

NORTH ASTON

NEWS

December 2017

#326



NORTH ASTON NEWS

DECEMBER 2017, No:326

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The Chairman's Mark

Meetings & Forums

Please make sure that you read the Minutes of the last Village Forum, as it will save me from having to repeat things in this column. However, I will reiterate that the need for a Treasurer has now become urgent, as we must have someone ready to take over after our AGM on 11th January. Just think how good you'll feel, knowing you've done your bit for your community! (Please contact Mark for more information or to volunteer.)

Christmas Gift for Senior Citizens

On following up the suggestion at The Forum that we offer a communal lunch for all senior citizens at the Yurt in January, it seems it would not be universally popular and so we will offer a voucher for tea/coffee and cake instead and then people can go at their leisure.

Thanks

As another year comes to a close I would like to thank Marcus for his dedication and hard work in producing The North Aston News; to Niel and Liz Nicholson for printing it; and to Norman for delivering it, come rain or shine.

I wish everybody a peaceful Christmas and if we can all keep spreading the Goodwill around we'll end up with a virtuous circle. We can but try!

Mark

Telephone: 01869 347 806 ~ email: chair@north-aston.co.uk

Village Meeting & AGM

Thursday January 11th
The Old Bakery from 7:30 pm

This is the date for our one-and-only Village Meeting of the year. Central to this is the appointment of Officers. There are just three; a Chair, a Secretary and a Treasurer. So far we have nominations for the first two, but we still need a volunteer to take on the role of Treasurer. It will demand about 2 hours a month, a brief comment at Forum gatherings and the AGM, and administration of the floats and takings at the annual Village fête. This is probably the most demanding task, but also the one that's the most straightforward and rewarding. If you can add up, keep a neat 'book', and sign a cheque, this is the job for you. If you don't, North Aston risks becoming 'absorbed' into the Parish Council for either Duns Tew or Steeple Aston. If that happens, our precept will rise significantly and, with it, your council tax. Please think about it! Subjects for the Agenda will be published in next month's News.



The winners of the November draw were:

1st Prize (£10): B. Greenwood (#111)

2nd Prize (£5): Mrs Walkerdene (#37)

Contact Norman (340368) for further details of the 100 Club. Remember ...

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

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

North Aston Choir

Rehearsals by the North Aston Choir for the annual Carol Service, are now under way, but it's not too late to join! Practice takes place at The Old Vicarage every Thursday at 7pm, through to the Carol Service on December 17th.

Everyone is welcome, and no experience is required, just enthusiasm! You'll also have the pleasure of talented accompaniment from professional musician Howard Ionascu, who has recently moved into the village.

Any questions please contact Miranda on 340625

& Carol Service

17th December

Once again The North Aston Carol Singers will attempt to sing to every house in the village (including all outposts).

Please reward their efforts by donating generously to *Restore* (supporting mental health in Oxfordshire), *Banbury Young Homeless Project* and *Homestart* (Helping young families in Oxfordshire).

The Singers will be in action over the course of three days. They will set out on Saturday 16th, Sunday 17th and Monday 18th December. If you do not wish to open your door but would like to support the charities, please leave an envelope outside. Thank you. If you would like to join the singers, meet in The Bakery at 5.00 pm Saturday and 6.00 pm Sunday and Monday.



Saturday 16th, Sunday 17th & Monday 18th

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
visit the website at:

www.northastonorganics.co.uk

December Birthdays

Paul Brown

Stefan Liberadski

Joyce Morley

Joshua Potts ~ Tony Rees

Caroline West & Peter West



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.

Announcements

Christmas at Nicholsons

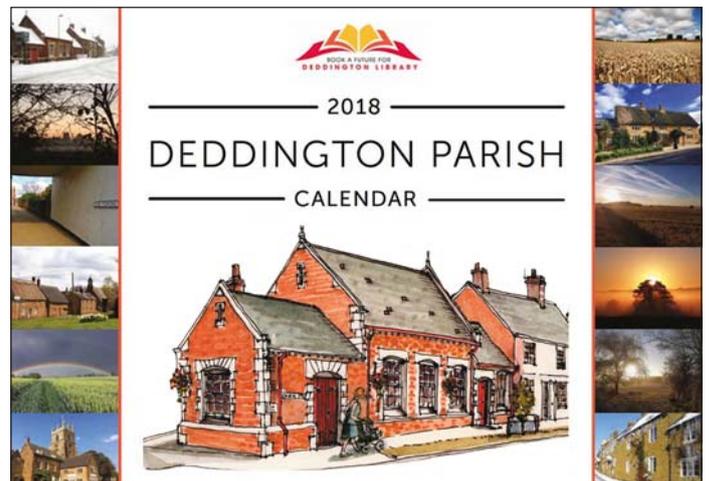
Nicholsons will celebrate friendship and festivities on Saturday December 2nd with *Christmas at Nicholsons*. Pop along to the Nursery to enjoy a lovely day filled with entertainment, live music, food, drink and artisan-inspired shopping.

You'll be able to explore the ROSARA showroom and visit the Yurt, while local craftspeople and traders will be offering unique, unusual and inspiring wares and gift ideas. Nicholsons will be partnered by the *Oxford Christmas Company*, who will be selling Christmas Trees, decorations, lighting and baubles.

The event will be open from 11:00 am through to 7:00 pm.

Deddington Farmers' Market

The Deddington Farmers' Market takes place every 4th Saturday of the month, and in December will be on the 22nd. Why not get a copy of the new 2018 Deddington Calendar while you're at it!



Calendars are also available direct from the Library.

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

December is here and it has started to turn properly cold. We have had a few small frosts, but nothing much really for the time of year.

I did a job for an old lady last week and she was telling me that she had read somewhere that it is going to be the coldest winter on record. Well, we will see won't we! Personally I doubt it.

Fred, my old best friend, saw an otter swimming down the canal at Somerton last month, and said that was a good sign. It shows the canal is healthy, although what I think it really shows is that they are hungry and looking wherever they can for food.



I spent a whole day fishing the river near deep lock a couple of weeks ago and caught very little. What with Cormorants, Crayfish and now Otters I don't think our little river Cherwell can cope with so many predators. Once again, time will tell. As always, Nature will select what creatures to keep and what to get rid of, and these things always sort themselves out if we leave them to it and don't get involved.

Walking along the river on the day I went fishing, I put up five Common Snipe, one after the other. I haven't seen any for a few years, though we do seem to get a good few Jack Snipe, which are smaller.

I set up on a big bend and, after an hour or so, saw a Snipe in the air, then another joined it, then another ... and another, until all five were flying and twisting together. Soon they came down towards the river a hundred or so yards from me and dropped like bricks out of the sky. I thought they'd gone down onto the muddy flat bit further downstream, but then a few seconds later, they came screaming around the bend of the river just inches above the water and just feet from me. It was a wonderful and close sighting - a true *wisp of snipe*.

We now have lots of Fieldfares around us that fly along and chatter as we walk along the hedgerows. They are a very attractive bird when you watch them through binoculars, and very communal too.

Our blackbird population seems to have grown even larger than usual this winter. I think some may be migrants.



Wendy, Penny and I have had three good river walks this month but have seen very few Peewits yet. They are Wendy's favourite bird. I wonder why?

We had another good walk on a Monday; from our house to the pub at Souldern. On the way, while walking alongside the flood meadows, we had four Stonechats flying along the fence in front of us, flitting from post to post. I love to see them - they're quite characterful birds.

We have mice moving in with us at the moment; making nests in my workshop and the other sheds we have. There's a rat down in our compost heap as well, although hopefully only one! Like most people, I can tolerate mice, but hate rats with a vengeance. So, I'm afraid war has broken out at Number 18 The Green! I will keep you posted with the results.

I'm pleased to report that George, the one-eared rabbit, is still about. He's matured into a fine big rabbit, so let's hope he makes it through the winter.

A very happy Christmas to all! I'm looking forward to a few days off work and some more daylight walks. From all at Number 18, Seasons Greetings!

Steve, Wendy & Penny

Golly Gosh Gifts



... Surprise Someone!

Useful and affordable gifts and accessories for the whole family. Press 'click and collect' at checkout for free delivery to your door or call Jane on 01869 347504 to come and view the range at North Aston's very own gift shop!



Solve those Christmas present dilemmas and visit:

www.gollygoshgifts.com

North Aston Village Forum

Wednesday 15th November 2017 ~ Notes

Those present: Mark Stay (MS) (Chairman), Beverly Rees (BR) (Treasurer), James Taylor (JT) (Secretary), Mary Healy (MH), Jeremy Taylor (JDT), Mike Kerford-Byrnes (MKB) (Local CDC Councillor), Linda Brown (LB), Trudy Busby (TB), Clive Busby (CB), Robert Hite (RH), Tony Rees (TR), Tuck Hatzigeorgiou (TH), Niel Nicholson (NN), Marcus Potts (MP), Annie Savage (AS), Tony Buxton (AB), David Hannah (DH) and Clare Hathaway (CH).

Introduction

MS welcomed MKB, who introduced himself as one of our three local Cherwell District Councillors serving the Deddington Ward. The ward consists of some thirteen parishes stretching from Fritwell in the East to Hook Norton in the west. The ward is shared by three Councillors; Bryn Williams, Mike Kerford-Byrnes and Hugo Brown, and is divided into three areas. Whilst our area is served by Bryn Williams, he was unable to attend our meeting, hence MKB came in his place. MKB made the point that should Bryn Williams be unavailable either of the other two Councillors would always be available to be contacted over any issues. MS filled in MKB on the nature of our Village Meetings – three informal forums and one official Village Meeting per year.

Accounts

The Village Meeting account stood at £3430-68. The accounts had been audited and approved. MKB raised an eyebrow at the amount of money in the Village Meeting Account – seeing that we had an annual precept of only £600. Only if one is saving for something (in our case the possibility of kerbing the village green) should there be significantly more in the account than the total precept.

The Village Fund Account stood at £8262

BR said that the profit for the Fête was £3390.39 and that a cheque had been paid to the North Aston PCC. CB on behalf of the PCC thanked the Village for the contribution which had been gratefully received.

MS asked if there were any takers for the up-coming post of Treasurer. All nominations should be in by the end of November.

Harvest Lunch

This had been a well-attended event and much enjoyed by all. Special thanks were given to AS for her work in encouraging people to attend. It was very nice to see new arrivals in the Village coming to introduce themselves and join in.

Christmas - Carols on the Green

Following a meeting with his insurance provider, JT was reminded of the terms of cover regarding this event. He was concerned about his liability should the terms not be adhered to and declared his wish that the Village take on insuring this event in the future, as it does for the fête.

It was agreed that the Village would look into insuring the event from next year but it would remain under JT's policy for this year. The desire for a simple festive gathering around a bonfire with the necessary health and safety and due diligence required by insurers is a sensitive balancing act.

Main points for this year - It was agreed that we needed a nominated steward or two to keep an eye on proceedings. CB was happy to take on that role. The fire should be lit well before the event starts so that there are no high flames that could be a hazard should the wind change. CB said he would never light the fire if the wind was blowing towards the thatched cottages. Some fire extinguishers needed to be on site. The fire would be roped off as always.

It was agreed that ...

- Five vats of mulled wine would be provided this year.
- Mince pies would be gratefully received.
- There would be a low key charity bucket
- More carol sheets would be printed if possible.
- Any musical instruments would be a bonus!

Christmas - Presents for Senior Citizens

A discussion was had over the offering of a meal at The Yurt (by kind invitation of NN) instead of the usual Christmas gifts. This was deemed to be a nice idea and would be investigated.

Christmas - Children's Party

CH said she would be happy to help if one was to be organised, but it was thought that there were not enough children of the appropriate age for a children's party this year.

Christmas - Village Wassail

This would happen on the same weekend as the Carol Service but spread over three days. The afternoon of Saturday 16th December for the out-lying houses, one half of the village after the Carol Service on the 17th, and the other half on the evening of Monday 18th. A discussion was had as to which charities to support. It was agreed to support BYHP (Banbury Young Homelessness Project) and Restore (an Oxfordshire based mental health charity).

Undergrounding Cables

JDT told the meeting that SSE had a scheme for undergrounding cables in areas such as AONBs. He asked the village if he could pursue the potential undergrounding of the cables through the village. For a conservation village these are quite an eyesore, and JDT showed photos of *before* and *after* following recent burial of cables through land north of the Green – much nicer without the cables. MP said the village he goes to in France has had the cables buried. Maybe it would be a chance to replace the copper cable and introduce high speed fibre to individual properties. The meeting voted in favour of supporting JDT looking into this.

Defibrillator

MS asked the village to vote in favour or not of getting a defibrillator. The meeting voted in favour and MS said he would get the ball rolling.

Any Other Business

CB said that one of the Speed Monitors was not working and it was agreed that he could purchase two more batteries.

Date for Village Meeting & AGM

The date for the next Meeting and AGM was set for 11th January 2018 at the Old Bakery.



Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

Many thanks to all who donated so generously this year. A record £522.94 was raised in the village, including a couple of letters through Norman's letterbox. This is almost 10% of all money raised by Deddington RBL. Thank you!

From Thames Valley Police

A brief round-up of this month's updates:

The number and variety of these items seems to grow month by month, and we publish only those that might be relevant to North Aston residents. Do you read them? Are they helpful? Please let me know.

Outbuildings & Sheds

With the weather turning colder, it's likely you are spending less time outside or in the garden. Garages and sheds can be full of expensive tools that can easily be stolen or used to break into the house. Many are unprotected and lack even basic security, making them a prime target for burglars.

Never leave a garage or shed unlocked, especially if it has a connecting door to the house. These doors should be treated the same as an external door and be fitted with strong locks.

For extra security make sure doors are strong and secure enough not to be kicked in. Fit strong padlocks and hardware, with locks or bars to windows. Secure tools and machinery with anchor posts and install a battery or mains-powered shed alarm. Mark all tools and machinery with your postcode and register them on Immobilise. Replace external screws with anti-tamper screws. Don't fall victim to opportunist burglars!

Shopping On-line

With Christmas coming up, many of us will be buying gifts on-line. Now's the time to be doubly wary of your on-line security and browsing habits!

Check the web address. Always check you're on the correct website. Criminals can set up fake websites that have a similar design and web address to the genuine site.

Is it a secure connection? Web pages where you enter personal or financial details should always display a "locked padlock" symbol in the URL line and have a web address that starts with https.



Phishing. Don't click on links or attachments within unsolicited emails. The number of online shopping related phishing emails increases significantly during the holidays.

Bank Transfers. 65% of Action Fraud reports during the 2016 Christmas period were linked to online auction sites. Don't pay for goods or services by bank transfer unless you know and trust the person. Payments via bank transfer offer you no protection if you become a victim of fraud - use a system like PayPal, and always look for the padlock symbol.

NTS Call Blockers!

Scammers take advantage of the most vulnerable members of our communities. Do you know someone living with dementia who is receiving lots of unnecessary calls? *Friends Against Scams* is offering a limited number of free Call Blockers. To see if they qualify, search for the *Friends Against Scams* website. For advice on preventing or avoiding fraud, email fraudprevention@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Burglaries on the Rise

Unfortunately we have had a increase in burglaries in the Bicester and North Oxfordshire area. The preferred means of entry seems to be via patio doors, both secured (by smashing the glass with garden ornaments and loose stones) and insecure. Please be vigilant! Keep doors and windows locked, even when at home, secure back and side gates, lock garages, and watch over vulnerable neighbours.

Phone Scam

TVP warn that members of the public have been receiving phone calls from people claiming to be from the HMRC. The calls (from 020 numbers) claim that arrest warrants have been sent out for Tax Fraud. This is a scam! Do not engage or relay any personal details to these callers, and if you have elderly or vulnerable relatives, please make them aware.

If you've been affected by any kind of fraud, report it to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.



Last month at Park Farm we competed in our own Halloween Bake-Off, and made lots of yummy cakes while the staff dressed up as Mary Berry and Paul Hollywood!

We have started the new school term and celebrated *Children in Need* by dressing up in our Pudsey onesies! We continued supporting charities all throughout the month by collecting and donating items to 'The Homeless Period,' a charity which helps supply homeless women with sanitary items, and we also held an afternoon tea for other homes in the area to help raise money for *Lemn Sissay's Christmas Charity*.

We also had our Ofsted inspection in November, which went really well. The inspector spoke to the staff and the young people on-site and had a look at all the lovely things we do for the girls! Everything was very positive and we are very proud of our home for achieving all these positive things!

We have also started to have in-house theme nights so that each young person gets the chance to cook a three-course meal based on a specific country, one night a week. This is going really well and our local PCSO has also been over to sample some of the food. So far we have done an Italian night, a Mexican night and an American night, but we have lots more to come!

Here at Park Farm we are also starting to get into the Christmas Spirit. We decorated cards to enter into the company's own competition and we have written our Christmas lists to Santa. We are also really looking forward to *Carols on the Green* again this year!



Councillor Calling



As Christmas fast approaches it's a good time to reflect on another year in our wonderful community of North Aston. Thank you for your support throughout the year and for listening to our ramblings. The Deddington Three (Councillors) have enjoyed representing you at Cherwell and look forward to continuing in 2018.

The past month has been dominated by the news that CDC is to acquire the current Castle Quay shopping centre and also the Castle Quay 2 development. It is indeed a considerable commitment that CDC does not take lightly, considering it is ultimately public money. However, it will ensure that the centre of Banbury can develop at the rate that we all wish as opposed

to having a third party in charge who may decide to redevelop Castle Quay in some other way that's not conducive to the long term plans of CDC. The decision on whether to proceed will be made at December's full council meeting on the 18th. Before that though, on December 7th, we'll hear the outcome of the independent review on the fate of the Horton at the Royal Court of Justice in London. Many of us will be attending on the day as a show of support and hopefully to hear a positive outcome.

In the meantime, my fellow CDC Councillors and I would like to wish you all a very happy and enjoyable Christmas with family and loved ones and look forward to a healthy and peaceful New Year. Thank you for your support.

Bryn Williams

Deddington Ward Councillor

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

Our other Deddington Ward District Councillors are:

Mike Kerford-Byrnes

Email: Cllr.Mike.KerfordByrnes@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Hugo Brown

Email: Hugo.Brown@Cherwell-DC.gov.uk

Make a difference every day – become a Care Worker

Oxfordshire urgently needs more compassionate Care Workers to support vulnerable members of our community.

If you want a flexible and rewarding job helping other people, then Care Work could be for you.

You will receive all the training you need. The most important thing for employers is that you are caring, friendly and reliable.

There are opportunities across the county so you can find a job that's close to home.

You can work the hours that suit you - there are options to choose a fixed hours contract or a flexible contract.

There are lots of different roles in social care depending on what you want to do, who you want to work with, and where you'd like to work. You could be supporting an older person, someone with a physical disability, autism, dementia or a mental health condition. You could be working in a Care Home, out in your local community, in a hospital or from someone's home.

Interested? Visit oacp.org.uk/jobs for job opportunities and to find out more about working in care.

Anita, 46 - Care Worker

'I would definitely recommend this job – it's different every day, you're learning all the time and you're making a difference. You can make people smile when other people can't.'



Merry Christmas



The Church MATTERS



Christmas - a Time for Challenge

Bishop Steven, our new Bishop of Oxford, is asking all churches to look at the Beatitudes (the verses at the start of the Sermon on the Mount in St Matthew's Gospel) and think about what it means to be "a more Christ-like Church". I talked about this on Remembrance Sunday. He's challenging us to be more Contemplative - taking worship very seriously; to be more Compassionate - genuinely caring for those around us; and to be Courageous - stepping out in faith.

Christmas is a good time for this challenge.

Angels sang, calling shepherds to worship with Mary and Joseph in a stable. Wise men fell to their knees when they saw Jesus. True worship isn't only about words we may say or sing - it's about the attitude of our hearts. Their hearts were suddenly changed that first Christmas; we are invited to re-read the familiar words of the story and ask - Why?

Mary and Joseph at first had nowhere to call their own, but someone found room for them. They showed compassion - and that act of hospitality, in the rush and busy-ness of Christmas remind us that caring always matters. Even when we don't feel up to it.

And Mary herself, so young and innocent, stepped out in faith when she was invited to be a part of God's story, bringing his Son into the world. She was genuinely courageous: not everyone believed she had heard from God, but she held firm.



Over the weeks ahead we will listen many times to the tale of Jesus being born, of angels and wise men and Mary and Joseph and of God's love living in our midst. I suppose Bishop Steven's invitation is to listen in a way that wonders - and what do we do about that?

Well, of all the gifts we give at this time of year, the gift of a few precious moments of peace (so that we find time to ask God into our hearts to help us) may be one of the most precious. I hope everyone knows that the Church is open every day so that anyone can slip in and find that time if they would like to.

And I hope that as we enjoy our village Christmas services - the Carol Service on December 17th, the Carols on the Green here and First Communion of Christmas at Steeple Aston on Christmas Eve, our glorious Christmas Morning service and all the rest - we might all find enough of the love of Jesus shining through the familiar words and music that we find ourselves surprised by becoming (in the Bishop's words) more "Christ-like". With bigger hearts. With bigger spirits. Finding God and loving each other. With faith renewed.

For I have a suspicion that if perhaps in the silence and the music and the words and the colours of Christmas, we take the time to really listen carefully (alone or all together), we may just sense how close God has come in Jesus. And a familiar prayer from a children's Christmas carol might help us along the way as we try to follow Bishop Steven's call:

"Be near me Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay close by me forever, and love me, I pray." Revd Marcus Green

Our Christmas Services are all on the Rota in the Magazine; Bible Study is on most Mondays at 2pm, and there will be Morning Prayer on Thursday Dec 7th at 10am. More news is always available on our website: www.sntchurch.com.



Any comments about the above are very welcome. More news is always available on our website: www.sntchurch.com
Please email our Rector Marcus Green: steeplerector@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 340 903
You can also email Clive: casb@north-aston.com (tel: 338 434) or Annabel: annabelbevan@hotmail.com (tel: 345153)
Any other member of the PCC will also be very happy to talk, and they are: Richard Bailey, Beryl Greenwood, Vicky Taylor, Jane McArdle, Ted Short, Jeremy Taylor and Norman West.



CHURCH SERVICES

PARISH WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

NORTH ASTON

STEEPLE ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday December 3rd 2017 - First Sunday of Advent

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

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer
Revd Marcus Green

5:30 pm
Informal Service for Advent Sunday
**Revd Marcus Green and
Canon Robin Gibbons**

Wednesday December 6th 2017 - St Nicholas' Day

No Service

No Service

3:30 pm
Christingle with Tackley CE School
Revd Marcus Green

Sunday December 10th 2017 - Second Sunday of Advent

9:30 am
Family Service
Revd Marcus Green

11:00 am
Family Service
Revd Marcus Green

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

Sunday December 17th 2017 - Third Sunday of Advent

4:00 pm
Carol Service
Revd Marcus Green

6:00 pm
Carol Service
Revd Marcus Green

5:30 pm
Carol Service
**Canon Robin Gibbons and
Revd Geoffrey Hunter**

Sunday December 24th 2017 - Christmas Eve

9:30 am
Morning Prayer
Revd Marcus Green

4:00 pm
Crib Service
Revd Marcus Green

4:00 pm
Crib Service
Canon Robin Gibbons

6:00 pm
Carols on the Green

10:00 pm
First Communion of Christmas
Revd Marcus Green

11:30 pm
Midnight Communion
**Revd Marcus Green and
Canon Robin Gibbons**

Monday December 25th 2017 - Christmas Day

9:00 am
Holy Communion & Carols
Revd Marcus Green

10:30am
Holy Communion & Carols
Revd Marcus Green

10:30 am
Holy Communion & Carols
Revd Clare Hayns
Chaplain of Christ Church Oxford

Sunday December 31st 2017 - First Sunday after Christmas

No Service

11:00 am
Morning Prayer & Carols, Baptism
Revd Marcus Green

No Service

North Aston News

The *North Aston News* is designed and produced by CMC Graphics, printed by Nicholsons of North Aston, and distributed monthly, free of charge, to all the residents of the Parish of North Aston. A full-colour edition in electronic format is also available and is mailed out to an extensive emailing list every month. To be added to that list, please contact the *News*. We welcome contributions, which need to be in an electronic format (except Classifieds and Announcements). To submit an item, please email: info@north-aston.co.uk.