

NORTH ASTON

News

March 2025

#413



NORTH ASTON NEWS

MARCH 2025, No:413

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Notes from the Chair

The great thing about the worst month of the year, February, is that it is quite short, and as it draws to a close the signs of Spring are beginning to appear. Perhaps it also helps that the planets have been aligning, or is that a harbinger of worrying thing to come? March in theory brings in winds but I feel we have had our fair share so maybe we will get a quiet month.

Best wishes,



You can phone Christopher on 340358

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

North Aston Parish Meeting

There will be a North Aston Village Meeting on Monday 14th April 2025, starting at 7:00 pm in the Old Bakery.

If you have any items that you'd like to have included in the Agenda, please can you email your suggestions to Richard: secretary@north-aston.co.uk

Items likely to be discussed include regular topics, such as Traffic Calming and Broadband, as well as the need to purchase a marquee, and plans for upcoming events, such as the Mikron visit (scheduled for 20th June) and the Village Fête (July 5th).

2025 NORTH ASTON FETE Saturday July 5th

It's never too early to start preparing for the Village Fête! Please could you start setting aside the following items:

- Books and DVDs in good condition
- Top quality Bric-a-Brac
- Bottles & Cans for the Bottle Stall
- Plants for the Plant Stall

The committee is also appealing for high-value prizes for the raffle, ranging from personal donation to something special via your workplace or a local business. Please watch out for messages on the village WhatsApp group.

It's in the bag ... but sometimes it isn't! We have been asked again to appeal to pet owners to pick up after their dogs. There's a persistent problem with waste along the Somerton Road, and with neatly knotted bags being left along St Mary's Walk and through the woods. This also applies *anywhere* in the Park: No matter how remote it may seem — just bag it, take it home, and bin it properly. Thank you

Cover and top of this page: Spring crocuses in bloom on the Green. MP.

Planning

With much progress on outstanding applications last month, the list of active applications has shrunk. To examine these in detail, search for "North Aston" on the CDC Planning Register web page at www.planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/

Nicholson Nurseries, The Park, North Aston, OX25 6HL. An application has been made to modify the opening hours to allow for evening opening on a Friday and Saturday for the Yurt Café. The deadline for comments is 27th March, with a target date for a decision on 18th April. Ref: 25 / 00459 / F

Rosemary Cottage, North Aston, OX25 6HX. The application to replace some modern windows with timber-framed heritage double glazed units has moved into the final consultation stage, and a decision is expected in early March. Ref: 24 / 03384 / LB

North Aston Hall, St Mary's Walk, OX25 6AA. The target date for a decision regarding the demolition of the existing Coach House and construction of a replacement was 31st January, but has still not been declared. Ref: 24 / 02763 / F



February's winners were:

1st Prize (£10): Sarah-Jane Brown (#139)

2nd Prize (£5): Mark Graham (#107)

Congratulations to you both! Each month two lucky winners get drawn out of the hat. For more info 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!



Steeple Aston Choral Society

Presents



Ahoy!

Don your blue and white and sail down to the hall for a fun-filled evening of nautically-inspired music

Stanford, Songs of the Sea

Elgar, Sea Pictures

Sing-along Sea Shanties

Handel's Water Music

(excerpts)

Sunday 30 March at 7.00

in the Village Hall

(Tables available from 6.30, seating 8 to a table)

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Traffic Calming

The proposal to install traffic calming 'build-outs' through Hempton, which were featured previously here (since they may have a bearing upon North Aston's own hopes for something similar) have hit an obstacle in the form of some technical irregularities and an unexpected number of objections. It transpired that the design for these chicanes, which allowed for a wider than usual carriageway to ensure easy passage for agricultural vehicles, meant that drivers might not be deterred from giving way to cyclists. Thinking the road to be wide enough for both, they might place cyclists at risk by trying to squeeze through at the same time.

The solution is to consider build-outs (more usually known as chicanes) that include collapsible bollards that can be driven over by wider farm vehicles, so allowing for a more normal, restricted road-width through the narrows, but also incorporating a side path that would enable cyclists to pass through unhindered. A trial using temporary cones will be tested, but any go-ahead will inevitably be delayed.

The Village Meeting next month (Monday April 14th) may tackle the question of traffic calming (again!) and this could influence the discussion.

Spice Night

The Friends of Deddington Library is organising a fund-raising *Bengal Spice Night* on 2nd April. The evening will comprise a two-course Buffet Meal of authentic Indian dishes at £25 per person. There will be two sittings, at 6:30 and 8:30pm. Tickets available (cash only) at Deddington Library, Nellie & Dove and Hamptons. To pay online email fodlbooks@gmail.com who will reserve your tickets.

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

Things have changed so much in our little village, just as they they have in so many other little villages all across the country. I'm not talking about *Lark Rise to Candleford* Victorian times, but just the last 50 years.

When I was a 10 year-old village boy, in my jumble sale red coat that I loved, and my pet lamb Lizzy that we kept on the green, our gang used to hang out by the telephone box. I only knew of two telephones in the village at that time; the red telephone box on the edge of the Green, and the big black one in the Manor House. Also in the Manor House was the early warning system in case of nuclear war. Can you imagine!

Blimey, that does sound like it might be a hundred years ago: no phones, black and white TV, and just an open fire in the living room. How things have changed.

Mum never left the village to go shopping — the shops came to us. There were lots of shopping opportunities from home in those days. We had shops in the village, including Mr Hazle's Post Office and shop, and Mrs Wyatt's bakery and shop, next to the Old Bakery. I can still taste Mr Wyatts hot lardy cakes even now! Besides these, there were the mobile shops that came around every week. Ralph Fonge, the butcher from Steeple Aston and Jim Wrighton, the Fritwell butcher. There was Mr Preston the greengrocer, and Mr Hayward, who sold all kinds of tinned food, as well as tea and sugar and all sorts of stuff. Then there was the haberdashery man who came round selling clothes, but I can't recall his surname, but my sister remembers he was called Philip, and was a bit dashing. She says the young wives (and some not so young) fancied him. She also reminded me about the library van, which used to stop by the Fountain and had a wonderful musty smell. Then we had our milkman, who came round in the mornings with our pint of milk and butter and things, so there really was no shortage of shopping chances.

Finally, there was the man always dressed in a black suit; Mr Drew, the pensions man. He visit in the evenings and sit with Mum and Dad and look after life insurance and pensions. Dad made me take out a £1 a week pension when I first started work. Thanks Dad! It will pay out soon.

Best of all, and really it was best of all, was Mum's catalogue. It was a huge big book full of coloured pictures that you could buy anything from: toys, clothes, a kettle or saucepan, a garden rake, or even a new bed. In the lead-up to Christmas we would spend every night going through the book and folding down the corners of pages in the hope of brilliant presents. It's all so different now. Today, if i need something, I can just go on Amazon and it's in our porch the next day. Nearly all of us have mobile phones, and I can't remember the last time we used the land line to make a call.



I hadn't planned this to be a *years gone by* article, but I was just thinking about the mobile shops the other day, and that got me started. I'll add one short Nature Note: I haven't seen droves of pigeons like we have in the village now for more than 20 years. There are hundreds of them, and about as many as there used to be, years ago, when we used to go out and shoot them on a Saturday afternoon, and then spend all day Sunday plucking them, ready for sale. I wonder where they have all come from?

Best wishes! Stephen & Wendy

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Puy du Fou on our doorstep ...

Last August the cover of the *North Aston News* featured a photograph of an ecclesiastical bishop apparently walking out of a lake, to be met by kneeling figures in medieval clothes. The reason for that was the preliminary announcement of plans regarding the possible creation of a historical re-enactment theme park on land between Bucknell and the M40. The proposal had been made by the company behind the famous Puy du Fou, near Nantes in France.

In February that possibility moved a stage closer when detailed plans were published and a series of public consultations took place in Bicester, Banbury and Bucknell. Needless to say, there have been mutterings and objections, but on the whole the reception appears to have been fairly positive. However, such a development, at a cost of some £600 million, is sure to have an impact on local communities, as well as the surrounding landscape and environment. What will that impact be, and will it spread to villages like North Aston?

Firstly, what is a Puy du Fou? The original, near a French village called Les Espesses, was first opened in 1977, sited around the ruins of an old castle. The concept has always been one of bringing history to life, through re-enactment and theatre. Over the last 48 years the Puy du Fou has grown into one of the most popular theme parks in France, and has regularly been voted one of the best in the world. In 2019 a second park opened in Spain, near the city of Toledo, and the one near Bicester would be the company's third venture.

The site chosen for the park is a wedge of land between the B4100, which runs from Baynards Green to Bicester; the Bainton Road that links the B4100 with Bucknell; and the Ardley Road that runs between Bucknell and the M40 flyover near Ardley. The plot is bordered to the north by Stoke Wood. The graphics below compare the land as it is today (on the left) with the site after completion (larger, on the right). The area is currently set mainly to pasture, used largely for raising pigs, but also includes a number of copses, areas of ancient woodland and lengths of established hedgerow.

The Puy du Fou has created a website that not only outlines the plans for the park itself, but also addresses some of the inevitable concerns. As might be expected, it offers a very

rosy interpretation, but it is possible to read between the lines, and also draw upon the company's reputation in France and Spain, where the parks are already operational.

There are three primary focuses. The first is the Environment. The land at present is low in biodiversity, being predominately a monoculture of grass with small amounts of woodland and hedgerow. As agricultural land, it is only modestly productive. As can be seen from these graphics, the existing woodland will be retained, while the proposal includes the planting of a further 20,000 new trees, as well as formal gardens, lakes and some five miles of new hedgerow. This represents a significant net gain in biodiversity, and should create extensive and varied new wildlife habitats. The Puy du Fou in France has been awarded Green Globe Certification for its efforts on environmental, economic and social sustainability, and that commitment seems likely to extend to the new park.

A second element is Employment. The park is expected to employ around 700 people upon completion, across a broad range of ages and skills, with support for a further 2000 in secondary or indirect jobs, through local suppliers and businesses. The number employed during the construction phase is not stated, but is likely to be significant. The park is also predicted to generate a significant economic boost to the surrounding area through retail and hospitality.

Unquestionably, the greatest concern is the impact the development may have on local transport. Baynards Green roundabout is already a bottleneck, and Junction 10 of the M40 is acknowledged to be one of the worst-designed motorway interchanges anywhere in the country. The majority of visitors to the park will have to negotiate both. Recent work to the Padbury roundabout (just north of Cherwell Valley Services on the A43) has made little difference. Fundamental changes need to be made to the area's road infrastructure, irrespective of whether or not the Puy du Fou is approved.

The developers state that they are already in discussion with Oxfordshire County Council to determine the extent of road junction improvements that will be needed, and this needs to be a priority. In addition, there have also been (unrelated) discussions relating to the possible re-opening of Ardley rail station, for passengers as well as the intended freight terminal, and this could be critical to the (*continued on the next page*)



mitigation of additional local traffic. Will this spread to North Aston? Probably not to any significant degree, when the village already faces the prospect of another 6000 homes at Heyford Park, but it has to be a consideration. It may intensify the debate over the need for traffic calming measures.

Undoubtedly, there will be months of discussion and wrangling, particularly as this adds to a perception that North Oxfordshire is already being over-developed. Anyone interested should visit www.puydufouconsultation.co.uk/consultation. MP

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www.steepleaston.org.uk/clubs-societies/gardening/



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The Church MATTERS



Reconciliation

With a late Easter this year, Ash Wednesday is on the 5th March, and is marked with a special service at SS Peter and Paul (6pm). Traditionally, during this service people are marked on their foreheads with an Ash Cross as a way of showing we are sorry for the things we have done wrong, a sign of penitence.

During the BeSpace week of prayer at Dr Radcliffe's school in February, one of the activities used zippers to help us think about reconciliation. A zip helps two sides come together. When we do something wrong, our relationship with others is often broken, like a zip being undone. Sometimes we need a third party mediator to help bring us back together, acting like the zipper on the zip. A mediator will listen to both sides, helping each side to understand what happened and working to find a way forward. This can be an incremental process, with progress inching forward over time, just like a zip bringing the two sides together tooth by tooth.

When we do things wrong, our relationship with God is also broken. Often, like Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, we want to hide. Jesus is our mediator, bringing us back to God. Being both fully human and fully God he is uniquely positioned as the zipper, being able to understand both sides, His death on the cross acts like the zip, bridging the gap between our sin and God's faithful, everlasting immense love for us.

This Lent, as we prepare to celebrate our reconciliation with God at Easter, I invite you to think about any relationships in your life which need to be mended. Are you the zip in that situation, or are you the zipper? Either way, remember that God is always ready to help. And that sometimes, all it takes is one simple *Sorry*.

In the words of St Francis of Assisi, 'Lord make me a channel of your peace.' Amen

Harriet

Please note – my usual day off is a Monday.



Church Services in March 2025

NORTH ASTON

S.ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday March 2nd

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

5:30 am
Evensong

March 5th - Ash Wednesday

6:00 pm
Holy Communion

Sunday March 9th

9:30 am
Morning Prayer

11:00 am
Family Worship

5:30 pm
Holy Communion

Sunday March 16th

9:30 am
Holy Communion

11:00 am
Holy Communion

5:30 am
Evensong

Sunday March 23rd

9:30 am
Morning Prayer

11:00 am
Morning Prayer

5:30 pm
Holy Communion

March 30th - Mothering Sunday

9:30 am
Morning Prayer

11:00 am
Family Communion

9:30 am
Family Communion

Sunday April 6th

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

5:30 pm
Evensong

This schedule is reproduced in good faith. The Editor cannot be held responsible for any errors or changes. To be sure of all this month's services, please visit: www.sntchurch.com/whats-on

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

More information is always available from:
www.sntchurch.com

You can contact the Rector by phone on **01869 932224** or by email: harriet.sntchurch@gmail.com

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 (Lay Reader & Treasurer), Vicky Taylor (Secretary), Ginny Stay, Jane Jana, Tony Godwin, Jeremy Taylor, Kildare B Borrowes.

Announcements

Deddington Farmers' Market

The Farmers' Market for March will take place on Saturday 22nd, from 9 am to 12:30 pm.

North Aston Farm Shop

There will not be a pop-up Farm Shop at Peach Barns this month, but there are plans to stage another on April 12th. Further details will be in next month's News.

Dog Walking Service

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

Brown Bin Collections - Final Reminder

The deadline for subscribing to this year's brown-bin collection is 30th March. Last year's period ended on 28th February, but there is a grace period of one month. To renew for another 12 months (or register), log-in to the CDC website at <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/10/rubbish-and-recycling/872/payable-garden-waste-collection>.

Scared of Heights?

If you've got a good head for heights, Katherine House Hospice is organising an Extreme Abseiling event on Saturday 12th April, with participants invited to leap 127 metres (over 400 feet) down the tallest permanent abseil structure in the world, The National Lift Tower, in Northampton. Definitely one for the bucket list! See <https://www.khh.org.uk/event/abseil> for details.

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March Birthdays

Jos Busby
Arthur Hathaway
Niel Nicholson
Stephen Rees
Wendy Rees
Joseph Stay



Many Happy Returns to all the North Aston residents who celebrate birthdays this month. If you're not listed, or know someone who should be, please let us know.

Sunday Night - Music Night

The White Horse in Duns Tew is hosting live music every Sunday evening through March, with Barney Newman (2nd), Krissy & Keith (9th), Rev Ferriday (16th), Leighton Tongue (23rd) and Macaro 4 (30th). Events start at 7:30pm.

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The North Aston defibrillator is located in the porch at 4 Somerton Road. CPR & Defibrillator training sessions are arranged from time to time. For more information or to book a session, please contact Mark: 347806



North Aston News

The *North Aston News* is edited by Marcus Potts and designed and produced by CMC Graphics. It is printed by Nicholson's 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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