

NORTH ASTON

News

April 2025

#414





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Notes from the Chair

The local Council election voting card has arrived along with the Spring weather. With Democracy under threat in so many places in the world the right to vote is a gift not to be ignored in our country. And it is important to vote whatever your political persuasion. It also keeps those nice people busy in the Old Bakery who generously give up their time to run the voting booths, but don't forget that you will need photo ID to be able to cast your vote.

In a number of villages I have been through recently I have seen spring clean-ups being organised. I have never understood why people throw stuff out of their cars onto the verges – but they do. So we should do our annual clean up as well to keep North Aston pristine.

See you at the Village Meeting on the 14th.

Best wishes,

You can phone Christopher on 340358

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

Christopher

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. The current Agenda is as follows:

Formal Business

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes of last Meeting and AGM, held on 9th January 2025. See the February issue of the News.
3. Treasurer's Report.
4. Village Bank Accounts.
5. North Aston Domain, Websites, Email Addresses.
6. Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan
7. Traffic Update. See piece from Howard Ionascu on Page 3 regarding a meeting with Local Councillors.

Informal Business

8. Mikron Theatre Company visit, Friday 20 June 2025. Hush! Hush! (see <https://mikron.org.uk/shows/>)
9. Village Fête. Saturday 5th July. Update following the Fête Meeting on 4th February 2025
10. Easter Egg Hunt
11. Marquees
12. Defibrillator
13. Any Other Business
14. Date of next meeting

It's not too late to have items included in the Agenda. Please can you email your requests to Richard: secretary@north-aston.co.uk, or raise them under Any Other Business.

Village Fête - July 5th

A regular reminder between now and July. Please could you start setting aside items for the various stalls at the Fête, including:

- 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.

Cover image: Spring blossom in the Nursery. MP

Planning

Two further applications have been approved, and one has progressed to the final consultation stage. 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. A decision on the application to allow for evening opening of the the Yurt Café on Fridays and Saturdays has moved to the final consultation stage. 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 been approved. Ref: 24 / 03384 / LB

North Aston Hall, St Mary's Walk, OX25 6AA. The application to demolish the existing Coach House and construct a replacement has finally been approved. Ref: 24 / 02763 / F

Celebrating VE & VJ Day

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2. The *Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum* in Woodstock is marking the occasion with a new exhibition; *From Conflict to Peace*. The display features stories of Oxfordshire celebrating VE & VJ Day 80 years ago and will open on Tuesday, 1st April and run through to 18th November.

The exhibition will cover the celebrations across the county itself, but also the experiences of local people serving in the armed forces throughout 1945, and for many, beyond the end of the war. Follow the museum's page on Facebook at *SoldiersOfOxfordshire* or visit www.soho.org.uk.

Bryan Palmer Memorial

The inaugural Bryan Palmer Memorial Ploughing Match took place last month in the field just over the road from The Fox. Organised by the Banbury & District Vintage Ploughing Society, of which Bryan was Chair for eleven years, it attracted competitors from all around the region.



We're grateful to Hal Busby for his notes from the event, and his atmospheric photos:



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We visited the Bryan Palmer Memorial charity ploughing match on Sunday 23rd March. Bryan was always about when I was growing up at Dane Hill Farm. He was definitely a slow and steady tractor driver, with the odd swear-word in the mix. He would often work late into the evening, and with this in mind I thought it was only right to go to a ploughing competition in his memory. What a turnout it was too!



I think I lost count at about 50 tractors. With the smell of diesel and paraffin in the air, we walked around admiring the straight furrows left by the vintage machines. The Banbury & District Vintage Ploughing Society did Bryan proud. *Hal*

For further details, visit the website: www.bdvps.co.uk

Full Fibre Broadband

About 18 months ago we were told that installation of full-fibre (FFTP) would begin in the spring of 2025. Well, spring has arrived, and the good news is, the diggers shouldn't be too far behind.

Michelle Tanfield, the local Community Engagement Manager for Gigaclear, has emailed to say that she plans to stage a Community Meeting later this month. This will be an opportunity for the company to inform everyone about the process, and clarify the schedule for the coming months.

Work will begin almost simultaneously in both North Aston and Duns Tew, so it seems likely that the meeting will be staged in Duns Tew, where they have the facilities to accommodate a larger gathering. The date and venue should be confirmed by mid-April, and householders will be advised by post. If all goes to plan, we should have fast, reliable full-fibre broadband by the end of the year.

Pop-up Farm Shop

What set out small last year looks to be growing into something really quite significant, as we look forward to another pop-up Farm Shop at Peach Barns on Saturday April 12th, 1-4pm.

If you missed the previous Pop-ups, then you've been denied a real treat! Combining elements of farm shop and farmers' market, the Peach Barns Pop-up is a showcase for all the food and other goods produced here in North Aston, as well as the skills and crafts of a range of other local producers.

As well as organic beef, lamb and dairy from North Aston Farms, and vegetables, fruit and herbs from North Aston Organics, there will be bread, eggs, cheese, pork, chicken, chocolate and beer, as well as a variety of crafts, refreshments, tea & cakes, plus burgers and steaks from the BBQ.

If anybody in the village would like to sell their own produce at the event, Nick would love to hear from you. Please email farmoffice@northastonfarms.co.uk or call/text him on 07751084168. He'd also be keen to hear from anyone who'd be prepared to lend a hand on the day. Please do volunteer!

North Aston Gardening Club

It's springtime and the sun is shining, so it's time to think about this year's Flower & Produce Show!

The Gardening Club met at the end of March and decided that this year's Show would be held on Saturday 30th August. That's the weekend after the Bank Holiday.

Although the exact categories have not yet been finalised, there will be all the usual favourites, including:

- The Chris Tuffrey Cup: The Heaviest Tomato
- The tallest Sunflower grown in a pot
- Spud-in-a-Tub
- Various Cooking Classes, such as
 - Jams & Marmalades
 - Pickles & Preserves
 - A Cake (variety yet to be decided!)

Pots for the Spud-in-a-Tub, and seed potatoes, will be available for collection outside Tony and Bev's house on the Green soon - keep an eye out as you walk or drive by.

Watch out for more information in the coming months, but in the meantime, get growing and make the most of the sunshine!



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Fresh beef boxes plus individual cuts of beef, lamb and rose veal, ice cream & more!	Open 7 days a week 8am - 7pm - Fruit & veg - - Meat & dairy - - Cupboard essentials -	Twice-weekly deliveries Monthly invoice Reusable glassware Delivery before 7.30am
Free delivery within 15 miles (on orders over £40) or collection from the farm	Find us at: <i>The Old Bakehouse, North Aston, OX25 6HX</i>	Milk, yoghurt & cream plus extras including bread, butter, eggs, juice, meat & ice cream

Find out more at www.northastonfarms.co.uk

North Aston Nature Notes

With Stephen Rees

Hello to all, and welcome to spring. On the 23rd of last month Wendy and I walked down to the pond to see if spring was getting near, and the signs were clear. There was frog spawn everywhere, and a huge chorus of frogs calling to each other. It was really loud, especially in the top pond, where they were fighting and mating. We caught it at just the right moment.



Photo: MP

There was also a Tufted Duck, a Dabchick, several Mallards and, best of all, a fish swimming along on the surface. It wasn't a big fish, but at least it was a fish. Brilliant! With Buzzards, Kites and a Kestrel mewing overhead, and Ravens too, it was a nice little walk.



Photo: Annie Savage

Going back up the hill I got to thinking about how different it all looked when we were kids. We used to be down there a lot because of *Hendon Race*. That was the name we had for the track from Hendon, where Andrew Hitchens lived, to the farm and dairy below the church, which is where he went to work. We used to race our bikes down the hill and see who could go the furthest up the other side before having to get off and push.

The dairy was really great for us, and Andrew was very good to us, letting us in the milking parlour to watch him milk the cows and giving us cups of warm milk, straight from the udder. The milking shed had a big square hole in the middle of the floor, where Andrew or Phil Burke (who later turned into one of

my best friends ever) would stand to put the milking machines on the cows. It was a bit of a dangerous job — you had a really good chance of getting poed on.

Twice a day they milked the cows, and a good few people would walk down with a bottle to get some fresh milk. I loved it, but if you offered me fresh unpasteurised warm milk now I think I'd probably throw up.

Rats! There were rats galore. All the stone sheds where the calves were kept had loads of rats in them, and we had great fun with our air pistols trying to shoot them. It was a challenge, trying to look tough and brave when going into the sheds, but really being scared to death of the rats.

Bird-nesting down there was brilliant too. There were so many different places where you could go to find a nest, look at the beautiful eggs, and cross them off our lists. Best of all was the slurry pit. It stunk. It bubbled, like it was alive, and it was brown and warm. It was behind the dairy, and it was where they pushed all the poo after they'd finished milking, and we loved it. Towards the back, where it was oldest, a hard crust developed, and we would dare one another to run over it.

This next bit is a true story. I'm not making it up, honest! One day the postman decided to take a short cut to Dairy Cottage, and he chose to go across the slurry pit. It must have looked really crusty and firm, but half way over, the crust broke, and he went through. He was up to his neck in oldest, stinkiest cow poo. I didn't see it myself, of course. I was at school, but my big brother told me all about it ... and he wouldn't lie ... would he? Happy Easter!

Stephen & Wendy

Photo: Bev Rees



Calling all runners!

The annual Four Farms Challenge is coming up on Sunday May 18th, so there's still plenty of time to prepare.

There are options on 5k, 10k and 20k distances, with various routes around the parish of Deddington. All start from the old Castle Grounds, and follow a mix of road, pavement and bridleway. The event is open to runners of all abilities, from experienced athletes through to fun runners and families. Any profits go to local charities.

See website for further details: www.fourfarmschallenge.run



ROSARA at NICHOLSONS

If you have recently visited Nicholsons, you may have noticed a few changes taking place.

Over the recent months, we have been working to enhance the customer experience with an increased plants and retail offer, events programme and hospitality spaces.

From Monday 7th April, we invite you to visit us and explore ...



The Plant Centre - A meaningful retail experience, promoting a love of horticulture and the natural environment, supported by local artisans. The Book Room is a space to relax and peruse our collection of favourites in our cosy setting. Curated for sustainability, biodiversity and climate resilience, the Rosara plant selection is responsibly sourced and certified Plant Healthy.

The Rosara events programme, including talks, demonstrations, workshops and seasonal fairs to share a love of nature, inspire creativity and share knowledge.



Generous Hospitality Awaits in ...

The Yurt restaurant is a Michelin-recommended restaurant, serving brunch and lunch using the very best of the season's harvest from The Yurt Kitchen Garden, local suppliers and growers.

Yurt Private Dining Huts – Tucked behind The Yurt restaurant, the private dining huts are the perfect location for intimate dining experiences and business meetings. Dogs are welcome.

The Folly – Situated beside The Yurt, The Folly is a private dining room to entertain up to eight guests - a relaxing space immersed in plants.

The Tiny Café – Located beside The Plant Centre, The Tiny Café serves refreshments, delicate treats and light bites to refresh customers during their visit.

The Chipping Norton Flower Farm, known to locals as Chippy Flower Farm, arrives at Rosara at Nicholsons from Tuesday 8th April.



Tif and her team, just 6 miles down the road from North Aston, harvest seasonal fresh stems by hand on their no-dig farm in Little Tew and create beautiful bouquets for customers to purchase. Cut flowers will be available from Tuesday to Saturday.

We would like to offer North Aston residents a complimentary hot drink with a cake purchase from the Tiny Café.

Quote 'Good Things Come in Tiny Packages' to claim yours.

*Offer valid from
Monday 7th April –
Friday 11th April
2025*



www.nicholsonsgb.com

Spring has sprung ...

Following on from Stephen's *Nature Notes*, confirming the arrival of spring to North Aston, here's a selection of photos to illustrate the fact.

Those with an ear for such things may have noted that the first Cuckoo has been heard in the village, several weeks earlier than last year. It has since been a regular caller around the Hall Close area.



Photos: MP

The all-colour April edition of *Steeple Aston Life* is available for viewing or downloading from the Steeple Aston village website.



<https://www.steepleaston.org.uk/.../2025/03/SAL-Apr-25.pdf>



Photo: Annie Savage



Coffee Morning
Saturday 5th April 2025
10:30 - 12:30
Duns Tew Village Hall
Come along and hear
from the Dogs for Good
team!

Paws for Thought

With so much in the news these days about Artificial Intelligence, we were intrigued to hear that Mark Clavier, our rector here a few years back, had recently asked the AI App ChatGPT to compose a poem for him. He wanted a verse that was reminiscent of Edgar Allan Poe, but suggested as his theme the relentless sound of his spaniel Cuthbert's claws as they tapped and scraped across the floorboards. This is what it composed:



Clap and clip, and clop and cleave,
A chattering chill I could not leave.
The floorboards clicked beneath each stride,
A ceaseless sound I could not hide.
Clatter, clamber, closer still —
A clawed command against my will!

I clenched, I cried, "No more! No more!"
Yet still it clawed across the floor —
A creeping curse, a clockwork beat,
That clawed the silence from my seat.
Click-clack, clink-clunk, sharp and thin,
It clawed its way beneath my skin.

Clasping tight my trembling head,
I fled, I fell, I begged the dead —
"Take these claws! This cursed sound!"
Yet still it clicked, round after round —
Clip-clap, clack-clop, cold and clear,
A clawing whisper in my ear.

Now lost, alone, in darkened halls,
I drift, I dread those distant calls.
Click-clack, clip-clop, closer yet...
A clawed refrain I can't forget.
Forever chased, forever flawed —
By clattering claws of Spaniel paws.



All credit to Cuthbert, who celebrated his 14th birthday last month. Now living in Wales, he's evidently an inspirational dog!
Thank you to Mark for allowing us to publish "his" poem.

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 Stay: 347806



Josh is on the run ...

This month Josh Potts makes his début in the London Marathon. It's been something on his "bucket list" for years, so he applied for a place last April, never expecting to be accepted at the first attempt. Much to his surprise, when the ballot was drawn in June, his name was included.

At the time he wasn't really a runner at all, but recognised that it was an opportunity he might never get again. Accepting was the easy part. What followed has been months of hard work and determination. He started by training locally, on the roads around North Aston, but soon built up to his first competitive run in the London Vitality 10k event last September. It went well, and others followed. Before long he began to appreciate how much better he felt, not only physically but also in himself, mentally. He also discovered that he was actually quite good at running, and completed a whole string of races, mainly at 10k, but also across longer distances.

He's been training ever since, five evenings a week, either out running or in the gym. Having discovered how much running has benefitted his own mental wellbeing, Josh has chosen to run the Marathon in aid of Bipolar UK, a mental health charity with close personal ties; his older sister Kate was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder when she was a young adult.

"Bipolar is challenging, not just for the person with the illness, but for those around them too," she says. "As an illness it is very often poorly understood, which in turn can make things harder for those suffering with it to get the help they need. Organisations like Bipolar UK educate others about what is a severe and sometimes devastating condition, as well as supporting people affected by bipolar — those with the illness as well as those around them. They offer online support and in-person groups, along with helpful day-to-day interventions, like a free mood-tracking App. Bipolar UK stands up for and stands with people with the condition."

Kate's journey with bipolar has been an inspiration to Josh, and he says her courage has shown him the importance of organisations like Bipolar UK, who strive to broaden people's understanding of the disorder, and directly help those who suffer from it. They receive less than 10% of their funding from government, and rely heavily on charitable donations, as well as people like Josh who raise money and awareness through sponsorship in events like the London Marathon. They need that support to sustain and grow their vital services.

Would you be able to help? Josh has set up a Just Giving page, where you can read more about his running and his passion to support the charity that has been a lifeline for his sister. Please visit: www.justgiving.com/page/joshlondon2025

Traffic

Howard Ionascu has kindly picked up the baton from Niel, and before him, Tony and Marcus, with regard to liaising on traffic matters through the village, and writes:

Our local Councillor, Andrew McHugh (Deddington and local villages representative to Cherwell District Council) has been extremely helpful in trying to move things along in terms of traffic mitigation measures for the village.

He reports that North Aston currently has £14,500 of Section 106 money, currently unspent, that could be used for traffic calming. He has prepared a map (below, in draft form) with some suggestions to be put forward to OCC for consultation, and has asked that North Aston residents consult amongst themselves to ensure everyone is happy with the ideas.

Ardley and Somerton Parish Councils are keen to put in an application from all three villages. It saves everyone money.

The suggestions for North Aston include:

- A reduction to 40mph of the limit between the A4260 at The Fox and the entrance to the village, keeping the limit at 20mph through the village itself.
- Moving the village entry sign further west, to a point beyond Bee Cottage and nearer to Peach Barns
- The introduction of three chicanes: one at each end of the village, and a third near the middle by the Green.
- The introduction of a 40mph limit between North Aston and Somerton.

These proposals, together with others, such as a preference for speed humps rather than (or in addition to) chicanes, will be discussed at this month's Village Meeting (on Monday 14th April in the Old Bakery).

Howard Ionascu

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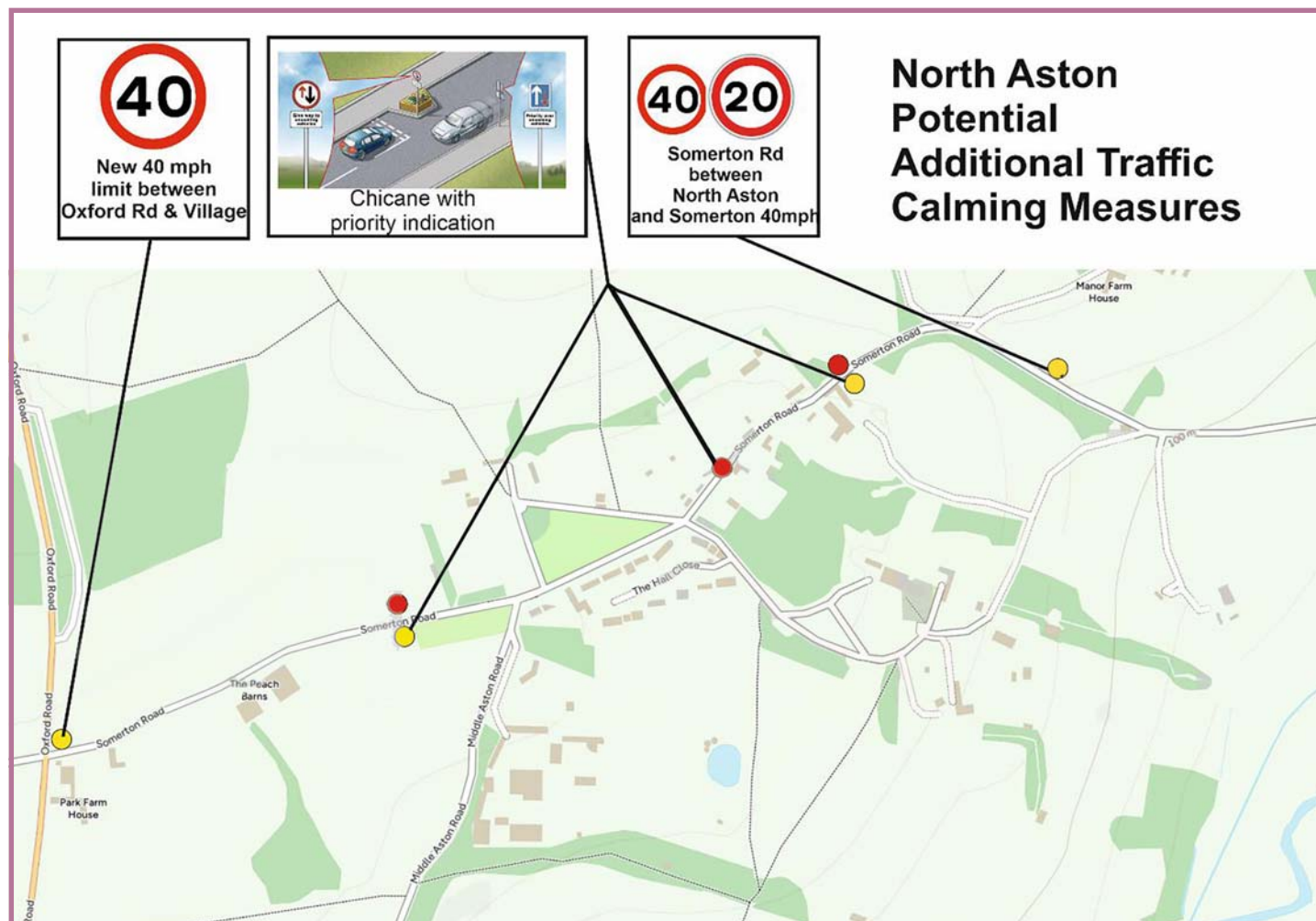
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The question of traffic calming through North Aston has been a recurrent theme for the best part of twenty years. All these options, and more besides, have been discussed at length, but this is the first time that there has been direct involvement by CDC and OCC, and a realistic prospect of progress.

Those previous discussions must be set aside and the slate wiped clean. If you would like your say, then please attend the Village Meeting. The map below is very much in "draft" form and includes a number of potential errors, such as the positioning of the "build-outs" or chicanes, but these can all be addressed during the discussion process.





The Church MATTERS



A World of Change

The seasons are again changing, thankfully. We have been treated to a few warmer days and nights. A few weeks ago snowdrops covered the churchyard and now bright yellow daffodils are nodding their heads in the breeze, heralding spring. The clocks have changed, jumping forward an hour, bringing longer and lighter evenings.

In our world things are constantly changing, sometimes at a pace faster than we would like. The rate of change in the world of technology is particularly rapid, with certain pieces of technology being invented, superseded and made obsolete within a few years. The way we listen to music for instance, moving from records, to audio tapes to compact disc and MP3 players and now using music platforms via our phones or other devices.

As our world constantly evolves and changes we can find ourselves appreciating and valuing things that stay the same, such as traditions, as they can help keep us rooted and grounded. On the 4th week of Lent (this year on the last Sunday of March) we celebrated Mothering Sunday. The celebration has shifted over the years, with more of a focus today on celebrating mothers. Traditionally it was a celebration honouring 'Mother Churches,' returning to where we were Baptised/Christened. The 4th Sunday of Lent is also known as Refreshment, when the lenten fast would be relaxed and celebrated with a Simnel Cake (a light fruit cake) decorated with two layers of marzipan and eleven eggs (one for each of the apostles minus Judas who betrayed Jesus).

Traditionally we celebrate Easter with chocolate eggs, although confectionery companies are coming up with a range of alternative ideas. This formed the basis of one of the challenges for the contestants on Lord Sugar and the BBC's *Apprentice* programme this year. The eggs are a reminder of new life that we see all around us in Spring. Equally the empty shell of the egg is a reminder of the empty tomb that first Easter morning, and the gift of chocolate a reminder of the gift of Christ and the new life we are promised through his resurrection.

As we move forward we carry with us the traditions of the past, blending and shaping them with today's world. However we celebrate Mothering Sunday and Easter this year, I pray that you will know God's love for you and those you love.

Harriet

Please note – my usual day off is a Monday.



Church Services in April 2025

NORTH ASTON

S.ASTON

TACKLEY

Sunday April 6th

9:30 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

11:00 am
Holy Communion
Book of Common Prayer

5:30 pm
Meditation on the Passion
of our Lord, with
Bach Organ Music

Sunday April 13th - Palm Sunday

9:15 am
Morning Prayer
from The Green
to St Mary's

11:00 am
Family Communion

10:30 am
From The Green to the
Methodist Church

Thursday April 17th - Maundy Thursday

6:00 pm
Holy Communion

Friday April 18th - Good Friday

2:00 pm
An hour at The Cross

Sunday April 20th - Easter Day

9:30 am
Holy Communion

11:00 am
Holy Communion

9:30 am
Family Communion

Sunday April 27th

9:30 am
Morning Prayer

11:00 am
Holy Communion

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 next Farmers' Market will take place on Saturday 26th April, from 9 am to 12:30 pm.

Dog Walking Service

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

Easter Egg Hunt and Coffee & Cakes

At the time of "going to press" it's not certain if the traditional Easter Egg Hunt will take place this year. Please watch out for updates on the village WhatsApp group. Not a member yet? Then let us know at the News and we can have you added to the group.

Blooming Tunes

Duns Tew Church will be hosting their annual "Blooms and Tunes" flower and music festival on the 17th and 18th May, raising money for the church and Katharine House Hospice. Full details will be in next month's issue.

Having a spring clean?

If you're having a clear out and have good quality clothes that need a new home, how about donating them to one of the six Katharine House Hospice charity shops across the area? Rather than throwing out your pre-loved unwanted items, donating to a charity shop is more sustainable and helps raise money for our hospice. You can find the details for all their charity shops here: www.khh.org.uk/retail.

NORTH ASTON ORGANICS

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April Birthdays

Tracy Boss

Evelyn Fuoco

Harry & Tony Godwin

Liz Hite

Mary Hoare

Mario Lemme

Franca Potts

Annie Savage

Susannah Taylor

Dawid Waszynski

Norman 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.



North Aston's increasingly well-attended Pop-up Pub, the unofficial "Baker's Arms", opens at 7 pm on Friday 4th April. Bring your own drinks, a selection of your favourite nibbles, and enjoy a convivial evening at The Old Bakery.



March winners were:

1st Prize (£10): Sue Hatzigeorgiou (#113)

2nd Prize (£5): Ian Pocock (#84)

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!



North Aston News

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