a song to share if you have a favourite.

Thank you letters from the charities for which we raised money by singing carols around the Parish last month are now on display on the village noticeboard.

Thanks, Mark Stay



100 Club



The lucky winners of the January were:

First Prize (£25): Nigel Doggett (#6)

Second Prize (£5): Deirdre Oakley (#19)

If you think that's lucky, then perhaps you should be taking part! If you're not currently a member and would like to join the North Aston 100 Club please call Norman on 340368.

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

The Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, and all on the Green
North Astonites gathered, Christmas carols to sing.
When again came Rector to offer a prayer,
Supplications and blessings with poetical flare.

He did this last year, I can hear some of you say,
Can't he without rhyme, simply just pray?
It's wet, cold and muddy out here on this night
If I don't get home soon, I'll die of frost bite!

What the heck are we doing out here in the rain?
There must be something wrong with our little brains
For us to sing carols until we're soaked through
Oh, right, we're English...this is just what we do.

And so while North Astonites put on their bathing suits
And prepared to swim home in their Wellington boots
Father Mark cleared his throat and began to pray aloud
For the souls, lives and loves of all in the crowd.

'Dear Heavenly Father, we ask you this night
To fill our cold hearts with your warm delight
And especially those whose company is bland
And perhaps even those whom we really can't stand!

We thank you for the many blessings you sent us this year,
And especially for those whom we hold very dear.
We ask you, dear Lord, to bless our new neighbours
Look kindly on their joys and prosper their labours.

We thank you, as well, for our huge Village Fête
People poured in at an unbelievable rate,
But we plead, beg and ask you to send us next year
Several large lorry loads of eager volunteers!

We pray that you bless the nursery and farm
And that you keep Jeremy's horses free from all harm
And should the rain continue it would be awfully nice,
If you'd help the Organics change over to rice!

In this Jubilee Year, you honoured the Queen's reign,
With a very British deluge of copious rain.
You gave us the Olympics which were such great fun
And miracle of miracles, our athletes won!

We're thankful, too, for our restored church memorial
For celebrations complete with Kildare's tutorial.
But for one thing we ask, no we actually beg,
Don't let anyone know the true story about the left leg!

And so, Lord, this night again we will pause,
And remember without you we'd have no cause,
To celebrate Christmas with all we hold dear.
For you sent your own Son into our earthly sphere.

To share in our silliness, sinfulness, pain,
Only asking in return that we'd take for our gain,
Humility for pride, and love for our hate,
Hope for despair, and glory for our sad state.

And so, our dear Lord, we will now end this short prayer
With the silent longing that we might all share
In the love that is yours that you give to all men.
And with that final thought let us all say, 'Amen'.

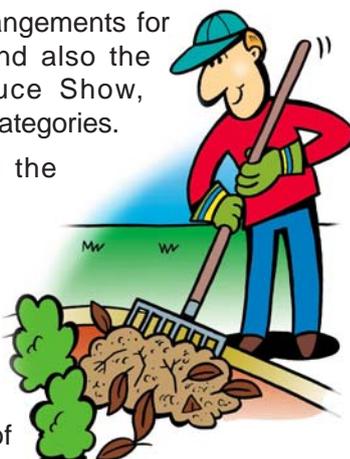
Father Mark Clavier. Christmas Eve 2012

North Aston Gardening Club

The next meeting of the North Aston Gardening Club will be held on Wednesday the 20th of February, 7.30pm at Nether Cottage.

We will be discussing arrangements for the annual Plant Sale and also the Village Flower & Produce Show, including new competition categories.

As spring is just around the corner, come along with your ideas and suggestions for any horticulturally-inclined village events for the coming year, or just to catch up with fellow gardeners over a glass of wine.



#chiplitfest

The second **Chipping Norton Literary Festival** takes place between the 18th and 21st April 2013

There will be more than 50 talks, discussion panels and workshops from authors you know and love. Among the many authors involved in this year's festival are

- Richard Dawkins
- Jack Straw
- Fern Britton
- Rachel Joyce
- Lionel Shriver
- Graeme Garden
- Tracy Chevalier
- Val McDermid

Talks will take place in several venues across Chipping Norton, including the Theatre, the Crown & Cushion, the Blue Boar and Jaffe & Neale bookshop and cafe.

A range of free children's events has been planned in the Methodist Church, supporting the extensive schools programme which puts a well-known author into every single school in the Chipping Norton Schools Partnership, at no cost to the schools.

If you're an aspiring writer you'll be well catered for, with a series of 'how to' sessions covering subjects such as writing for television, creating 'real' characters, building your story and writing historical fiction.

Soak up the atmosphere in our literary cafe, follow the live twitter screens and bring books for our free book swap, or get a book signed by your favourite author. Immerse yourself in words for the region's biggest festival. Full programme details are available on www.chiplitfest.com. Tickets are available now from The Theatre, Chipping Norton, on 01608 642350.

North Aston Village Meeting & AGM

Thursday 17th January 2013 ~ The Minutes

Present: Chris Tuffrey (Out-going Chair), Marcus Potts (Secretary), Sue Hatzigeorgiou (Treasurer), Kildare Bourke-Burrowes (In-coming Chair), Jeremy Taylor, Sarah Bourke-Burrowes, Niel Nicholson, Tony & Beverley Rees, David & Chris Hazle, Sandra Reeves, Franca Potts, Clive & Trudy Busby, Eileen Gilmore, Lynn Quek, Vicky Taylor, Jane & Peter Durnin.

Apologies: David Greenwood, Beryl Greenwood, Nicholas Kneale, Gurli Andreass, David Hanna, John Harvey-Lee, James Taylor, Tuck Hatzigeorgiou, Liz Nicholson.

Village Meeting

1. Welcome & Apologies

Chris Tuffrey welcomed everyone to the meeting, and a note was made of those present and apologies received.

2. Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of the last Village Meeting in November, as published in the January edition of the News, were thought to be a fair and accurate record of the events and were proposed by Jeremy Taylor and seconded by Lynn Quek. Carried unanimously.

With reference to those minutes, Chris Tuffrey raised a point that had been addressed to him since then. This concerned the decision, approved at that Meeting, for the preparation of a letter to be submitted to the Planning Department at Cherwell District Council. This would state that the Meeting had no objection to a planning application from Clive Busby for the construction of a new house overlooking the Green. During the Meeting in November, and as Minuted, it had been suggested that there had been a previous vote to the effect that there should be no direct involvement of North Aston Parish Meeting in planning issues.

CT said that it had since been brought to his attention that, "going back a few years", this had indeed been the case. At the Meeting held on 25 September 1995, the archived minutes state that such a vote had been passed by the Meeting, proposed by Eric Maslen, and seconded by Clive Busby. Consequently, the writing of the intended letter could be interpreted as unconstitutional.

CT stated that, in order for the letter to be submitted, that earlier vote would have to be overturned. He suggested that this subject should be added to the Agenda for the next Meeting. It was noted that the letter approved by the November meeting had not yet been submitted.

3. Election of Officers

CT introduced the Election of Officers, pointing out that these Officers would stand for both the Village Meeting and the Village Fund. "We need to elect people who are prepared to do the hard graft for the Village," he said. Marcus Potts had agreed to continue in his post as Secretary, but both CT and Sue Hatzigeorgiou had expressed their intentions to stand down.

CT asked that, since MP had declared his intention to stand again, could the Meeting vote through his re-election. The move was proposed by Niel Nicholson, seconded by Sandra Reeves, and passed unanimously.

CT then moved on to the post of Treasurer. "Sue made it clear part-way through the year of her intent to stand down at the AGM," he said. "I would like to begin by thanking her for her

time and efforts over the years, and for doing such a marvellous job. However, it is now necessary to find another Treasurer."

SH outlined the duties associated with being Treasurer, and the need to maintain the records of expenditure and income relevant to both the Meeting and the Fund. "The Village Meeting does not take much," she insisted, "as there are only a few transactions throughout the year, although the insurance is something I can't stand! The annual audit is really just form-filling and not particularly onerous."

"The Village Fund, on the other hand, is a regular task, but Norman is marvellous at helping with the 100 Club," she said. "The returns need to be filled in every three months. Also, there's always quite a lot to do with the Fête, but I feel that's my contribution to the Fête, as Treasurer, and there are usually willing helpers." The demands of being Treasurer require her to commit to about an hour's work every month. "The three-monthly returns take a little longer, but it's still not a great deal of time."

CT said he couldn't speak for MP, but felt it would be wrong to expect him to do any more than he already does for the village. Vicky Taylor, who used to be Treasurer, confirmed that both jobs together would be "too much" for one person.

CT referred to CB, who had occupied the seat for some 18 years. He also gave credit to John Harvey-Lee for his long service to the community, and that he and MP still did so much, with regard to the monthly newsletter. "We have approached a number of possible candidates," he concluded, "and the result has been a resounding uh-uhhhh." The ramifications were, he suggested, that North Aston must consider the possible dissolution of the Parish Meeting and an amalgamation with Duns Tew or Steeple Aston.

Having made such a case for the Treasurer's job, and faced by the absorption of North Aston into another Parish, SH generously offered to continue as Treasurer, "if nobody else will do it – but provided someone else will give me a hand with the insurance." There were sighs of relief all round, and expressions of thanks to SH.

Tony Rees asked if it would be okay if someone came forwards later in the year, and would SH then help with the transition? She agreed that she would.

Jeremy Taylor asked if there was anything that needed to be dealt with immediately, and was assured that everything was up-to-date.

TR suggested that perhaps someone could be found to assist SH specifically with the Fête, if she felt that this was the most demanding task. It was thought certain that someone would be able to help, nearer the time.

CT thanked SH for her generous offer, and since nobody else seemed prepared to stand, SH was re-elected to the post,

proposed by Franca Potts and seconded by CB and carried unanimously. Further thanks were expressed to SH.

CT then moved on to the post of Chair. "This time last year I agreed to stay on for another year after there were no other candidates, but I now feel I have done my time for the Village, and I really do want to stand down," he said.

NN proposed a vote of thanks for "many years of sterling service." There was a resounding chorus of agreement and the proposal was passed unanimously.

CT said that it had been "very enjoyable, but now I must move on to pastures new." MP pointed out that CT had agreed to become Chair of the Village Hall Forum, and was grateful for his on-going support of the project. He noted that CT's adoption of the role meant that anyone taking on the position of Chair of the Village Meeting would now be relieved of certain elements of the task to date.

CT asked if there were any volunteers for the job of Chair. There was a moment's hesitation before he continued. "Since there are no other volunteers, then I am pleased to say that someone has graciously agreed to take over as Chairman, and that person is Kildare."

Kildare Bourke-Burrowes acknowledged the thanks of all those present. "One volunteer is better than ten pressed men," suggested CT. "I have said that I will offer Kildare any help I can." KBB's election was proposed by CT, seconded by CB, and passed unanimously. "I know Kildare has some reservations about taking on the role of Chair, especially as he has so many commitments elsewhere, with the church and PCC, but I have always thought we were all one community and I welcome his appointment," concluded CT. KBB was heard to voice his approval of this sentiment.

CT remained in the Chair for the rest of the AGM, but KBB moved to join the other three at the table.

4. Treasurer's Report

SH distributed copies and then read out the details of the Village Meeting Accounts, through to January 2013. She spoke about the build-up of reserves, and that there might be a need to explain these again to the Auditors. She said that the reason given in 2012 had been for the Village Meeting to establish sufficient funds to cover the cost of kerbing the Green.

MP said that, with the addition of the current income from the 2013 Precept, the balance was moving very close to the amount needed, and that we should be in a position to move ahead with the kerbing this year.

KBB queried some aspects of the layout of the figures, and SH explained her calculations in more detail, and everyone was assured that all the columns balanced as they should. Approval of the Accounts was proposed by NN, seconded by LQ, and passed unanimously.

SH then offered round copies of a Risk Assessment & Management paper she had carried out for the past year. She said that there was a need for the Officers to complete a "Declaration of Interests" form, but that this was fairly straightforward, given the nature of the Village's funding. She added that all risks highlighted by her work were either "Medium" or "Low", and that the Village Meeting had now considered these in some detail, and all was satisfactory.

CT asked the Meeting to consider the level of the Precept for the coming twelve months. He said that it was already at a

very low level, especially when compared with neighbouring Parishes, and recommended that it be kept unchanged for the coming year. NN agreed, and proposed that the same figure of £1200 was adopted again. VT seconded, and all present voted in favour.

With reference to the kerbing, David Hanna pointed out that the Highways Department might require a lengthy period to inspect and approve the quality of the work before they would "adopt" it. There was also some concern that the granite setts, put aside for the edging, could not be embedded deeply enough to last long.

5. Any Other Business

a. Middle Aston Lane. CT said that he had received many complaints about the state of the Middle Aston Lane. He said that he had attempted to contact Kevin Cash concerning the ongoing works being done in The Park, and the detrimental effect this was having on the Lane, its verges and the road surface itself. He said that the Council had inspected the Lane, and had erected "slippery road" signs, but this aside, did not appear willing to tackle the core issues, claiming they had no jurisdiction. He also suggested that the lorries now appeared to be arriving from both directions, and that the Lane to the south of the new lakes site was suffering as a result.

MP said that he had also received complaints regarding the driving standards of one of the contractors vehicles – a tractor and trailer unit operated by Banbury Plant Hire. It appeared that the young man driving the vehicle had poor control and little concern for the damage he was doing to the verges by his erratic steering. CT said he knew the owner of the company and felt sure that, despite any appeals, no notice would be taken.

TR suggested that the plant and lorries going to and from the lakes site was not wholly to blame, and that the regular traffic of bread lorries from Middle Aston was also adding to the problem.

CT asked for suggestions as to how the issue might be addressed. "As Tony rightly says," he added, "it's not just Banbury Plant causing the problem."

Eileen Gilmore expressed her belief that "Middle Aston Lane has been taken away from us." She suggested that the problem had now been going on for years, and getting steadily worse. "It used to be a lovely lane for walking, cycling or riding, but now it's just a mud trap," she said.

DH said that he recalled an instance of mud across the road in Banbury when Sainsbury's was being built, and a single complaint to the Council had resulted in the road being cleaned within a few hours. However, it was felt that the Oxford Road in Banbury and the Middle Aston Lane might receive different priorities within CDC.

CT suggested that perhaps the Meeting should approach the Council, as representatives of the whole Village, pointing out the state of the road, and the safety and environmental issues. EG said that perhaps it would be best to approach Kevin Cash first. KBB agreed. Chris Hazle asked whether the Meeting should not also ask Middle Aston for their support. SH wondered whether these concerns shouldn't be expressed in a letter to Kevin Cash. BR thought it unlikely that the Lane would ever go back to the way it used to be. CT reminded everyone that, when he first began as Chair, he had attempted to have the Lane adopted as a "Quiet Lane" but had been rebuffed by CDC.

CT asked if there was a proposal that the Meeting should write to Kevin Cash, asking for the road to be cleaned and restored. DH insisted that there should be a time scale implemented for the restoration to be completed. TR insisted that the roadway needed to be swept regularly, as had been the case north of Banbury when the flood defence work was being implemented.

CT repeated that he had already spoken to the Highways Department and that they had passed on his comments “to the relevant department.” They insisted that responsibility rested with the landowner causing the problem.

MP pointed out that assurances had already been received from Kevin Cash that the Lane would be made good once the works had been completed. He expressed his hope that, as part of the renovation, the designated passing places would be better defined, and perhaps the verge could be strengthened with the embedding of buried wooden posts, if only while the vegetation re-established. He added that there had been a similar discussion of this problem at the previous Meeting, and perhaps the matter had already been covered sufficiently.

DH suggested that perhaps this was not the time to resolve the matter, although SBB insisted that the road was now a danger to motorists as well as pedestrians. CT agreed that the danger aspect needed to be referenced in any letter, saying he knew of an incident recently when a car had skidded off the road on the mud. VT was concerned for the school bus. NN added that there had been another car in the ditch only a few days previously.

CT proposed that MP should prepare a letter to send to Kevin Cash, and liaise with KBB over the content. He said that the Village needed to know how much longer the situation would persist. This was approved, and it was agreed to move on.

b. Granite Setts on Somerton Road. JT raised the subject of the displaced granite setts along the Somerton Road. CT confirmed that he had spoken – again – to the Council, but still nothing had been done to reinstate the missing and loose stones. Peter Durnin asked whether or not we could arrange to have the stones re-set ourselves. CT said that, as the Council had officially “adopted” the footpaths, it was their responsibility, and the Village could not repair them. DH said he was concerned that granite setts would always be a problem, because they were not embedded deeply enough – a point he had also made with reference to kerbing the Green. CT said that he would make it his “last official duty” to approach CDC’s Highways Department once more and ensure the job was done.

c. Kerbing the Green. The mention of kerbing the Green caused this subject to be reconsidered. EG asked whether we couldn’t install a series of low posts and rails alongside the Green. “It would look a lot better and I’d prefer that to the setts,” she said. “It would give a better definition to the edge of the Green, and it would also be cheaper,” she suggested. This has been done in Ardley, but CT said this matter had been referred to the Council, as there had been complaints. It transpired that this was about the associated high fencing, not the roadside posts. There was a brief discussion before EG pointed out that Ardley’s problems had nothing to do with us, and CT requested that the subject be deferred to the next Meeting.

d. Telegraph Poles. JT queried the duplication of certain telegraph and electricity poles through the Village, and asked

when the secondary pole might be removed. CB said he thought it was awaiting the transfer of the telephone cables. That concluded the discussion of the Village Meeting.

Village Fund

1. Welcome & Apologies

The same apologies for absence were noted, and similarly, the same list of those present was recorded.

2. Approval of Minutes.

The Minutes of the August Meeting, as published in the January edition of the News, were again agreed to be a fair and accurate record of the previous Meeting, and carried unanimously.

3. Treasurers Report

SH went through the figures for the Village Fund accounts in some detail. She also handed out copies of the Accounts from the 2012 North Aston Fête, as had been requested at the previous Meeting. CB offered to take a copy to Beryl Greenwood. Aside from a brief need to clarify the meaning of some of the ‘cells’ in her table, there were no questions relating to the Village Fund Accounts, and they were proposed by NN, seconded by TR, and approved unanimously.

4. Review of Christmas Events

a. Wassail. MP asked that the Village’s appreciation be shown for the efforts of Mark Stay and his troupe, who once more traipsed around the parish collecting money in aid of Save the Children and local charities. This year, he said, the group had been resplendent in Victorian costume, and he felt this had added significantly to the enjoyment of all concerned. A vote of thanks was proposed by NN, seconded by SR, and approved unanimously.

b. Children’s Party. Thanks were expressed to Jane McArdle for organising North Aston’s participation in the Christmas Party, held jointly this year with Steeple Aston. VT, who had been present with her children, said it had been “an excellent” occasion, and that the children had all had a wonderful time. Seven or eight children from North Aston had attended.

c. Carols on the Green. NN wished to express his own thanks for the support of everyone who had made mulled wine and mince pies for the Carols on the Green at Christmas. His gratitude was echoed by all present. It had been, it was said, another excellent occasion, and a great way to start the Christmas celebrations.

Later in the Meeting, KBB made the observation that there had been a large number of “out of towners” present again this Christmas, and asked if they had contributed anything towards the costs. NN said that there had been a ‘pot’ and that some £50 had been collected and presented to the church. However, he insisted that those making the wine did not expect recompense, and that this had been their contribution to the occasion. KBB said he appreciated the gesture, and wanted to add his own personal thanks to those already offered, concluding with his suggestion that a more prominent notice be posted next Christmas inviting donations.

5. Jubilee Commemoration

CT said that he had received the design sketches from Daniel Durnin for the proposed bench, to be sited on the Green as a permanent memorial to the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. He

outlined the details of the design and associated quote. He said that the design was inspired by blades of grass, and would be made from large planks of green oak, shaped to represent grass, and would be approximately 1.5 metres tall and 2 metres wide. It would, he said, be utterly unique. The total cost would be in the region of £1500, but that this figure was negotiable around details of the design. CT said he hoped the design could be illustrated in a forthcoming issue of the News, so that everyone could have an opportunity to see the design before it was officially commissioned.

JD added some detail about the way the bench would be made, and how “screwed and glued” would be cheaper than “pegged and dowelled”, but the latter might last longer. CT insisted that the Village as a whole needed to be involved in the final decision, not only regarding the design, but most especially, the siting of the bench.

CT will have a meeting with DD to finalise the details and pass these on to MP for publication. However, NN suggested that some decisions needed to be made now, because it might be several months before the next Meeting, and it would be good to see the bench installed while the Jubilee was still relevant. MP said that the Jubilee celebration had until June to run, when the 60th anniversary of the Coronation would be celebrated. NN proposed that the figure of £1500 be put to the vote.

SH said that, if a picture was put in the News, then people could have until a given date to respond. TR said that a vote could be taken at the next Meeting. MP suggested that the unveiling could take place on Coronation day in early June. CB seconded that suggestion, and others supported the idea. JD confirmed that this would still give DD time to construct a bench. KBB said that he felt £1500 was a “sizeable amount”, but FP observed that the bench should last perhaps 50 years, and in the grand scheme, was a modest investment for the future. So, CT made the proposal to publish details in the News, invite comment, and then approve the commissioning of the bench at the next Meeting. The proposal was passed unanimously.

6. Artweeks Festival.

KBB confirmed that the participation by North Aston in this year's Artweeks Festival will take place in May. He said that the Village had put on a great exhibition last time (about 5 years ago), all created by people within the village. The message now was to get creating! He said that the criterion for entry had been extended to include anyone who had been born in North Aston, and anyone who currently worked in the village. “Last time we had a lot of entries, and it was great fun,” he declared. JD wanted to know if there was a cut-off or a limit on exhibitors. KBB assured there was no limit – the more the better. “Anything that requires imagination and creativity” could be entered, he said. “We want to encourage everyone to take part!”

7. Broadband

At the last Meeting, Sam Hatzigeorgiou had raised the subject of Broadband, and the topic had been added to the agenda for the AGM. CT said that he could offer little good news with regard to the Internet service in North Aston. SR said that she had recently changed suppliers, and her new provider had said they had discovered 50 known faults on the line. Her new connection was no better than the old one.

MP said that he had recently spoken to his supplier, who had

advised him that 2.8 Mb/s download, and 0.5 Mb/s upload was the best we could expect, given our distance from the Steeple Aston exchange. Although the exchange is to be upgraded, and some cabling within Steeple Aston will be replaced the effect here in North Aston will be negligible. For the time being, we are stuck with what we've got.

8. Any Other Business

a. The Fountain. Concern was expressed that the water supply to the Fountain was still switched on. Over the winter it is usually disconnected from the mains, to safeguard against freezing. CB said he would turn off the supply.

b. Gift to Nicholsons. NN stated that, having read the Minutes of the November Meeting, he and Liz wished to decline the offer of a gift, proposed as a thankyou for their on-going support of the North Aston News. Thanks were again expressed for this generous sponsorship, and their declining of the gift noted.

c. AED Device. To a chorus of jeers, CT stated that “North Aston is an ageing village!” After a pause, he added; “I believe we should have an AED installed somewhere in the Village.” He went on to explain that an AED is an Automated External Defibrillator, and is a mechanism that can be used in an emergency to revive a person who has sustain a heart attach or cardiac failure. “We have volunteer responders in some of the neighbouring villages,” he said, “but Oxfordshire Ambulance stated that they are not always on duty,” and it could take anything up to half an hour for paramedics to arrive after a 999 call. He cited the installation of an AED in Brailes, and said that he could source a similar unit at cost.

FP wondered where such equipment could be sited in North Aston, until such time as we have a Village Hall. LQ asked about the Brailes installation, and CT confirmed that it was outside the pub. Had this caused issues? CT insisted it had not, and the battery lasts up to four years, with regular checks. “You need no medical knowledge or training to use one,” he said. “They're fully automated.” LQ agreed that they were generally a good idea, as long as people know to phone for an ambulance before they go for the defibrillator. SR said that any site had to be central to the Village – perhaps in someone's garden. It was suggested that Gilmore's would be a possible location. However, there was some doubt as to the need for such an expensive device in a relatively small community. CT said that he would place some further information in the News so that the subject could be discussed again at the next Meeting. “If the village decides that we do need this, then it will be ‘at cost’,” he said.

d. Village Green Management. JT followed up the comments raised at the August Meeting, and referred to again in the Minutes to the November Meeting, concerning the state of the Green prior to last year's Fête. He said that “it remains our ideal that we graze the Village Green, and we would like to do that again, but we would also like some of it to be allowed to grow on for hay. However, we will be happy to liaise with the Fête Committee to ensure that we have a ‘green Green’ that meets the full scope of all its possible uses.” He wanted to ensure that the Green would remain a haven for wild flowers and grasses.

Next Meeting

That concluded the Meeting. The schedule for the next Meeting was proposed to be during the third week of April, and a date of Thursday 18th was agreed.



Your art is needed for the spectacular 'Spirit of North Aston' Arts Festival May 18 - 27 2013

Media: almost any, whatever you like working in - Digital Art, Drawing, Painting, Engraving, Mixed Media, Paper, Photography, Pottery, Printmaking, Textiles, Wood - and more.

Prizes: You can win one of the 3 'Peoples' Choice' Prizes.

Big: This is part of Oxfordshire Artweeks - country's oldest and biggest open studio event. Thousands of people attend it.

Promoted: our North Aston show will be actively promoted - newspapers, radio stations, village newspapers, notice boards.

More news soon. Meantime GET CREATING!!



The North Aston Scarecrow Show & Competition

Every Family or Household in the Village is invited to make the most imaginative Scarecrow (small, large, friendly, fun, scary, terrifying, static, moving, silent, noisy) they can, and take part in the great Village Scarecrow Show.

May 18th-27th 2013.

The Show will run in conjunction with North Aston Artweeks 'The Spirit of North Aston', and then will be mounted up again for the Village Fete.

Three members of our Farming-Dairying-Vegetable Growing-Nursery community will form a judging committee, and there will be prizes.

No 'live' exhibits!

When you're making yours, remember - your scarecrow's job is to scare off birds! Also remember that it has to stand out in all weathers. More news soon. Meantime please

GET SCARECROW MAKING!!



Artweeks Contacts: Kildare: 340200 ~ John: 347164 ~ Nick: 345153 ~ Chris: 347210



The Church MATTERS



FATHER MARK IS LEAVING

Well! It seems like only yesterday that Mark arrived, that we had started to get to know each other, that we had started to appreciate the true depth and width of his faith, knowledge, spirituality and humanity - and now having shone like a bit of a comet across our skies, he will be no more (here).

He has expressed the depth of his anxiety about this decision, believing almost until the last moment that his only desire was to be our parish priest, and being extremely happy in our benefice. But, but - the offer came to go and teach theology, and many people round here know that he is a natural and inspiring teacher. He is to be the Dean of Residential Training at St Michael's College, Llandaff, Cardiff which prepares Anglicans and Methodists for priesthood in Wales; he will also lecture at Cardiff University.

Father Mark will be with us until at least Easter, and then there will be another 'interregnum' while his successor is appointed.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH AND PRAISE with Erica Sunday 10th February at 9:30

This will be a 'special edition' of Children's Church, combining with them for our Village Praise hymn singing, and some other jolly events. We need voices, and plenty of them!

Delicious refreshments afterwards as a little reward for your efforts.



TO THE CHURCH

Following the recent weather, St Mary's Walk could be called St Mary's Muddy Slither. Anyone who would like a lift down, please just ask a member of the PCC. It's no problem at all.

ARTWEEKS 2013

Though this is not a Church event, it will take place in (and even around) the Church. Art, craft, scarecrows, singing, playing - there is really going to be something for absolutely everyone between the ages of 2 and 102 to do and join in.

So please - GET CREATIVE, while there's still plenty of time.



Any comments about the above are very welcome.

Please email Kildare: k.bourkeborrowes@btinternet.com or tel: 340 200
If you wish you can also email Clive: casb@north-aston.com or tel: 338 434
or our priest Father Mark Clavier: mark.clavier@gmail.com or tel 349 267

Any other member of the PCC will also be very happy to talk, and they are: Bill Adams, Richard Bailey, Nick Bevan, Beryl Greenwood, Jenny Martin, Jane McArdle, Ted Short, Jeremy Taylor and Norman West.

It's your Church

From Thames Valley Police

The Team has carried out an ANPR operation at Cherwell Valley Services, checking a large number of vehicles for known offences. The operation also served as publicity for crime prevention, and tamper proof number plate screws were handed out. These clever little screws, which are free of charge to members of the public for personal use, are inserted normally but cannot be removed with a screwdriver – if you would like some for your vehicle to prevent your number plates from being stolen, please call in at Bicester Police Station front counter or contact the team.

PC Sullivan, PC Dell (Bicester Response officer) and PCSO Kidd attended a burglary at Middleton Stoney, where computers, a television and furniture were stolen. CID officers are currently following up some enquiries, but the victim was so pleased with the officer's service that it was specifically brought to the Sergeant's and Inspector's attention. It was lovely to have a morale boost for the officers involved.

PCSO Kidd attended Cubs in Steeple Aston to give a talk about personal safety and answer any questions from the children, who loved their tour of the marked vehicle. Parents were also involved in receiving crime prevention advice.

PCSO Kidd was involved with an ANPR operation on the A41 specifically targeting metal theft and burglaries in the rural community, and also stop/checks on van-type vehicles.

Finally, three speed checks with the speed indicator device (SID) were carried out this month. Camp Road, Upper Heyford registered 2 out of 33 vehicles speeding. Bainton Road in Bucknell recorded all vehicles driving within the limit. And finally in Caulcott, none of the 33 vehicles was speeding. Thank you to everyone for driving slowly.

Cycling on the Pavement

Thames Valley Police is reminding cyclists that cycling on the pavement is an offence. Several reports have been received recently by members of the public complaining they had nearly been hit by cyclists and had abuse shouted at them.

This has happened mainly in the towns, of course, but this is dangerous for pedestrians wherever it takes place. It is illegal to ride on the pavement and an on-the-spot fine of £30 can be imposed under sections 28 & 29 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Little Book of Scams

Fraud costs the British economy £73 billion a year and criminals use a number of sophisticated scams to try and snare victims. To ensure the public is informed about these scams and able to spot them, TVP has produced a booklet which aims to reduce the risk of becoming a victim of fraud.

The Little Book of Big Scams, which includes a foreword from Esther Rantzen, includes sections on identity fraud, scam mail, door to door scams and internet scams. As well as details on different types of frauds, there are a number of helpful hints, 10 golden rules to avoid becoming a victim, and case studies.

The booklet also gives details on where to go to get help and how to report fraud if you do become a victim. The booklet is available to download from the TVP website, where you can find more crime reduction advice.

Anthony Stansfeld

The new Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley, Anthony Stansfeld, has launched a public consultation on his draft Police & Crime Plan for the Thames Valley.

This plan sets out his objectives for policing and crime in



Thames Valley and brings together both the police and other partners responsible for crime reduction. The plan is intended to reflect the real issues and concerns of the people of Thames Valley, and he is keen that everyone should have the opportunity to contribute. The draft plan can be viewed on the TVP website where there is a short consultation survey.

Closer to Home

In the middle of last month (January) we were advised of a spate of burglaries in Duns Tew, including one instance when a house was broken into, and items stolen, while the family was all asleep upstairs. These were pretty audacious thefts, and are being investigated diligently by TVP, but they should stand as a warning to us all to be vigilant.

Please make sure your doors and downstairs windows are closed and locked before you go to bed at night, and keep a wary eye open for any suspicious activity.

From the Doorstep

In recent weeks there have been a number of instances of "Milk Theft" in North Aston. Doorstep deliveries of milk have been taken from outside homes along the Somerton Road. It's quite possible that these are opportunist thefts by passing motorists, but keep your eyes peeled for anyone running off with milk bottles that aren't theirs!

Contact the Police

Should you wish to speak to a local officer about crime prevention, advice on securing your property, deterring burglars, suspected theft, or any other aspect of police work, please contact Thames Valley Police by dialling 101. If you witness a crime in progress, or suspect that one may be about to be committed, dial 999.

Severe Weather

We survived the heavy snows of mid-January fairly well. Thank you to all those who made some impressive efforts to clear the footpaths - only to see their good works undone a few days later when it snowed again! There were a few - thankfully very few - who shovelled all the snow off their own driveways and then dumped it right across the pavement. It's good to know that community spirit is alive and well.

There was no need this time to implement Chris's "Emergency Plan" (which we must now consider, perhaps, to be Kildare's 'Plan') as the roads were cleared fairly quickly and we were not cut off from the outside world, but the Winter is far from over and the snows may yet return. If they do, please can we appeal to all 4x4 owners to register with Kildare so that he knows who may be available in the event of an emergency.

NORTH ASTON ORGANICS

Vegetable Stall

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

- Wide variety of fresh seasonal organic veg at affordable prices
- Minimal packaging & zero food miles
- Supporting the local economy



Too busy? Why not try our Veg Box Scheme?

Fresh vegetables delivered to you door!

Email: northastonorganics@gmail.com

Tel: ((01869)) 347702

Adverts

Babysitting Service

Mature and responsible 16 year-old available for babysitting.
Please contact **Yvie** on 01869 340090

Need a Baby Sitter ?

Responsible baby sitting service available most evenings, including weekends. Also dog walking.
Phone **Josh** on 01869 347356 anytime

Computer Problems Solved

Look no further for a reliable computer repair and maintenance service. We'll remove viruses, fix hardware failures, boost the performance of your PC, or tackle a broad range of tasks.
Phone 07522 342093 or visit the website at

www.naenterprise.co.uk

Village Hall Forum

Shortage of space in what has become a very long *News* means that I cannot devote as many column inches to the Village Hall as I'd hoped, so just a brief update on what has been a month for significant progress on the project.

A very well-attended Forum meeting in January saw some real strides forwards, with Chris producing what is a much more comprehensive Business Plan than we've seen previously. It's still not quite there, as far as using it as a tool for approaching potential funding bodies is concerned, but it offers us some clear and well-defined food for thought. It is also the best confirmation yet that the project really is viable.

In addition, the process of appointing the full complement of Trustees for the Charity is now at the stage where we can prepare the final paperwork for handing over to David Endicott, the solicitor handling our application. Once the forms have been delivered, the process of creating the Charity can become official. We can then open bank accounts and start the challenge of raising the funds we'll need to have in place before we begin the process of building the Hall.

On which subject, we have received some further draft plans for the design from Oakwrights. While these are still a little shy of where we want to be, they are a great help in focusing minds and getting to the stage when we might be able to publish something definitive for people to examine.

Finally, and this is crucial to all future developments, we have had a very generous offer from Jeremy Taylor with regards to the land for siting the Hall. As I'm sure everyone recalls, the various ballots that have been staged over the years have consistently seen the plot on Beesley's Close, overlooking the north-east corner of the Green, as the favoured spot for constructing the Hall. There have been some concerns about this, because it will be overlooked by several households and may also restrict the picturesque view towards Deddington. In an offer intended to reduce these concerns, and move the Hall even nearer to the heart of the community, Jeremy has suggested that the actual site be transposed to the southern side of the existing fence - in other words, actually onto the corner of the Green itself. While still meeting the expectations of so many who favour the Beesley's Close site, and offering many obvious additional advantages, it does represent a departure from the previously discussed location. This will be key to the discussions at the next Forum meeting, so please come along and join the debate if this is important to you.

Marcus Potts

COFFEE MORNING

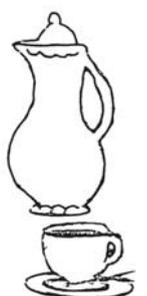
Come and join us for an informal get-together at the Bakery on the first Wednesday of each month. Tea, coffee and cakes will be served from 10:30am till 12:00 noon.

EVERYONE WELCOME!

If you would like transport, or a helping hand across the road, please ring Gwen Short (01295 810762) or Beryl Greenwood (340122) to arrange.



We hope to see you on Wednesday February 6th



Councillor Calling



Bicester Planning

The result of the application I reported last month by Tesco to move South of the Bicester ring road into the space next to Wyevale's Bicester Avenue and double in size was a unanimous approval and there was a similar result for Bicester Village's proposal to add another 28 shops where Tesco now stands.

Bicester Village will add some 300 parking spaces, while Tesco will accommodate 600 and there will be a further 700 in a new Park & Ride facility.

These two projects will also contribute several million pounds to a new set of road junctions (including a trendy "hamburger" roundabout, as at Headington and Heyford Hill) which, it is hoped, will finally solve the traffic jams on busy shopping days at Bicester Village.

They will also, of course, create hundreds of new jobs which will, in turn, contribute further cash to the local economy. In addition, our transport links by both road, using the Park & Ride, and rail, with the new Chiltern services that will come from Oxford to Bicester Town Station and on to Marylebone, once a major upgrade of the line is complete (2017 springs to mind as the target date), will take a leap forward.

I was happy to vote for these schemes with just one niggling doubt, which I was assured had been considered by the County Council's Highways people: have they allowed for the double effect of shoppers at the Park & Ride and around Bicester Town and those who may start travelling from there? I know the main pressure of shopping is at weekends while commuters predominate during the week and I have to accept the assurances of the experts, but I do hope their traffic models trump my pessimism – who will prove to have had the right 2020 vision?

Banbury Station

Another rail parking issue, this time in Banbury, was deferred from that meeting for further work. This was Chiltern's proposal for a multi storey carpark to the West of Banbury Station to replace the bursting facilities which now extend through several warehouses on the Tramway industrial estate and are still overfilled daily.

Although the need is overwhelming, the concern is the position: to get to the proposed carpark, most people will have to file across the bridges over the canal and railway: does this bottleneck have the capacity to cope without making life intolerable for those who live there?

Clearly, there has to be a solution but we have yet to discover if this is it.

Post-Olympic Surge

Sports, meanwhile, are confounding the cynics and experiencing a genuine Olympic surge. All sorts of clubs are gaining new members – including rugby, which isn't even an Olympic sport until 2016 – while entries for Cherwell's Sports awards have shot up, along with doubled demand for children's holiday activities. We are therefore going to establish a £4m Olympic Legacy Fund to develop the District's facilities to meet this demand. It will focus on mainstream, popular sports, which may disappoint a few but will benefit the maximum number. The first four projects are spread around all three of our major settlements:

- Bicester gets a £450k further development of the sports village at Kingsmere to build the pavilion, parking, paths and floodlighting
- Banbury gets a replacement £165k athletics track at the North Oxfordshire Academy, home to the Banbury Harriers club, and
- Kidlington gets an £80k refurbishment of facilities at Stratfield Brake and a replacement £165k artificial sports pitch at the leisure centre

All of which should help meet the growing demand.

Council Tax

This is, of course, on our minds at this time of year. As we meet after the deadline for submitting this (everything has been delayed this year both by the new Police and Crime Commissioners having to put their precept together from a standing start after November's elections and by the complicated new Government financial settlement), I can't give you the definitive result but, as it's been so long since Cherwell last raised Council Tax that we've forgotten how to do it, I wouldn't be surprised by another year on no change (ie, in "real terms", a cut).

While on the subject, though, be alert not to be caught out by lawyers offering to get your council tax band reduced on a no-win-no-fee basis which, of course, means that if you do win, they take a large chunk of what you've saved. If you think your home is in the wrong band, you can easily write to the Valuation Office yourself at no cost at all – CDC's website will have the details.

James Macnamara

Tel: 01869 340109

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

ORCC Trading Oil Scheme

Don't get caught out by the cold!

Details have been published previously in the *News*, but with the approach of Winter here's a reminder that could save you hundreds of pounds each year if you use oil-fired domestic heating. If you would like further details, or would wish to join the North Aston 'Collective', please contact Chris Tuffrey, North Aston's liaison officer with ORCC. Call him on 07903 339155 or email: info@offac.co.uk. Savings of over £250 in a year based on an annual membership fee of just £20 seem like a bargain.



CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY 2013

STEEPLE ASTON

NORTH ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday 3rd - Second Sunday before Lent / Candlemas

11.00 am
Holy Communion
Fr Mark Clavier

8.00 am
1662 Holy Communion
Fr Mark Clavier

9.30 am
Holy Communion
Fr Mark Clavier

Snowdrop Sunday
2.30-4.00 pm

6.00 pm
Candlemas
Frs Mark Clavier & Robin Gibbons

Sunday 10th - Sunday before Lent

11.00 am
Holy Communion
Fr Mark Clavier

9.30 am
Village Praise & Children's Church
Mr Kildare Bourke-Borrowes

9.30 am
Holy Communion
Fr Mark Clavier

6.00 pm
Evensong
Frs Mark Clavier & Robin Gibbons

Wednesday 13th - Ash Wednesday

7.30 pm
United Benefice. Holy Communion
and Imposition of Ashes
Fr Mark Clavier

No Service

No Service

Sunday 17th - First Sunday in Lent

11.00 am
United Benefice Service
Rev'd Geoff Hunter

No Service

6.00 pm
BCP Communion
Fr Robin Gibbons

Sunday 24th - Second Sunday in Lent

11.00 am
Holy Communion
& Children's Church
Fr Mark Clavier

9.30 am
Mattins
Mr Richard Bailey

9.30 am
Holy Communion
Fr Mark Clavier

6.00 pm
BCP Communion
Fr Mark Clavier

Mid-Week Services & Morning Prayer - Every Week

9.30 am
Morning Prayer
Tuesdays

Noon
1662 Holy Communion
Thursdays

9.15 am
Morning Prayer
Mondays

9.15 am
Morning Prayer
Wednesdays

Families are welcome to **all** services.
Father Mark provides a children's sermon for children 4+ during the service.

Other Events this Month

6th February – 10.30-12 pm **Coffee Morning** at the Old Bakehouse in North Aston
Bible Study at the Rectory each Monday 1.30-2.30 pm
2nd February – 7.30 pm **Pint with the Parson** at *The Gardiner Arms*, Tackley