

NORTH ASTON

NEWS

March 2015

#293



NORTH ASTON NEWS

MARCH 2015, No: 293

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Your Village Chairman

Neighbourhood Plan.

The development of this Plan, on which we are supposed to be holding a referendum in May (!), is still in complete limbo. The revised 5-year CDC Local Plan is still not finalised, and the boundary submission has still not gone to Committee. This means, among other things, that Cherwell is still without a 5-year land supply and so two developers have 'jumped in' with proposals to develop greenfield sites within the boundary, and the Council may grant them. One by Pye is for 70 houses on greenfield land off Camp Road at Heyford Park, just east of the brownfield area, and the other is by Gladman Developments for over 100 houses on the northern edge of Kirtlington between Oxford Road and the Golf Course.

It's an ironical and difficult situation, because an important element of the Plan is for communities, if they wish, to be able to direct developments on to Heyford Park and prevent greenfield development in view of the very large brownfield site already available. Could this potentially happen in North Aston? Yes it could. In any case all of these developments affect us, since they all add to pressure on our local infrastructure, on schools, etc.

Adams goodbye

Jill and Bill Adams have left the village after 40 years and now live in Adderbury; Greenside Cottages, on which they have so beautifully renewed and maintained the old thatch, will now feel quite different. Jill of course came from Leadenporch Farm just over the Deddington brook so, like so many people, has always been extremely local; Bill too. They have both been great contributors to village and church life, and we will all remember Harry and Jonathan, village boys of their day, knocking a football around on the Green with Bill. Their interest in and collection of locally made clocks and furniture is a delight and their knowledge of the genealogy of local families is huge. I'm sure we wish them very well in their new Lake Walk home, and will welcome them back over the years ahead.

Hear the new Organ

Do we all know that, thanks to a very generous anonymous donor, our Church has an amazing new organ? It's a real state-of-the-art thing, producing sound worthy of a Cathedral and its arrival just before Christmas was a once-in-a-lifetime event. Since then experts have been coming and going, adjusting everything to optimise the sound for our Church. This will soon be finished, and a grand public 'opening' is planned. Meantime, we can all come and listen to a real expert, Peter Read, playing Bach on it at 7:30 pm on Saturday 4th April (the Saturday of Easter week).

If you have any suggestions about Village life, please do call or email me.

Kildare BB

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



100 Club



This month's lucky winners are:
First Prize (£10): Yvonne Churchill #65
Second Prize (£5): Oliver Bevan #110

If you'd like to reserve a number and join in the fun (from next month) please speak to Norman West, or call him on 340368.

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

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

The Name Game – Solutions!

Dear All

I have a confession to make. You will only have managed to complete last month's crossword if you have spelt Hatzigeorgiou (correct spelling) incorrectly – as I did! (Apologies Hatzis!). Some managed to spot my mistake, and well done if you did. So the following answers are as they needed to be to fit the crossword.

Across:

1. Savage 2. Cash 7. Nicholson 9. Palmer 10. Martin 11. Hite 13. Gilmore 19. Beaufoy 20. Bevan 22. West 23. Hatzgeorgiou (incorrect spelling) 24. Durnin 25. Rees 26. Lewis

Down:

1. Stay 3. Hanna 4. Rose 5. Bourke-Borrowes 6. Kneale 8. Potts 12. Taylor 13. Godwin 14. Hoare 15. Baimbridge 16. Greenwood 17. Walters 18. Quek 20. Busby 21. Rainbow

JFT

Many thanks to James for setting such a very challenging crossword, even without the additional unintended difficulty posed by the 'Hatzis'! If anyone else would like to make a similar puzzling contribution to the News, please do!

This Month's BIRTHDAYS

Jos Busby
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.



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The Post Office, just before WW1. Copies of 'the book' are still available!

Announcements & Events

Welcome!

There are several new faces in the village this month. Chris and Ruth Martin have just moved into Greenside Cottage (see Kildare's piece on Bill and Jill's departure to Adderbury), while the adjacent cottage is now home to Jim Veitch and Wendy Bell.

We welcome them all to North Aston and look forward to meeting them in due course.

Antiques@TheHolt

The next Antiques & Collectors' Fair at The Holt hotel, organised by some of North Aston's own antiques dealers (and featuring several others from the neighbourhood) will take place on March 21st & 22nd.

This will be the fourth fair held at The Holt, which has grown into one of the best-respected events of its kind in the area. Trade and public buyers now travel from far and wide to browse the top-quality stock and enjoy the warm and friendly atmosphere.

The fair will be open from 10:00 through to 4:30 both days, with The Holt offering an excellent Carvery lunch on the Sunday. Further information from www.antiques-at-the-holt.co.uk.

Deddington Farmers' Market

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

North Aston Village Fête

The date for this year's annual fête has been provisionally set for Saturday 18th July. Please put this into your diary now! Will there be another Big Lunch this year? The possible date for this would be the following day; Sunday 19th July, to take advantage of the marquees on the Green. Full details of both events will be discussed at the next Village Meeting on Thursday 30th April.

Mikron Theatre Visit

Following on from the Fête, there will be a return visit this summer by the Mikron Theatre Company. This looks set to take place on Monday 27th July, and details will be confirmed shortly by Mary Healy and James Taylor, who are jointly planning and organising the event. This will be a significant occasion for the village, and is most likely to take place on The Green, either in the open air, or with the benefit of the village marquees. Please make a note in your diary and support this exciting event.



On the Land

Nicholsons

February finished and March is now with us. Who has heard the saying for March – *In like a Lion and Out like a Lamb* – or *vice versa*? Old wives tales can be very interesting, so watch the first few days of March and we should know the end. There are loads of these old saying and I have a book somewhere – I will see what more I can dig out.

Anyway with the advent of Spring, I see the Snowdrops are almost over and the daffodils on the way. This signals a small shift for us. The bare root season, when we can shift plants that have been pulled from the ground with lose roots, is almost over, as we need to get them all planted before the leaves start coming on the trees.



This means that we can concentrate on planting container-grown trees like the ones we grow at The Park. We still have some to shift so are hoping for some good spring sales, but in the cross over of the seasons we are at our busiest, with everyone wanting the last of the bare root and still getting on with the major spring planting. Always a great time of year for us – equivalent to the harvest season on the farm – so all hands to the deck and we always hope for some kind weather.

Kind weather to us is a mix of reasonably cold, to slow the season down; some rain to keep the soil damp but not wet; not too much wind as this is unpleasant; and sun because we all like working in the sun. Not too much to ask....!

We have also increased the range of gardening Sundries in the Plant Centre, so do come and have a look – a lovely range of all you could need either for yourselves or as gifts, and there is always that free cup of coffee!

Other than that we hope you all enjoy the first throws of Spring rather than the last gasps of Winter.

Niel

North Aston Farms

Well, it never froze hard enough to get the last cattle yard mucked out and carted to a field, so in desperation we have had to stack an enormous heap just outside my house at Manor Farm. Here's hoping the wind blows in a favourable direction for the next week or so.

February seems to have been a month for starting numerous jobs. Dig out a wet spot here and see if one can find the blocked field drain. Take down that stretch of falling down fence (so much to choose from) ready for re-fencing. Open up that hedgerow ready for putting in a new field gate. Sweep up the hedge cuttings ready for burning. The only problem is that before you know it you have started a thousand jobs and not finished one! Here's hoping we finish some in the next month or so because then its lambing ... then calving ... then silage making ... then hay-making etc.

One job that has been finished is the hedge that Bill has been cutting and laying between Mill Ground and Stephill Ground*. As well as being a good way of maintaining and rejuvenating the hedge and making it more stockproof, it is also an art form in itself and can only gladden the heart when one sees it – Thanks Bill!

James

(*Unfamiliar with local field names? Check the map in *The Book!* Ed.)

Antiques
@ THE HOLT
Antiques & Collectors' Fair
Open 10 am - 4:30 pm
~40 Dealers. Trade from 9 am. Entry £1
@The Holt Hotel, Steeple Aston
Full details and directions on the website:
www.antiques-at-the-holt.co.uk
March 21 & 22

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

Twenty years or so ago, while having a chat with Clive, he said he'd seen a Buzzard up near the water tower on the main road. That was a really good 'spot' and a rare bird for our area at that time. Now you can't walk two fields without seeing a Buzzard or two. We also now have Red Kites in the air above us, and what a wonderful sight they make too. Huge, slow, but so agile! A few years ago you would have to go to Wales to see one.

Ravens also now live on the farm, easily distinguished from Crows by their long neck, diamond-shaped tail and a deep guttural call as they fly. They are big powerful birds and I love to see them, yet just a few years ago you wouldn't have dreamed of spotting them anywhere near North Aston.

Why these three predatory, carrion-eating birds have come to this area I do not know. I do recall that imported Kites were released on the Chilterns between 1989 and 1994 as part of a reintroduction project and have flourished there, but I can't account for the arrival of the Ravens, but I am glad to have them here.

Our local waterways have also had their fair share of new species over the last few years, the most obvious being the American Crayfish. These alien invaders have caused absolute havoc with our fish populations, eating eggs and spreading disease, as well as ousting the smaller native Crayfish.

When my brothers and I were young we would spend all day on the canal catching hundreds of gudgeon. Now you are lucky to see them at all. They've been replaced by shoals of Bream. Most strange of all on the canal - or should I say 'in' the canal - are the Zander. Until a few years ago they were only regularly caught on the Norfolk Broads, but after a small batch were released into the Great Ouse in 1963, they've spread across the country. Originally from Eastern Europe, they look like a Pike-Perch hybrid, and are properly savage. Hungry all the time, these predators now dominate our canal, with up to 5 or 6 pounders being caught.

While fishing the river last summer with my brother Tony, just after the sun had come up, an Otter swam down the river towards us. It spotted us and dived. Over the last two years we have found three dead Otters, all young males. We reported them to a friend, Pedro, who works for the Environment Agency, and he sent them off for autopsy. Pedro seems to think they were out looking for mates.

It seems our small bit of countryside environment is changing and the wildlife changes over the years to suit it, sometimes for the better, sometimes not.



A photo of rutting stags, taken last year by Stephen

From Thames Valley Police

This month's updates and information:

Online Safety

80% of online crime is easily preventable by taking simple steps to protect computers, smart phones and tablets. During 2015, TVP will be working in partnership with Get Safe Online to provide practical advice to help our communities protect themselves on the Internet. The website covers a wide range of topics, and will be a useful read for parents, businesses and the vulnerable and elderly too. www.GetSafeOnline.org

Parcel Scam

Following on from our piece last month, here's a picture of another form of courier scam. Postcards like these are being delivered to UK residents' homes claiming that a parcel containing "jewellery" is waiting for the homeowner. Do NOT call the stated number, as this may expose you to high-cost call charges and also the risk of credit or debit card fraud.



Pills & Potions Whiter Than White ... not!

There has been an increase in the number of victims signing up for free trials for unapproved or misleading pharmaceuticals or supplements.

The scam usually involves a website 'pop up' or text message advertising a free 14-day trial. While signing up to this trial you are asked for your credit or debit card details and after the 14 days have elapsed, recurring payments are taken.

Recurring payments or continuous payment authorisations are similar to a direct debit, but it can be much harder to identify who is debiting your account. In most cases victims are also finding it extremely difficult to cancel the subscription and the products are either not delivered or are of inferior quality. Common pharmaceuticals or supplements being advertised are teeth-whitening products, food supplements and slimming tablets.

If you really need such products, speak to your GP or a pharmacist. Be vigilant and always read Terms & Conditions. Carry out some basic online research about the company before registering, and remember that, because you have paid for a product that, in most cases you do actually receive, this cannot be recorded as fraud.

If you have already entered your card details on one of these websites, call up you bank immediately to stop these payments and give us a call on 0300 123 2040 for advice.

Contacting TVP

Should you wish to contact the police about any non-urgent matter, please use the 101 number. They want to hear from you, no matter how trivial you think the incident may be. In the event of an emergency, use the familiar 999 number.



The Church MATTERS



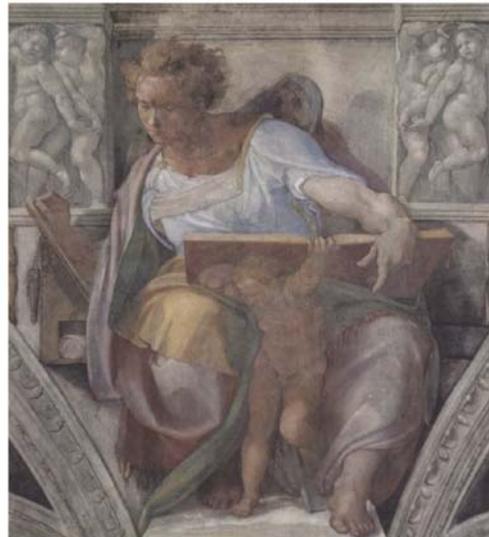
Lent is upon us, and Spring is around the corner.

Lent is often felt to be a dry, negative, austere season. It comes from times when, at the end of a long, dark winter with supplies running low, there was a spiritual sense in depriving the body to feed the soul. Spring and Easter would come. Life would bounce back. Then all could return to normal with a song of joy.

The point of Lent is, of course, to prepare us for Easter. Easter itself carries a wonderful two-beat rhythm about it. There is deep, deep sadness and loss at the death of Jesus, and unimaginable joy at the resurrection. So a Lenten journey that only carries a note of austerity might not be a full preparation.

Think of it this way: I watched a programme on Sky about the restoration of a famous painting. The gallery wasn't sure about the proposed work, people were skeptical about anything that might alter a famous painter's intentions. But the restoration happened. And as the dirt and grime of the years was stripped back, remarkable colour shone off the canvass, catching everyone off guard, and transforming people's understanding of a once-familiar picture.

Lent is a time to let God be the restorer of our souls. We forget what we should look like as the dirt and grime of years covers over the colours that are supposed to be there. Yes, peeling stuff away can feel painful, but the joy of what lies beneath! That's what Easter reveals. Something dies. Something more wonderful lives again.



This Lent we will fill our churches with music to help guide us through this journey of stripping back and finding new colours beneath. On February 28 and March 1st, Amici from London are singing at Steeple: a concert on the Saturday night, and then during the 11am service on Sunday morning - St David's Day. March 15th is Mothering Sunday, and this will be our Family Service in both Steeple and North this month. Join us for joy and song and thanksgiving.

Joy and thanksgiving: Our United Benefice Service in March is on Palm Sunday, March 29th, in North Aston and we will start at 10.30am with a procession along St Mary's Walk towards the church. When we get there, the service will include the re-licensing of Richard Bailey as Lay Reader (or LLM). I am delighted that this is happening, and that we are able to do this when we are gathered as a whole Benefice.

Also on March 29th, the Steeple Aston Choral Society sings two short mass settings at their Spring concert, Steeple Church, 7pm. The final touches are also being put on the installation of the new Magnus/Hauptwerk organ at North Aston during March. We are very grateful to have received a donation enabling this organ to be placed in the church; on Easter Eve, there will be an evening of "St John & Bach" - the second part of St John's Gospel read out at North Aston church, interspersed with organ music by JS Bach. It will be a wonderful way to prepare for Easter Sunday, and a terrific opportunity to hear the new organ in all its glory. Do join us for this very special occasion - 7.30pm, April 4th.

And then Easter! The journey is complete, and the restoring reveals God's true colours in us, and we will celebrate with as much joy as we possibly can!

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
If you wish you can also email Kildare: k.bourkeborrowes@btinternet.com or tel: 340 200
or Clive: casb@north-aston.com or tel: 338 434
Any other member of the PCC will also be very happy to talk, and they are: Bill Adams, Richard Bailey, Beryl Greenwood, Jenny Martin, Jane McArdle, Ted Short, Jeremy Taylor and Norman West.

Councillor Calling



And on that bombshell ...

Oxfordshire County Council's leader dropped a bombshell in February by announcing out of the blue a proposal to take over the county's four rural districts and the city council – in the jargon, to become a "unitary".

According to their figures, this would cost a one-off £16million to bring savings of £33million a year, easing the pressure on their funding. I'm not sure they've understood how much saving Cherwell has already made by joining up closely with South Northants and sharing some services with Stratford. Unwinding this would have considerable costs, while the benefits would only be from the less-than-half the management costs we now pay. Similar tie-ups exist between South Oxon and Vale of the White Horse and between West Oxon and Cotswold. On top of that, Districts also face fierce cuts in grant income so that pressure would increase.

From the user's point of view, a "one stop shop" might make some sense. It can be confusing that Cherwell collects your rubbish while OCC disposes of it; Cherwell is the planning authority for homes and businesses while OCC does mineral extraction and highway planning. Against that, District councillors have smaller wards and are therefore more locally focussed: having OCC's less than 70 councillors taking every planning decision for one and a half million people seems too remote and unaccountable to me.

Banburyshire?

If unitary is the way forward, I'd rather be like Berkshire, which has five separate unitary councils: given the Cherwell-South Northants-Stratford tie up, perhaps "Banburyshire" could become a real entity and not just a phrase!

Brewing in a Teacup

Anyway, there seems to be no mood in Government for local authority reorganisation – or, at any rate, not this side of the General Election – so perhaps this is just a storm in a teacup. If I were in Government, what I'd be looking at is tying Social Services, who come under OCC, in to Health to smooth out the pathways in and out of hospital: but that's just my pipe dream!

One interesting change, though, is that OCC is dispensing with the Chief Executive and not replacing her*. It will be fascinating to see how such a large and complex organisation manages like that: the costs of mistakes could be far higher than the relatively small savings so it's a high risk bet.

* Since James prepared this piece, Oxfordshire County Council has revised this decision, and Ian Hudspeth, leader of the council, admitted he may have "acted hastily" when he decided to axe the chief executive's post to save money. However, the reprieve may only be temporary...

All down to Money

But, to come back to finances, Cherwell's council tax will remain fixed at £123.50 in 2015/16 for the middle Band D for the sixth year running, while OCC's continues to rise: forgive me for boasting, but I know which I prefer!

What you'll get for that is not, as you'd expect, radically different from past years, more a development of ongoing projects such as:

- a Local Development Plan in place (at last!) with supporting masterplans and detailed policies being evolved to fill in the details.
- Bicester seeing the town centre completed and starts on the sports pitches at Kingsmere and building at the north west and Graven Hill.
- Banbury extension of Castle Quay over the canal and a masterplan for the town centre.
- an overall focus on attracting and building businesses so that jobs are there to match all the new housing coming along.
- developing skills, apprenticeships and job clubs and support for vulnerable residents (with debt, homelessness, and other support) to maximise opportunities for all.

and, while all that and much more is going on above the surface, paddling furiously below to plan yet further savings and efficiencies over the coming years in order to keep service levels and satisfaction up while costs go down – fingers crossed that the plates all keep spinning....

James Macnamara

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CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH WORSHIP IN MARCH-APRIL 2015

NORTH ASTON

STEEPLE ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday March 1st - Second Sunday in Lent & St David's Day

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

11:00 am Holy Communion
Revd Marcus Green
featuring *London Choral Group Amici*

5:30 pm Evensong for St David's Day
Revd Marcus Green and
Fr Robin Gibbons

Sunday March 8th - Third Sunday in Lent

9:30 am Morning Prayer
Richard Bailey and
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am Holy Communion
Richard Bailey and
Revd Marcus Green

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

Sunday March 15th - Fourth Sunday in Lent, Mothering Sunday

9:30 am Family Service
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am Family Service
Revd Marcus Green

10:30 am Service at Tackley
Methodists

5:30 pm Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer
Revd Marcus Green and
Fr Robin Gibbons

Sunday March 22nd - Fifth Sunday in Lent, Passion Sunday

9:30 am Village Praise
Kildare Bourke Borrowes

11:00 am Holy Communion
Revd Marcus Green

5:30 pm Evensong
Fr Robin Gibbons

Sunday March 29th - Palm Sunday

10.30am United Benefice Festival
Procession & Service
Revd Marcus Green and
Richard Bailey

No Service

No Service

Easter Week, March 30th - April 2nd

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

Monday March 30th
8:00 pm Compline

Tuesday March 31st
10:00 am Morning Prayer
8:00 pm Compline

Wednesday April 1st
8:00 pm Compline

Note: There is Morning Prayer
10:00 am Every Thursday
in North Aston church

Wednesday April 1st
9:30 am Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

Thursday April 2nd - Maundy Thursday

10:00 am Morning Prayer

7:30 pm Informal Communion & Prayer Vigil

7:30pm Maundy Thursday Service

Friday April 3rd - Good Friday

10:00 am Meditation on the Cross

2:00 pm Meditation on the Cross

12 noon Meditation on the Cross

Saturday April 4th - Holy Saturday

7:30 pm St John & Bach

Sunday April 5th - Easter Day

9:00 am Easter Communion
10:00 am
Every Thursday

11:00 am Easter Communion

10:30 am Easter Communion

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