

NORTH ASTON

News

October 2024

#408



NORTH ASTON NEWS

OCTOBER 2024, No:408

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Out of Hours Doctor: 111 or 08453 458 995

Notes from the Chair

Having predicted, or perhaps hoped for, an Indian summer of September, we had instead the worst continuous downfall of rain that I can remember. So I think I will stop mentioning the weather in the hope that something nice may happen. I have never seen the water so deep over the road down in the valley.

There is a Village Meeting early in November which gives us the chance to thank Eve for all her hard work as secretary and welcome any offers to succeed her in the role. Along with all the other usual interesting topics of discussion. The full agenda is included below. In the meantime – stay dry. Best wishes,

Christopher

You can phone Christopher on 340358

or you can email him using: chair@north-aston.co.uk

Village Meeting, 4th November - Agenda

There will be a Village meeting in the Old Bakery* on Monday 4th November 2024, starting at 7:00 pm. The Agenda is as follows:

Formal Business

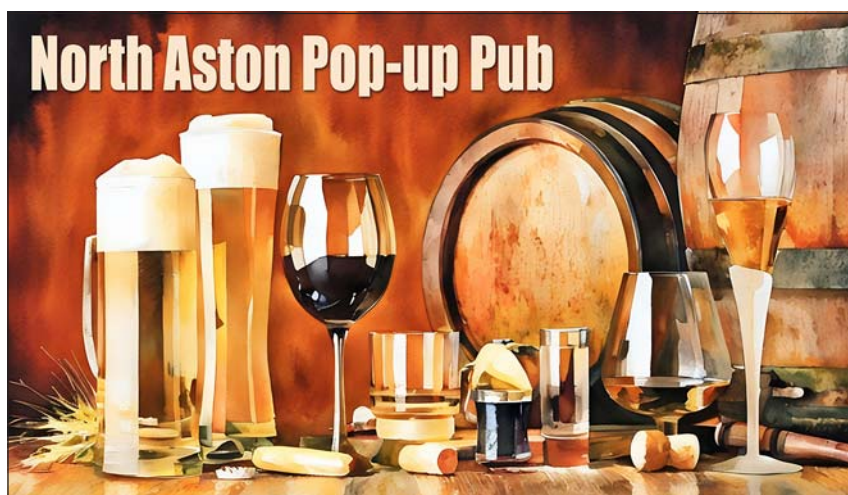
1. Welcome.
2. Approval of Minutes from previous Village Meetings on 23 April and 19 June 2024.
3. Treasurer's report and update on bank account.
4. Election of Officers at AGM January 2025
5. Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Review, update.
5. Traffic update.

Informal Business

6. Christmas activities & events
7. Any other business
9. Date of next meeting

If there are other topics that you'd like to have raised at the Meeting, please contact the Secretary – details on the left.

* Venue to be confirmed in the next edition of the News.



"The weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful ..."

It's the time of year to settle down by the woodburner with a glass of something warming - so come along to the Bakery on the first Friday of the month, and share a convivial evening in the company of friends.

These will be informal gatherings where you bring your own drinks and nibbles, but if your cupboard is bare, there will be some to share, so don't let that stop you. The first date for your diary is October 4th, followed by November 1st and December 6th, starting at 7 pm. If it proves popular, then we'll look at continuing through into the New Year. We want to get together!

North Aston Hall following restoration, including reinstatement of roofline and chimneys.

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

Planning

All quiet this month, with no fresh applications relating to the village. You can check for the latest status by searching for "North Aston" on the CDC Planning Register web page at www.planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/

North Aston Hall, St Mary's Walk, OX25 6AA. A decision relating to the application to begin internal works to the Hall was scheduled for 1st October, so may have been declared by the time you read this. Ref: 24 / 02154 / F and 24 / 02155 / LB



All will be welcome at the Harvest Festival service in St Mary's on October 13th. The church will be beautifully decorated as usual to reflect the local harvest, with hot drinks, cake and chat to follow the service. (Cake offerings welcome!)

There will also be a special 'Children's Window' in the church, and any youngsters who would like to come along and help set this up will be very welcome. They should head down to the church on Saturday 12th October at 10:30 am and bring items to decorate the window, such as Fruit, Flowers, Conkers and colourful Fallen Leaves ... as well as anything else from nature's bounty that they like the look of! Their own harvest-themed artworks and creations would be a perfect addition.

For further information, please contact Vicky.



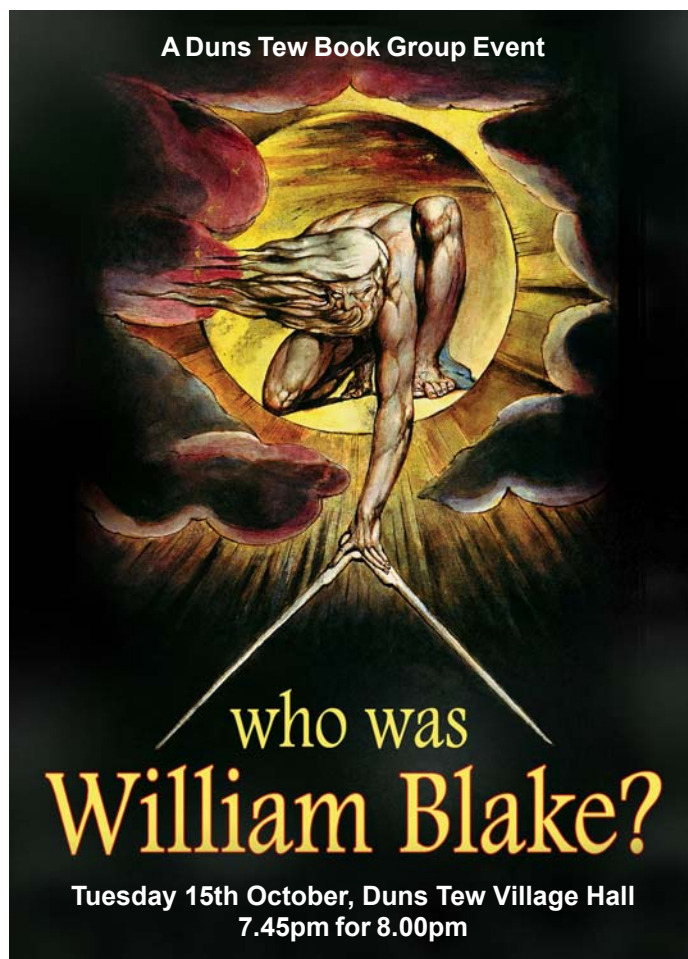
100 CLUB

August's winners were:

1st Prize (£10): Miranda Doggett (#15)
2nd Prize (£5): Tony Rees (#26)

Congratulations! Every month, two lucky winners get drawn out of the hat. If you'd like to learn more about the 100 Club, please contact Bev: Telephone 347434 or email info@north-aston.co.uk.

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



Helen Bruder, an enthusiast for Blake's art and who's written a feminist study of his poetry and co-edited books which celebrate his amazing creativity, will share her thoughts.

Wine, soft drinks and nibbles will be available for a small donation. This event is free, but please book in at stephanielacey34@icloud.com so that the organisers know how many chairs to set out.

OXFORD CERAMICS Fair 2024

26 - 27 October 2024
Christie Centre
St Edward's School
Oxford
OX2 7NZ

www.oxfordceramicsfair.com

Tickets: £6.50
Concessions £5.00
Under 16 free

CERAMIC REVIEW  **Craft Potters Association**



North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

Hello all! My apologies, but a shorter note this month, as we were away for the best part of September.

We drove down to the Pyrenees to go mountain biking. On the way down we were wondering about the type of flora and fauna we would see, as there seemed to be a complete lack of wildlife on our journey south through France. We saw very few birds, no deer, and not a single rabbit!



The first thing we did notice when we got there, and went for a walk to stretch our legs after the longest drive I have ever done, was that there were lots of mushrooms, in a huge variety of colours and sizes. The local market also had a good choice of them for sale, so we

bought a kilo of Ceps and Chanterelles, which we devoured on toast with a little oil. What a treat they were too!

The next day we went for our first bike climb up the foothills of the mountains. At one high point we stopped for food and water, and gazed up at the proper mountain range that stretched away in front of us. There was snow on the tops, and so different from our views at home.

Up above we could see huge birds, their wings out-stretched. They were literally not moving at all, seemingly just floating on the wind. Later that afternoon we took a drive all the way to the top, got out, and then we could see them again, but now they were below us. They were enormous! So vast that you almost couldn't believe their size. One folded its wings and dived down through the cloud and out of sight. We checked later, and discovered that they were Bearded Vultures.

They're quite common in southern France, with a wingspan of over three metres, making our Buzzards back home look like pigeons. What a wonderful sight they were!



Another thing we saw was lots of were lizards. They're very common all over Europe but, again, not so in England.

Chatting in a bar to an old expat who's lived there for years, he said we had just missed the Hoopoes. They'd passed through a couple of



All photos by Stephen & Wendy

weeks previously on their migration south for winter. That would have been something special, as I have never seen one.

The main thing we wanted to tell you though was the amazing number of Swallows and House Martins that we saw. Just above our little village, every afternoon, we watched as hundreds and hundreds circled around, chasing insects. I haven't seen House Martins at home for ages, so it was a lovely sight for us.

Hunting is very popular down there. The law says that the hunters now have to wear high-viz jackets, because of the high level of shooting accidents. I stopped and chatted to a man who was stood on the side of the road with a rifle. He said he was waiting for the dogs that were a mile up in the forest to chase wild boar out, which would run across the road and down the valley. He said it happens very quickly, and its very common for the dogs to get shot by mistake.

That's about it then, except to say Tony was keeping in touch with us about the awful weather here while we were away. When we got home my rain gauge was overflowing. I've never seen that before! The gazebo that should have been on our patio wasn't on the patio any more either – lesson learned, I suppose.

Best wishes! *Stephen & Wendy*

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Turning back the clock ...

Earlier this year the wraps came off The Hall after months of hard work, much of it hidden behind scaffolding and tarpaulins. What was revealed was a building restored to much of its former glory, with the original roofline reinstated and the cleaned and repointed limestone walls glowing honey-warm in the spring sunshine.

That unveiling marked the completion of Phase One in the rejuvenation of North Aston Hall. As we approach autumn, Phase Two is about to begin, with the focus moving on to the total renovation of the Hall's once-splendid interior.

We are grateful to Tony Salmon of Yiangou Architects for the following revealing insight into what has been done so far:

We first saw North Aston Hall on a chilly October day in 2019 shortly after it had changed hands. What struck us was the juxtaposition of the house and church tower, which were unbelievably close, especially when seen from the flat roof of the Hall.

It was clear on first viewing that the house and outbuildings had seen a lot of change in their time and that a very thorough approach to understanding the evolution of the property would be necessary to inform a programme of restoration and repair. This was going to be a long journey, and one that was soon to be disrupted by the onset of the Pandemic.



The Hall as it appeared in 2019, before work commenced.



The C18th South Front by John Yenn, from a watercolour dated 1822.

The period in 2020 did however give us the opportunity to get a huge amount of research underway, including very detailed research into the history and development of the buildings and surrounding landscape by an Archaeologist and Landscape Historian. This was informed and evolved over time by physical investigations into the existing fabric of the buildings (by uncovering) and an archaeological dig under the North Lawn. All of this had to be done with listed building consents and in collaboration with the county archaeologist as well as the conservation and planning team at Cherwell District Council. The presence of bats also had an influence on the timing and sequencing of works, and we had numerous surveys done by a consultant ecologist.

This investigative process was fascinating. It soon became obvious that the buildings contained very little in the way of historic finishes, with internal details having been heavily altered during the 20th century. We were however able to draw conclusions about the significance of what we had and the best way in which to approach a programme of restoration.

The key parts of the site for us were:

- The Hall
- The Coach House and Bradenstoke Barn
- The later Outbuildings
- The Parkland Gates

The Hall

We know something of the origins of the Hall. We understand that lands around the church belonged to Bradenstoke Priory in the late medieval period and that after the dissolution of the Priory in 1539, there may have been an early house dating from the late 16th or early 17th centuries. We think that part of the vaulted cellars immediately adjacent to the church pre-date the 18th century.

We have a copy of a watercolour painting (1822, illustrated on Page 5) which shows the house after it was rebuilt in the C18th by John Venn. It was an elegant and simple country house with the main entrance on the south, sash windowed front facing out towards the Parkland. Behind the front door was a double height reception hall. We have evidence of this from John Venn's own architectural designs.

The house was enlarged and completely refaced in 1867 with a fashionable Jacobean influence and the entrance hall moved to the north west corner.



The North Elevation c1900, with C19th projections removed in C20th

The Victorian phase retained some important 18th century structure internally so we were able to interpret the earlier plan form. The Victorians also retained the earlier pitched roof and surrounded it with the fretwork parapet that we see today (*and above*). They also rebuilt tall statuesque chimneys in the Jacobean style to give the house a dramatic roof line.

The later 20th century saw many more changes. On the north side, quite a lot of projecting rooms were removed exposing a flat elevation which is much altered. Most significantly, the C18th roof and C19th chimneys were completely removed to enable the installation of a concrete floor at roof level which was intended to support a new floor of accommodation in a much taller roof. This was never built and the concrete floor became a flat roof with parts of the old chimneys refashioned to makeshift flues. A very visible feature of this later adaption was the timber conservatory on the roof. Internally, the plan form of the house was also significantly altered again.



Beneath the scaffolding and tarpaulins, the new roof is constructed.



The house under scaffold in 2023

We know that the house was in a fairly poor state of repair. Many of the chimneys did not work and the flat roof leaked. Having understood the key phases and the amount of change that had occurred, we concluded that the best course of action was to repair and refurbish the whole of the external shell of the building. This would give us time to consider how best to refurbish the interior.

As you will have seen, to do this we needed to cover the house completely in a temporary roof structure to protect the fabric of the building (and the work force) from the elements, and to allow a full team to proceed with works unhindered. The scaffolding which was a huge engineered construction in its own right, began to be erected in August 2022 and works commenced in earnest a couple of months later.

We retained the later concrete floor at roof level, as it would have been structurally damaging to remove it. On top of this we constructed a new roof along the lines of the 18th century pitched roof. This was covered in reclaimed Welsh slate. New chimneys were constructed of the scale and detail and colour of those present in the 19th century, and helping to reinstate the strong roofline. The fretwork parapets were dismantled, repaired and reinstated, and below this, areas of disintegrating stonework were repaired. The whole house was repointed in a natural lime mortar by a team of highly skilled stonemasons.

Once the high level work was completed and the scaffolding dismantled we were able to reface the modern single storey orangery on the north elevation.

The house is constructed of two very distinct stones – both are limestone, but one is quite a pale buff and the other is a much darker orange tone. During the 20th century phase, mismatched stone types had been used in patch repairs, and then painted to disguise the colour. This was only apparent when the house could be examined closely from the scaffolding.

Whilst we had the full scaffold in place, providing safe access, we were able to refurbish, repair and redecorate all of the timber sash windows and replace the plastic rainwater pipes with authentic handmade lead pipes.

Tony Salmon, Director, Yiangou Architects Ltd.

The tarpaulins came off The Hall in May 2024, and marked the completion of the initial phase of the restoration.

Meanwhile, work was also progressing apace on the adjacent Bradenstoke Barn and Coach House. In next month's issue, Tony will explain exactly what has been happening in these two historically important buildings. We are grateful to him for his time, and also to Mario Lemme, for allowing us this insight into the works being undertaken at The Hall.

North Aston Farms is delighted to announce that the Farm's Honesty Shop is now open for business, 7 days a week, 8am-7pm, in the corner of the North Aston Organics car park by The Old Bakehouse.

This is a chance for residents to buy the farm's meat and dairy produce without having to place a regular weekly order. It's taken a lot of hard work and quite a bit longer than anticipated, but the shop has had its council inspection, achieved a 5-star food hygiene rating, and is now open to visitors.

It has been a huge team effort, building and kitting out the shop. Most of the interior has been ingeniously built from recycled pallets, and the walls are insulated with pure sheep's wool, giving the shop a real rustic feel and smell! A big thank from the Farm to everybody who helped, or offered encouragement!!

The shop is a collaboration between North Aston Organics (suppliers of the fruit & veg) and North Aston Farms (meat & dairy). Most of the produce is certified organic, and all the fresh dairy, ice cream and meat is from the Farm's pasture-fed cattle and sheep, slowly and lovingly raised here in the fields surrounding the village. Where possible, additional items are locally sourced from independent producers. If there is something you would really like to see in there, please let the Farm know, and they will see what can be done. The Farm is also interested in hearing from anyone who'd like to supply the shop. There are some very talented and creative folk in the village!

How the Honesty Shop works

While the Farm would love to employ a full-time shop assistant, it's simply not viable. Instead the shop is fully self-service! It works much like the familiar veg stall, but items must be selected on the touchscreen till and paid for by card or contactless payment. Regrettably, cash and bank transfers can no longer be accepted.

Although unmanned, help will be on hand (Mon-Sat) either by ringing the bell or calling the phone number on the board above the till. Someone will come to the rescue! The shop will be locked up at 7pm each evening and re-opened at 8am.

North Aston Farms Honesty Shop ... NOW OPEN!!



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From the FIRE STATION

We had twenty-one shouts last month, which meant we were out and about a lot more. Stand-bys, after dropping off in frequency, have come back into our remit – but fires and alarms are still our most frequent turnout.

A more unusual one came in earlier during the month, with a fire in an autoclave – a pressurised oven used for the manufacture of carbon fibre parts for the automotive industry. The autoclave has an automatic vent valve that had activated, but this vented to the outside above a propane fuel tank. Due to pressurisation, the autoclave could not be directly opened, so the fire was allowed to burn itself out whilst a covering jet was used to cool any venting gasses and to prevent damage to the propane tank.



After two gruelling hours the oven had cooled, and no further hot gasses were venting. Upon re-inspection later in the evening, the autoclave had been cleaned out, all burnt parts removed and bagged, and fumes and gasses removed from the building. All rooms were gas monitor checked for CO levels – the building was cleared for use and the grateful owners were confident of re-establishing production within the week.

In other news, Stephen Baker has started his training for conversion to a whole-time position and James Greenwood received his 5-year service award.

FF James Greenwood, james@cyclogicalshop.co.uk



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Last month turned out to be the wettest September on record for ten English counties, including here in Oxfordshire. Together with Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire and Wiltshire, this county recorded more than three times its average September rainfall, and it proved to be Oxfordshire's wettest calendar month in records that go back to 1836. Despite this, average temperatures and hours of sunshine were close to normal, demonstrating again that extremes are becoming the norm. Luckily, the Somerton crossing never became totally impassable, but it came close on a couple of occasions.

Thanks to Angie Hanna for the photo



The Church MATTERS



An Attitude of Gratitude

October within the church calendar is dominated by Harvest, when we thank God for his wonderful provision. This year our Apple trees are full of apples, and the hedgerows are bursting with berries. I do love a good apple and blackberry crumble.

In September SS Peter and Paul Church hosted it's penultimate Steeple Aston Talk, with Mary and Steve Bacon (sister and brother-in-law of Church warden Eileen Baglin-Jones). It was entitled '30 years of heartbreaks and joy,' and discussed their extensive work with locals schools in the South African Township of Mamelodi, just outside Pretoria, helping raise standards and aspirations. They told us stories of what the schools were like 30 years ago, when Steve was invited to visit the township whilst at a conference nearby. Back then the classes were held in broken and discarded cargo shipping containers, with around 100 students per class, and the only resources were pencils and paper. Over the years, Mary and Steve have helped several schools build their own libraries.



Throughout the years of Apartheid the government had suppressed education, so that the black population could not get quality jobs, the legacy of which is still being felt today with 80% unemployment within the townships. Whilst the current government is building concrete housing (roughly the size of a single garage here), people are moving into the townships at a faster rate than they can build them. So most people are still living in shacks made of cardboard, and sheets of metal with no running water and a hole in the ground for a toilet.

The same evening our daughter made a surprise trip home from Nottingham. Rachel is a character, and as usual she had numerous stories. One of which was about how she had looked after a friend who ended up spending the night on her sofa, so she lent them her spare duvet, and tucked them in for the night. She ended her story saying that the clean duvet now smelt of her friend and needed to change it before she could use it, and then ending the story with the comment "such a first world problem!". As she remarks there's nothing more comforting than the smell of your own bed. A marked contrast to Mamelodi.

Gratitude cannot make problems disappear. Being grateful that we live in a country that provides free education for all does not suddenly provide the same for South Africa, nor can it heat all British homes over the winter, or solve climate change. However, having an attitude of gratitude helps us find ways forward. Gratitude for their own education gave Mary and Steve a passion for education generally, and to help provide the same for the people of Mamelodi. Gratitude for our world empowered Greta Thunberg to make a stand about Climate Change. An attitude of gratitude helps us strive to be better, and do better. This Harvest season, together let us reflect on what we are grateful for, and see where that gratitude takes us.

PS Don't miss this year's last 'Steeple Aston Talk' by Jackie Watson entitled 'Murder in the Tower' on Thursday 10th October

God bless,
Harriet

Church Services in October 2024

NORTH ASTON

S.ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday October 6th

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

5:30 pm
Evensong

Sunday October 13th

10:00 am
Harvest Thanksgiving

5:30 pm
Harvest Evensong ①

5:30 pm
Holy Communion

Sunday October 20th

9:30 am
Holy Communion

11:00 am
Holy Communion

5:30 pm
Harvest Family Service ②

Sunday October 27th

9:30 am
Morning Prayer

11:00 am
Morning Prayer

9:30 am
Holy Communion

Sunday November 3rd

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

5:30 pm
All Souls Service

① The Harvest Evensong in Steeple will be followed by a Harvest Supper.

② The Harvest Family Service in Tackley will be followed by a Produce Auction.

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

Details of this month's Church Services are on Page 2. More news is always available from: www.sntchurch.com

You can contact the Rector via email (harriet.sntchurch@gmail.com) or by phone: 01869 932224. You may also reach out to members of the North Aston PCC: Church Wardens: Clive Busby, (casb@north-aston.com, Tel: 340470) and Annabel Bevan, (annabelbevan@hotmail.com, or Tel: 345153). Richard Bailey (LLM, ex officio), Vicky Taylor (secretary), Jeremy Taylor, Ginny Stay, Jane Jana, Les Parry, Beryl Greenwood.

Announcements

Deddington Farmers' Market

The Farmers' Market this month will be staged on Saturday 26th October, from 9 am to 12:30 pm. Extra parking at the school.

Dog Walking Service

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

Village Meeting

There will be a Village Meeting in the Old Bakery on Monday 4th November, starting 7pm. The preliminary Agenda is published on Page 2, but if you have any topics you'd like to add, please let Eve know by emailing her: secretary@north-aston.co.uk.

News from TVP

Thames Valley Police has seized over 100 **e-scooters** in the past three months. Users have been stopped for a variety of indiscretions, ranging from riding on the public roads, on pavements, travelling at excessive speeds, and causing injury by dangerous 'driving'. There have also been instances of e-bikes being confiscated following modifications that enable them to travel at illegal speeds - some exceeding 60 mph. Currently it hasn't been a problem here in North Aston, but users of e-bikes need to be aware that the motor must cut out above 15.5 mph. It's leg-power only if you want to go faster! The laws on private e-scooters are more restrictive, and they can only be used on private land. It's illegal to use them on public roads.

TVP has also issued a warning about a **Parking Fine Scam**, sent out as a text message to mobile phones. The message suggests that "your local council" has issued you with a Parking Penalty Charge Notice. However, the council is not named, your car's registration number is not included and it is referred to as a "parking fine". If you receive one of these, ignore it and delete it. As with all such texts and emails, do not click the link.

Barbecue Brunch #MenUnited

Sunday 5th October, 10:30 - 12 noon

Duns Tew Village Hall, OX25 6JN

Sausage or Bacon Rolls

Tea, Coffee & Cakes

Raffle Prizes!



SUPPORTING

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October Birthdays

Daniel Durnin

Olivia Durnin

Tom Godwin

Paul Honess

Jimmy Rees



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.

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 vegetables at affordable prices
- Minimal packaging & zero food miles
- Supporting the local economy



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www.northastonorganics.co.uk

Pop-up Pub

There are plans for an informal Pop-up Pub to be held in the Old Bakery on the first Friday of each month, from 7pm. The dates scheduled so far are the 4th October, 1st November and 6th December. See Page 2 for more information.

North Aston News

The *North Aston News* is edited by Marcus Potts and designed and produced by CMC Graphics. It is 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 electronic edition is also sent out to an extensive emailing list every month. To be included in that list, please contact the *News*, stating your wish to be added to the mailing list. Contributions are welcome, which need to be in an electronic format (except Classifieds and Announcements, which may be hand written). To submit an item please email: info@north-aston.co.uk. All images should be at the highest possible resolution. The Editor strives to adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, and reserves the right to amend or modify content, where appropriate, and to express editorial control. All content is copyright the original author and/or CMC Graphics. © 2024.

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