

# NORTH ASTON

NEWS

February 2016

#304



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FEBRUARY 2016, No: 304

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## The Chairman's Mark

*It is with some trepidation that I take on this role - a previous chairman (who shall remain nameless) said to me the job was like "being on a conveyor belt that you can't get off and there is a big fiery pit at the end of it." That bad??*

*I would like to say an enormous thank you, on behalf of us all, to Kildare for his dedicated service during his three years as village chairman. He has always been very proactive in thinking about the needs of the village and pointing out the things the village ought to consider. I am personally immensely grateful to him and to Chloe Woodhead for remaining as our representatives at the Neighbourhood Plan Forum. I know I would struggle to cope with the reams of lawyer-speak.*

*Also thanks to Beverley and James for agreeing to stay on as Treasurer and Secretary. It is a great comfort to me that we have some continuity there. And finally a huge thank you to Marcus for staying on as editor of this esteemed publication. He has become our de facto Communications Officer, as he also disseminates loads of useful information whether it be by email, leaflet, poster or press release. We are lucky to have him.*

*In many ways I find North Aston a contradiction: on the one hand a very small village of only about 70 houses and 200 souls (smaller than the average town street) and yet it always seems to punch above its weight when it comes to putting on events. I hope we can keep up the momentum!*

*If anyone has any issues or concerns to do with village life, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Ginny (who is supporting me in the role) and we will bring them to the next meeting.*

Mark

Telephone: 01869 347 806 ~ email: [chair@north-aston.co.uk](mailto:chair@north-aston.co.uk)



January 2016

The winners of the January draw were:

First Prize (£25): Bev Rees (#49)

Second Prize (£5): Capt. Coran (#116)



*In a few weeks' time this year's 100 Club season will come to an end, and we'll be handing out the final prizes in this 12 month period. That will mean it's time to renew membership, or enrol for the first time if you've never taken part before. Last month two potential winners missed out because they didn't renew their numbers last year - don't miss out again! If you'd like to join this worthy cause, please contact Norman (340368) for further information.*



Your chances of winning are far better than the Lottery!

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

## Announcements

### David & Beryl Greenwood

It is with some sadness that we note the departure from North Aston of David and Beryl Greenwood. After some 23 years in residence (plus another eight during renovations to the old Coach House) they became familiar faces around the village. They were very active participants in many aspects of North Aston life, not least the Church and the annual fête, and until recently Beryl also organised the monthly coffee mornings in the Old Bakery. The sound of David's various cars burbling along Somerton Road will be notably less frequent in future!

The implication there, of course, is that they will not be leaving us completely. They have only moved a couple of miles along the road to Deddington, and they plan on remaining active members of the Church in North Aston, as well as continuing their involvement in our traditional events.

We wish them all the best with their move, and look forward to hearing their news from time to time.

### Community Speed Watch

At the Traffic Calming Meeting in December several people generously volunteered to become "operatives" for the Community Speed Watch programme. Training has now been set for Sunday 21st February at 2:00 pm in the Bakery. If you were one of those people, please be there, or contact Clive: 338434.

## Broadband into North Aston



We are very grateful to James G. of Hall Close for his endeavours to uncover the mysteries of North Aston's broadband prospects for the coming months, and we are pleased to report that they are much improved.

There was some disappointment when super-fast broadband was fed into Park Farm Barns last year, and a possible opportunity for extending the cabling the extra hundred yards or so into the village was missed. Whether it would have been a feasible or cost effective option remains open to debate, but since then, we have had some better news.

In September James contacted Peter Stanton of the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire group on Oxfordshire County Council. He questioned the roll-out of broadband to the OX25 postcode area, as served by Cabinet P7. At that stage, the proposed schedule suggested we might receive the upgrade in June 2017, but the response from Peter Stanton was more encouraging.

"The average cost of connecting a cabinet in the first phase (1-6, commenced in 2014) was £30k, and this equates to approximately £814 per premises connected," said Stanton. "We secured new funding earlier this year (2015) from the districts and from the Local Enterprise Partnership and this added just under £9m to the programme and will allow us to fund phases 7 to 9. The cost per premises for this phase, to give a balance against phases 1-6, is £2000, so we are now starting to deliver the more difficult and costly upgrades."

## This Month's Birthdays

Tuck Hatzigeorgiou  
Nicholas Kneale  
Jocelyn Parsons  
& Dick Taylor



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

So, even though North Aston falls down the pecking order, by dint of having fewer potential subscribers per exchange, this additional funding means that the delivery date could be brought forward to "the end of 2016".

The following postcodes are registered against the P7 Cabinet: OX25 6HL, 6HP, 6HR, 6HS, 6HT, 6HU, 6HY, 6JA, 6JZ. Hopefully that includes you!

Concurrent with this, James had investigated the feasibility of North Aston jumping the queue by approaching BT Openreach directly, and negotiating to contribute towards some of the costs. He spoke to Stacey King in December, who concluded that, given that public funding is already in place and it is programmed to be supplied by the end of this year anyway, private funding is not worth exploring, largely because it would take a minimum 12 months to get to delivery.

Our best plan now is to monitor the Better Broadband Oxfordshire website from time to time and await developments. The only aspect yet to be clarified is exactly how the P7 Cabinet will be linked to the super-fast cabling. Will it be connected directly, via the nearest link along the main road at the Fox or using the existing extension to Park Farm Barn, or might the upgrade be serviced via the old copper-based cabling that currently connects North Aston with the exchange in Steeple Aston.

If the latter, then the prospects are disappointing, as individual speeds will improve only modestly, to 15 or 20 Megabits/s, while the direct link via the main road will assure households here of nearer 80 Megabits/s, or perhaps even better. As demand for live streaming, catch-up TV and on-line gaming increases, then the need for the higher speeds will become more and more important. If we can't secure the faster option, then we'll be back to square one in five years' time.

Further news should be available by June or July.

## Nicholsons

Well, winter is proving interesting isn't it! Very mild and wet and a brief reminder of what winter can be before we go back to the mild weather again. Have you noticed there are several hedges in the parish with leaves on already – and it is still only the first week in February.

We also have some trees in flower that are a month or two early, and the daffodils are well ahead too, but have you noticed that the snowdrops are at the stage they are normally at for this

time of the year, with no real effect? So, whatever is effecting most things is not effecting the snowdrops. But, with a likelihood of frosts over the next few months, we are sure to get some damage and this will set some trees and plants back a bit.

So we are busy despatching our bare root and trying to get this planted for our customer as fast as possible, as it may continue to be an early Spring – who knows? – but it is a great time currently to do planting, be this small shrubs and climbers to larger trees. The ground is warm and moist and they should settle in well ready for the Spring warmth and lengthening days.

Normally in our contracting business we get some down-days when the weather stops us from laying patios or planting. We have to be careful if there is any frost in the ground and using



concrete adds further complications, but this year we have had no down-days at all yet! However, the wet has hampered operations and we end up making more of a mess, the jobs get done slower and it obviously costs us more. At the start of the winter the predictions were terrible, so we did draw up a “snow list”, but we've not had to put this into action yet – but who knows with the British weather! *Niel*

## North Aston Farms

*Just a reminder from James that he gave an explanation of the works being undertaken in the fields around the Fox and opposite Park Farm Barns in the December issue of the News. A new water main is being installed by contractors for Thames Water, and the land is being used for temporary access and storage of pipework and materials. We hope to have reports from other land workers next month ....*

# Nature Notes

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## With Stephen Rees

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Out at the back of our house, between the greenhouse and chicken run, there is a small bit of post-and-rail fencing that I like to sit on and drink my coffee when I get back from my walk.

To the left, and behind the greenhouse, is a small elder hedge covered in ivy, and to the right is the hen run which is now well overgrown with blackberry and ivy. Last Sunday, after a properly squelchy walk that produced not very much of worthy



note, I made a drink and went round to sit on my fence and have a quiet smoke. Quiet it was not! The hen house and ivy-covered bush were full of sparrows and finches.

House Sparrows and Hedge Sparrows mainly - there must of been 50 or 60 of the little devils stuffing their faces on chicken food and having a right good old time of it, cheeky beggars! In the trees above them there were four Goldfinches. They are always lovely to see, looking very glamorous, and a few Greenfinches had joined them, as well as Great Tits and Blue Tits. I sat there, smoked my cigar and thought; 'I've just trudged three or four miles to woods and flood meadows looking for unusual migrants or fungi or mammals or trees in far too early blossom, and here, right on my doorstep, there is a spectacle worthy of any African safari or massive Starling murmuration.'

Most days now Penny and I are walking in the dark, morning and night, and in the evenings we are seeing a good few Foxes. One poor old scraggy dog Fox has teamed up with a young vixen, who sits under the oak in the middle of the field and waits for him. I have seen this pair together many times now. There are Barn Owls below James's house which show regularly, and the Little Owls are still hanging around the cattle sheds below us.

With the days slowly starting to draw out hopefully my article will get longer as well. If anyone has any interesting spots in and around the village, please let me know.

Happy walking all!

# North Aston Village Meeting & AGM

Thursday 7th January 2016 ~ The Minutes

**Officers present:** Chairman Kildare Bourke-Borrowes(KBB), Treasurer Beverly Rees(BR), Secretary James Taylor(JFT)

**Those present:** Mark Stay (MS) (incoming Chair), Marcus Potts (MP), Jeremy Taylor (JDT), Mary Healy (MH), Tuck Hatzigeorgiou (TH), Chloe Woodhead (CW), Ginny Stay (GS), Tony Godwin (TG), Niel Nicholson (NN), Peter Durnin (PD), Jane Durnin (JD), Robert Hite (RH), Clive Busby (CB), David Hanna (DH), Tony Rees (TR), Clare Hathaway (CH), Annabel Bevan (AB), Sarah Bourke-Borrowes (SBB).

**Apologies:** Apologies John and Elizabeth Harvey-Lee.

## Village Meeting

KBB welcomed those present to the meeting.

### 1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Village Meeting (8th December 2015) were approved and signed by JT. MP brought with him previous Minutes dating back to 2010, which were also signed by MP and JT as appropriate, and BR said that she would keep them filed.

### 2. Treasurers Report

#### *Village Meeting Accounts*

BR said there had been no change to the accounts since the last meeting. They were duly approved by the meeting.

#### *Village Asset Register*

BR handed out printed copies of the Village Asset Register for approval.

CW asked whether the assets were depreciated. BR said that they remained on the register at their original cost – but could not go up in value. KBB said that if kept at their original value it acts as a reminder of possible cost of replacement. KBB also reminded the meeting that the Village, as an unincorporated body, cannot legally “own” any of the assets. They are in “Virtual” ownership.

MP queried the fact that the marquees were listed on the register as they had been purchased from the Village Fund. BR said that because they were covered by the insurance policy paid for by Village Meeting, she felt they ought to be on Village Meeting Asset register.

It was pointed out that the two “Twenty’s Plenty” signs and the Village Bench should also be on the list of current assets. BR said she would add them.

Other items that would be added in due course, once purchased, would be the new Village Notice Board and the extra Radar Lux speed monitor.

#### *Risk Assessment*

The current Risk Assessment was handed out for review. It was decided to review the Risk Assessment at the AGM every year. It was questioned why, under “legal Powers”, the illegal activity of payment was perceived as a high risk? BR said that the money was hard to get out of the Village Meeting Account as there was no cheque book and it still needed two signatories. It was agreed to change this to medium risk.

CW asked why there was no action listed under “Members’ Interests”? It was agreed that Officers should declare whether or not they have any interests that might conflict with the interest of the Village at the start of every meeting. Those points having been raised the Risk Assessment was deemed satisfactory.

### 3. Nomination of Officers

There was one nomination for the position of Chairman – and that was Mark Stay.

He gave the caveat that he would not necessarily be as proactive as previous Chairmen. He said he was very grateful to KBB and CW for continuing to represent the Village on the MCNP (Neighbourhood Plan) Forum. There was a unanimous vote in favour and MS was duly elected as new Chairman of the North Aston Parish Meeting.

There had been no nominations for the posts of Secretary or Treasurer. JT and BR said they would be happy to continue for another year. There was a unanimous vote in favour and JT and BR were duly re-elected as Secretary and Treasurer respectively. As retiring Chairman KBB passed on a few thoughts:

He had had an indication from another person that they would be

willing to Chair the meeting at some time in the future – which he found comforting.

Normal Parish Councils act as a Committee, with responsibilities being shared out. This might be a good pattern for the new Chairman to consider. The Committee could then report back to the Chairman every month or so.

Thirdly he felt it was part of the Chairman’s role to think about the interests of the Village – to be the *Village Conscience*, as it were.

A vote of thanks was raised for JT and BR and *especially* to KBB for all the work he has done in his role as Chairman.

### 4. Precept

CW questioned the low level of the precept. MP explained that in the past, when it had been higher, it had been questioned by the auditors. There was no longer a cost for verge cutting, and Insurance was the only real current cost.

There was still money in the Village Meeting Account originally ear-marked for curbing the Village Green. GS asked whether the insurance would rise as the number of assets had increased on the register. BR did not think it would.

A discussion was had concerning the cost of Traffic Calming measures and KBB said that Dorchester Group had agreed to donate £3703 towards the cost of the measures recently voted through (November 2015), which would leave the village with a net liability of only roughly £400 in funding the traffic calming measures that had been agreed.

KBB proposed the precept remain at £600. This was voted through on a majority.

### 5. Frequency of meetings

A discussion was held and it was agreed that we would have one formal Village Meeting per year (the January AGM), and three other less formal ‘Village Forum’ meetings per year. It was agreed that the officers would set dates for the year in advance. Likely months for meetings would be January (AGM), April, August and November with the first Thursday of the month being suggested. This was to be confirmed.

### 6. Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan

KBB proposed that he and CW continue to be the village representatives (delegates) on the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum and see it right through to the referendum in 2017.

KBB informed the meeting that the MCNP Executive had a proposed formal Constitution for the Forum which would need to be signed by the participating villages at the next MCNP meeting (Wed 13th Jan). KBB and CW had read through it and found nothing contentious. CW suggested it should be emailed to as many as possible so that residents would at least have had sight of it before KBB or CW signed it on behalf of the village. Subject to no objection being raised before the next MCNP meeting it was agreed that the document could be signed on behalf of the village.

KBB went on to say that there was a requirement as part of a due consultation process to keep the village informed about the Neighbourhood Plan and what it means for North Aston. This would be done through a meeting in February or March, when a presentation would be made, including Power Point and other presentational material. To help try and attract as many as possible to this event it was proposed to hold an informal meeting in the Bakery during the daytime followed by an evening meeting at Nicholson’s Barn, on a Thursday. Date to be confirmed.

### 7. Any Other Business

JDT asked whether anything was being done about clearing the road drains – especially outside No’s 7 and 8 – where the cottages

were being severely affected by spray water which was not getting away from the road surface. He felt this needed dealing with urgently. CB said he would contact Highways on behalf of the village.

## Village Fund (Forum)

### 1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Item 4: CB felt that the word 'objection' should be replaced by the word 'review' in order to clarify the meaning of Revd Green's comments. Item 16: CB said he had spoken of the 'road drain', not the 'sump'. Subject to these amendments the Minutes were approved and a copy was duly signed.

### 2. Village Fund Accounts

The balance in the account as of 7/1/16 was £7,016.70. Recent expenditure included £94.62 for two "Twenty's Plenty" signs and £71.76 on wine for the Carols on the Green.

Future expenditure included £135.10 on batteries for the RadarLux; £196.80 for two Speed Watch signs; and £100 for the Speed Watch Speed Gun.

NN asked if marquee hire was still £50 as he had noticed a figure for £60 in the accounts. BR said the last payment had come from the Websters in Middle Aston (formerly of Middle Cottage North Aston). During the discussion it became apparent that there were some monies outstanding for hire of the marquees. It was agreed that NN, as the current keeper of the marquees, should become the new contact for marquee hire and that BR would issue invoices for hire. MP said he would change the contact details in the *North Aston News*.

It was agreed that the Village Hall Fund now be merged back into the Village Fund accounts – completely dis-allocated with no further need for mention.

NN proposed to approve the accounts. Seconded MP.

The accounts were approved unanimously.

### 3. Noticeboard

The second quote for the making of the new Village Notice Board had not yet arrived but TR and BR said they would be very surprised if it were cheaper than the quote NN had obtained.

A discussion was had as to the siting of the new Notice Board. TG proposed that it should remain in the same position as the current Notice Board. This was seconded by GS. A vote was taken with a majority being in favour. MS to speak to Trevor Green-Parkes on this matter. NN was authorised to have a proper working drawing made and to have the Board made, as per the quote obtained by him.

### 4. North Aston News Advertising

There had been no progress on this subject

### 5. Carols on the Green Review

It was agreed this had been a good occasion. NN asked if CB could light the fire a little earlier so that the flames could die down somewhat by the time the singing starts.

JT said he would prefer it if the event could be covered on the Village Insurance as he felt it was really a Village event. BR said she would review the insurance policy. JDT suggested that as the farm policy is with the NFU, which already knows about the North Aston Carols round the Bonfire, maybe the Village could insure the carols through the NFU. JT asked whether it was possible to take out a separate policy to cover just that one specific event.

### 6. Traffic Calming Review

One "Twenty's Plenty" sign had been erected on the same post as the current RadarLux but it was decided that it was not effective enough and it would be trialled in a new position. CB and family were in the process of obtaining the kit for the Speed Watch.

KBB reiterated the fact that Dorchester Group had offered a payment of £3703 on presentation of invoices towards the traffic calming measures. It was thought possible that there may be additional money available for future projects.

### 7. Easter Egg Hunt

RH volunteered to run the annual Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Monday, 28th March, on the Village Green. £50 would be available in advance for purchase of chocolate eggs.

### 8. Village Fête

The date of the fête was confirmed as Saturday 16th July. KBB reiterated his offer to run the fête, but would very much like the village to agree that all the money raised this year should go to the Church. The Church was embarking on some substantial improvements and repairs which would likely cost over £100,000.

### 9. Broadband

NN said he would be happy to talk to Hamish of Peach Pubs regarding the costs of bringing in Broadband. CW commented that Blackthorn had received a grant to bring Broadband on the proviso that they set up an internet café to train up people in using the internet.

### 10. Conservation Area Appraisal

No update as yet.

### 11. Mikron Theatre

Mikron had confirmed Sunday 31 July for a matinee performance. It was agreed that the Big Lunch would take place on the same day. Given a choice of two plays the Meeting chose to request one called *Pure* – a play about chocolate.

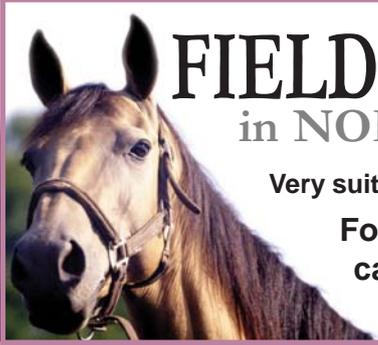
### 12. Any Other Business

CB asked that Norman West be formally thanked for his delivery of the *Newsletter* around the Village.

MP mentioned the state of the Green verge, which had suffered somewhat as a result of a horse box being parked on the opposite side of the road for a while. JDT agreed that some repair work was needed.

### Date for the Next Meeting

A proposed date for the next Meeting was provisionally set for Thursday 7th April 2016 in the Bakery, but this was subsequently amended to Thursday 14th April to avoid a potential clash with school Easter holidays. This will be confirmed nearer the time.



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## Classifieds

### Deddington Farmers' Market

The traditional Farmers' Market in Deddington takes place every 4th Saturday of the month. This month's will be on 27rd February, and North Aston Organics will have a stall.

### Antiques & Collectables!

We are always looking for interesting items to add to our stock of antiques & collectables. If you're moving, having a clear-out or trying to 'de-clutter' your home, then please give us a call or drop us an email. We'd be pleased to have a look and offer a fair price. Old School Antiques.

Telephone: 347356 or email [sales@oldschoolantiques.co.uk](mailto:sales@oldschoolantiques.co.uk).



# The Church MATTERS



February is always a month of great variety: we have both Valentine's and Ash Wednesday, which really does take us across the gamut of emotions! Up one moment, and all over the place the next. If you are one of those lucky people who live out your existence on a permanently even keel, do spare a thought for the rest of us every now and then...

In our worship, it's sometimes a temptation to button-up our true selves in our Sunday Best and hope that the Almighty is as un-noticing as the Rector. The truth is, of course, both scarier and more wonderful than we dare hope: We bring who we are to God, and God loves us.

So St Valentine's Day needn't just be about cards and sweethearts and roses and tables for two; romance and St Valentine have no historical link we know of (Chaucer brought the two together a thousand years after Valentine lived) but now we have the connection, let's use it. Churches are places where people marry and celebrate and find all sorts of wonderful life memories.

Why not join us on February 14th for our Family Service: bring who you are to God, and come for a blessing - especially if you've been married here in the past few years, or plan to be soon.

Ash Wednesday sees the start of Lent. Every year I say - don't just see this as a time to give up chocolate again. Lent is a time to prepare for Easter, for the wonder of God's love revealed as Jesus dies on a cross and rises gloriously on the third day. God's love is seen at Easter to be stronger than all things; Lent is time to spring-clean our souls so we can see this Easter wonder clearly when it comes. Add time to pray, time to help others, time to do something practical for someone else for whom it will mean the world. Don't give up something - do something! Join us at 7.30pm on Ash Wednesday here at St Mary's and make your own commitment to this season.

During Lent we always hold a course; it's on Thursday evenings at the Methodist Church in Tackley, and this year we've chosen ten paintings to help us think about five characters in the Gospel story. Come along - all are welcome, starting 8pm on February 18th.

And when we edge over into March, we have a slight change to our usual plan - the first Sunday in March will be a Family Service as March 6th is Mothering Sunday. Time again for the whole family to come and give thanks together, and I'm thrilled to be able to announce that our *Open the Book* team are once more taking the helm!

I'm thrilled too that our building project is progressing. We want to be a church community that serves our whole village. The open evening we held at the end of January was filled with positive ideas and wonderful contributions from everyone who came - very many thanks to all. I will be keeping everyone informed of what is going on, step by step. There's detail of the meeting in a separate article, but here I want to say that we are reviewing the plans following everyone's terrific ideas, and soon we hope to have members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee visit us so that we can get their input. Then we will be about ready to apply for the permissions we need and start seeking grants too. It will be a bit of a journey, but with goodwill and God's help we will get there.

After all, I started by saying we bring who we are to God, and God loves us. In February, the joy of Valentine's and the Ashes of the following Wednesday show us that God sees us through every mood, and his love remains with us all, always. We will always try to reflect that in all we do.

*Revd Marcus Green*

More news is always available on our website: [www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com).

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



Any comments about the above are very welcome. More news is always available on our website: [www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com)

Please email our Rector Marcus Green: [steeplerector@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:steeplerector@hotmail.co.uk) or tel: 340 903

You can also email Clive: [casb@north-aston.com](mailto:casb@north-aston.com) (tel: 338 434) or Annabel: [annabelbevan@hotmail.com](mailto:annabelbevan@hotmail.com) (tel: 345153)

Any other member of the PCC will also be very happy to talk, and they are: Richard Bailey, Kildare Bourke-Borrowes, Beryl Greenwood, Vicky Taylor, Jenny Martin, Ted Short, Jeremy Taylor and Norman West.

# Village Meeting about St Mary's

Tuesday 26th January 2016

Many thanks to the 25 or so hardy souls who braved the stormy weather and joined us on Tuesday January 26th to hear more about the plans the churchwardens, PCC and I have been working on for our wonderful church building in North Aston.

We began with refreshments and an opportunity to catch up, and then I gave an overview of why we were embarking on the project. It is essential that everyone has access to the church, and a letter came to the PCC asking us to improve this for those who are less mobile. We thought long and hard about this, and as well as the lych gate, the path and the church entrance, we included the idea of a WC in church as part of this. For some, this is a matter of no consequence - for others it is very important.

As we talked, other things were added to our brief. Fellowship is part of worship, and we want to be able to offer refreshment more easily and better. A simple servery - as many local churches have now - seemed a good thing for us to look at. And then we have a couple of storage issues (books, altar frontals) to include. There are two windows in the Anne Chapel that need restoration work, and they have been brought into the project too. But it begins with being here for everyone, because a church should help everyone. The architects then spoke; Jeremy Bell and Katie Duggan of JBKS from Watlington gave an overview of some of their other projects, and took us through the detail of the plans, using a screen and projector so all could see.

Following this, the meeting opened to questions. We did this in three parts. First, people were invited to raise points of clarification. Second, to talk about aspects of the design they particularly liked. And third, everyone was asked to ask questions about anything that troubled them with the project.

The clarification points included questions around the thought processes in the design. For example: if a servery was planned for the corner by the font, had the other 'back corner' in the church been given much consideration, as it wouldn't risk blocking the doorway? Did the font need to be moved (no, though we can ask the question if anyone wants us to, if it will help the process)? The nature of the drainage for the WC (probably trench arch) was asked about, and assurances that the WC would be disabled compliant (it will). Conversation took place around what would happen to the congregation during any building programme, and around costs and fundraising. On the latter, I pointed out that the wardens had done their own costing exercise, the architects had done some preliminary work, but we had not yet gone into detail

with a QS and so we do not have accurate figures. Large enough to need grants, for sure. We are not thinking of achieving this by local fundraising.

Aspects of the design that people liked pretty much covered the whole design. The WC, the lych gate and disabled access there, the suggestion of a new glass door, the servery - all were welcomed. One hesitation was added by one person - if money were no object...

A series of very helpful and practical issues were then brought forward in the final section of the evening. Would the stone used in the window renovations match what is currently there? Would the screen in front of the WC at the west end match the woodwork throughout the church? The architects spoke of their other projects and the conservation experts they use, and of the way they source the right materials. I referred back to the cost question - we are allowing a high cost estimate because we want to use the best materials so that they are appropriate here, and so that they last. A question was asked about sounds, smells, and cleaning of the WC. The example of Tackley in the Benefice is very helpful as it shows how successful a WC can be in a church, and how successfully it can be managed, in a much bigger village.

Sourcing of grants was raised, and the time this might take, and I referred to my previous life as a fundraiser: it's hard work, but within my skill-set. Let's hope I can remember how to do it!

Various technical points about the design were raised through the evening, suggesting alternatives and asking for things to be re-thought. I made a note of all of these, as did our architects. We will take time to go through all of these questions, and we will work through many of them with the help of Diocesan advice. For now, I have asked the architects to put the current plans in church by early February, and I would be delighted if any member of the community wants to look at them. Please ask me or either of our churchwardens if we can help you understand what is there.

Over the years I have undertaken many church projects, but I have to say that this evening was one of - if not *the* most positive, participatory and productive consultation evening I have ever been part of. Thank you to our architects, Jeremy and Katie, our church wardens, and to everyone who came. As a result of this part of the process, I am sure we will make our project even better. Thank you.

More news is available on our website: [www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com).

*Revd Marcus Green*

## Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan

### North Aston and the Neighbourhood Plan

**Important Village Meeting** regarding **Local Development**

Come and hear what is happening and give your views

**Join the Discussion and Have a Voice!**

We are running the meeting twice to get maximum participation so you have two opportunities to join the discussion

**WEDNESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2016**

**10:00 – 12:00 am at The Bakery**

**7:30 pm at Nicholsons' Orchard Barn**

Refreshments will be served at both meetings  
Everyone is very welcome - Save the Date!



# Comment

*This is the first of what could become a regular feature in the News – a column allowing residents to let off steam about issues and concerns that they feel are important, and wish to share with the community – either anonymously, or with a name attached. The views and opinions expressed here may be personal and subjective, and you may, or may not, agree with what's said. That's your prerogative.*

*This recently arrived in my in-box ...*

## High Speed Waste

I'm sure many residents have friends or relatives who will be affected by the proposed route of the HS2 railway. From Aylesbury the line will run east of Bicester, close by the villages of Calvert, Pounden and Tingewick, before veering slightly northwards to curve around Brackley and cut through Sulgrave. From there it will bisect Chipping Warden and Aston le Walls before pressing north-west, shaving Southam and Kenilworth on its run through to Coleshill and into Birmingham.

That means it won't pass especially close to us here in North Aston, so should we be concerned? Perhaps we have some sympathy for those directly affected, but can we do anything about it? Perhaps not, but consider this: in France a similar high speed link is being built, right now, that will join the city of Tours with Bordeaux. It is part of the South Europe Atlantic high-speed rail link that will cut journey times between Paris in the north and Bordeaux on the mid-west coast to a mere two hours. These trains will be travelling at average speeds of around 200 miles an hour, and new track, straight as a die, is required to accommodate them. There has been debate and discussion, and compulsory land purchase, but the engineering works began on time and will be completed on time – maybe even ahead of schedule.

This new French LGV line was first proposed at about the same time as Britain's HSR, yet it will enter service, not in 2025, or 2030, but next year, 2017. Here, in Britain, the first sod has not even been cut, and with public consultation, and debate, and legal challenge, work is unlikely to begin for at least another three years. Completion, even now, isn't scheduled until 2033, but it's sure to slip, and costs will escalate, and for what? We'll have a train service that will be about as useful as an ejector seat in a helicopter, but considerably more expensive.

The key purpose behind the high-speed network is to cut journey times between London and the "Northern Powerhouse" conurbations of Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and, eventually, Scotland, but to whose advantage? We're told it's to benefit corporate executives, keen to attend vital business meetings, further trade, and improve commerce, but they'll never use it. Even now, top-level gatherings are held in virtual boardrooms, with oval tables flanked by monitors and webcams. Attendees sit hundreds of miles apart, conversing in real time and making decisions without even shaking hands.

By the time HS2 and HS3 are completed, in 18 years time (best estimate) even the most modest business will have these same facilities, or vastly better ones, perhaps with holographic



'bodies' sitting round the table, negotiating in virtual space, and with clients, board members and shareholders who probably rarely, if ever, meet face to face. Shaving an hour or so off the journey time between London and the North will simply be an irrelevance. It won't matter. HS2 will be redundant, even before it's built.

Over Christmas I had dinner with one of the HS2 planners, and we had this same conversation. He conceded I was right. "But don't tell anyone," he stressed, "or else I'll be out of a job!" HS2 is needed now ... or not at all. Why waste the money? Cancel the whole thing and spend the money where it's really needed - and I leave you to decide which sector deserves the lion's share of £50 billion.

*Please feel free to reply or submit your own articles for 'Comment' to [info@north-aston.co.uk](mailto:info@north-aston.co.uk).*

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# From Thames Valley Police

*This month's updates and information:*

## **Your Package has been Seized!**

Don't believe it! Fraudsters are sending out emails that claim a package has been seized by HM Revenue & Customs, but the official-looking scam, claiming to be from Royal Mail, contains a link to a document which will install malicious software on your computer.

So, if you receive an email about a package, a delivery, or a consignment that you're not expecting, then don't open it!

Often this kind of email will claim that an order has been despatched, and there is a document attached. Genuine invoices and delivery notes are not sent in Word format - they'll usually come as a PDF attachment, because PDF documents are safer and more reliable. Word documents are not! These can easily include "macros" that mask underlying code that can include viruses and malware.

Similarly, beware any attachments in ZIP format. This innocent (and useful) compression format can hide any manner of alternative file types, and once "unzipped", these can easily prove to be harmful.

Beware any email that instructs you directly to "open" or "download" a file, and be suspicious of any email that addresses you as "Dear Client". If you were a genuine client, the company would know your name.

If you receive one of these emails, do not click on any links or download any attachments and report it to Action Fraud.

Remember, no genuine supplier will ever send an email asking for credit card numbers or other personal information.

If you believe that you have been a victim of fraud you can report it online: [http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report\\_fraud](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report_fraud) or by telephone: 0300 123 2040

## **Theft from a Vehicle - Can you help?**

Overnight between 13th and 14th January 2016 a van was broken into on Broadway, Upper Heyford and items taken. Offenders forced open the rear doors and among items taken were two Makita drills. If you saw anything suspicious, have been offered such items cheaply, or have any information, please contact TVP on the details below and quote Occurrence number 43160012988.

## **Recovery Room Fraud**

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) is warning of the dangers of Recovery Room fraudsters targeting former victims of fraud.

Recovery Room Fraud refers to a scam whereby victims of previous frauds are cold-called by others claiming to be able to recover previous losses. In July 2014 the Financial Services Authority (FSA) estimated that 30% of people who had lost money through Investment fraud would also fall victim to a Recovery Room fraud.

These fraudsters try to legitimise the scam by claiming to be legal professionals or representatives of a government agency. They appear to know personal details about the victim and their previous investment, which adds credibility, although it is suspected these are often the same fraudsters who were behind the original scams, even though many years may have passed. They request advance fees to meet 'local taxes' or 'litigation costs' incurred during the recovery of the funds.



Initially a small fee, typically in the region of £200-400, is requested by the fraudsters which they often claim is refundable as part of a 'no-win no-fee' basis. The fraudsters rely on the victims seeing this as a nominal fee compared to the amounts lost, which often run into the tens-of-thousands of pounds, and therefore seem worth paying if doing so facilitates the return of their money. Subsequently, larger amounts are then requested but, needless to say, no refunds ever materialise and no money is ever recovered.

Beware any cold-caller claiming to be offering help in such circumstances, or suggesting "you recently had an accident" and offering to handle insurance claims for you.

## **Using Caller Display**

Are you plagued by cold-callers? Registering with the Telephone Preference Service does help, but cannot screen all calls, but having a Caller Display option on your phone can be a very useful tool.

If you see a number displayed that you don't recognise, or is withheld, or originates from an international number, pick up by all means, but say nothing. Wait for the caller to speak, but still say nothing. Depending upon what the caller says, if anything, decide if it's a call you wish to take. If it is not, simply remain silent, and they will ring off and be less likely to call again. Respond at all and they will mark your number as 'live', and not only call back, but possibly distribute your number to others.

## **Community Policing Awards**

Nominations are now open for Thames Valley's Community Policing Awards 2016. This is your chance to recognise the work done by community officers, volunteers and police staff who work in your area.

If you know someone who has gone above and beyond in their role, and you think should be recognised for their hard work and effort, then please submit your recommendations before the deadline on 22nd February.

There are seven categories: Community Police Officer; Police Community Support Officer; Special Constable; Volunteer; Diversity Champion; Cadet; Victim Support Award

To nominate please visit <http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk> and follow the link to the Community Policing Awards pages.

## **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.

# Councillor Calling



## Planning!

Some good news (for a change!) to start the year. The 2015 annual monitoring report we have to produce to show how the District is doing against the government's housing supply targets reveals that we are achieving the vital 5-year supply. In fact, projecting forward for three 5-year periods, 2014-19 shows 5.1 years, 2015-2020 shows 5.3 years and 2016 to 2021 shows 5.8 years supply. Such an increasing trajectory with a wide margin for error, slippage and mishap makes the figures even more secure. This is vital as aggressive developers routinely challenge the whole basis of these figures (like any future projections, they rely on assumptions which can always be questioned) in planning appeals – though the last such challenge, during the recent Kirtlington appeal, was turned down flat by the Inspector.

The reason all this arcane figure work matters to you, me and developers is that, with an adopted Local Plan and 5-year housing projections above target, planning applications have to be in accordance with District plans to be approved: without them, there is a “presumption in favour” of unbridled development. So this is good news in that it gives our villages some protection.

## MCNP

Neighbourhood Plans form part of the Local Plan, once finalised, and therefore this also gives them substantial weight – or should do. This is important for all those putting effort into our Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan to protect our villages. So it was extremely disappointing when a Planning Inspector overturned Cherwell's decision to refuse 54 houses in Hook Norton because they didn't fit Hooky's Neighbourhood Plan. We think the Inspector was wrong in law by not applying the NP's stipulation that no more than 20 houses should be built in one place at one time. We are therefore going to challenge this in court: it will be expensive but the principle that NP's should be followed is so important, for Mid Cherwell especially, that it is worth the price.

## Challenging Projections

“Need not Greed” is the combative name of another challenge, this time made by a number of conservation bodies led by CPRE (the Campaign to Protect Rural England: I declare an interest, as a member) who are challenging a body called the Local Economic Partnership over their projections for Oxfordshire's jobs and housing. Although the LEP includes Council leaders, including Cherwell's, its members are mainly appointees from business interests and it meets in private without published minutes, which seems dodgy. Despite this, Inspectors treat its figures as sacrosanct, driving the ridiculously inflated housing numbers now being inflicted on Bicester, Banbury and Upper Heyford. So, although this is a bit of a conflict of interest for me, I am glad to see the LEP's processes and housing numbers challenged and will watch *Need not Greed* with interest.

## Accolades Build!

Building isn't always bad, of course, when it's in the right place. Cherwell has been picking up accolades for its *Build!* scheme of “self build” homes. This is where people get homes at more affordable prices by doing some or all of the work themselves (the rather unattractive term “sweat equity”!). There are four levels available depending on the site:

- **final finish** involves just decorating and outside landscaping
- **self finish** involves a lot more: fixtures and fittings, doors, walls and ceilings, kitchens and bathrooms as well. These first two are suited to flat refurbishments in town centres and urban regeneration.
- **watertight shell** means you do everything inside, all internal structures, partitions, plumbing and wiring. You are more likely to find this in villages and on new estates around the edges of towns.
- **serviced plot** is the ultimate self build, as on Graven Hill in Bicester. All you get is planning permission and utilities up to the boundary.

Obviously, all of this needs a lot of skill as well as sweat, so there is a lot of support available both to ensure the projects work and that the end results are safe and comply with Building Regulations. The reason I mention this is that we've had two plots in Steeple Aston in the *Build!* programme and there is huge interest from people around here in the Graven Hill site so, if you'd got the time and want to use that in place of money, have a look on the Cherwell DC website.

**James Macnamara**  
Tel: 01869 340109

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



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# CHURCH SERVICES

## PARISH WORSHIP IN FEBRUARY-MARCH 2016

**NORTH ASTON**

**STEEPLE ASTON**

**TACKLEY**

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### Sunday February 7th - Fifth & Last Sunday after Epiphany

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9:30 am  
Holy Communion  
*Book of Common Prayer*  
**Revd Marcus Green and  
Richard Bailey**

11:00 am  
Holy Communion  
*Snowdrop Sunday*  
Book of Common Prayer  
**Revd Marcus Green and  
Richard Bailey**

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

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### Wednesday February 10th - Ash Wednesday

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7:30 pm  
*Ash Wednesday*  
Holy Communion  
**Revd Marcus Green and  
Canon Robin Gibbons**

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### Sunday February 14th - First Sunday in Lent

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9:30 am  
Family Service  
**Revd Marcus Green**

11:00 am  
Family Service and Baptism  
**Revd Marcus Green**

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

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### Sunday February 21st - Second Sunday in Lent

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9:30 am  
Holy Communion  
**Revd Marcus Green**

11:00 am  
Holy Communion  
**Revd Marcus Green**

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

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### Sunday February 28th - Third Sunday in Lent

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9:30 am  
Morning Prayer  
**Revd Marcus Green**

11:00 am  
Holy Communion  
**Revd Marcus Green**

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

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### Sunday March 6th - Fourth Sunday in Lent, Mothering Sunday

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9:30 am  
Family Service  
*Open the Book*

11:00 am  
Family Service  
*Open the Book*

5:30 pm  
Informal Service  
United Service with Tackley  
Methodist Church  
**Canon Robin Gibbons**

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

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

Visit the Benefice Website for further information [www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com)

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