

NORTH ASTON

News

October 2025

#420





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Notes from the Chair

We live in an uncertain world, but how resilient are we both individually and as a community? How would we cope if there was a long power cut or another pandemic? Perhaps we need to prepare for any major disruptions to our "take it for granted" lives. There is plenty of local and national advice on various websites but it might be worth some thought.

On that cheery note, welcome to autumn and all the fruitfulness of an amazing summer – much of it on display in the church for Harvest Festival.

Best wishes,

Christopher

You can phone Christopher on 340358

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

Traffic - Keeping Calm

On Friday 19th September a meeting took place in the village with OCC Highways to discuss traffic calming in North Aston.

Clive, Stephen and I met with Billy and Andy from OCC Highways, and it was fortunate that Linda was passing by and was able to join the discussions.

As discussed at the last Parish Meeting (see Page 10) we asked for the "20's Plenty" sign on the Green to be replaced with an official 20 mph sign, and Highways have agreed to do that for us asap, at no charge.

In response to discussions about the positions of chicanes, their conversion into 'roll-outs' over time as money allows, and this all being put forward to the village for consultation, Billy and Andy have recommended the following:

We think it would be sensible to trial temporary build-outs and gain a temporary traffic order for the extended 20 mph limit that we discussed. By doing this, it will give the residents a feel of how the traffic calming measures would work. What we would need is a few volunteers to monitor the temporary locations, to assess if these work or don't work, and to provide us feedback.

From what I've been told we could be looking at a cost of £700-£1500 for the temporary measures. I have replied to ask what the temporary build-outs would look like and potential time-scale for putting them *in situ* if this went ahead. (*Hopefully, to be featured in next month's issue. An explanatory map is reproduced across the foot of the next page.*)

Cllr Gareth Epps has confirmed that the sum above can be taken from Section 106 funds.

Howard

Councillor's Report

We now receive a regular update from Gareth Epps, our new and very proactive OCC Councillor. A welcome change.

His recent report included news on the current swathe of major planning applications (reviewed on pages 8 and 9), and his delight at the granting of permission for the new Oxford United stadium near Kidlington. He also confirmed the sale of the old County Hall, and the proposed relocation of OCC offices to Speedwell Street, to be completed in the spring of 2027.

He revealed that the proposed speed reductions for the A4260 have been approved, despite many objections, principally from Banbury residents. To counter this, there was overwhelming support from Duns Tew and North Aston. His hopes that the speed camera might be reinstated fell on deaf ears, with TVP citing insufficient serious accidents at The Fox! He was equally disappointed by their reluctance to reveal figures for speeding enforcement, which suggest significantly fewer fines since 2019.

He was rightly encouraged by the publication of OxRail 2040 – an ambitious plan to expand the local railway network, including bringing forward the re-opening of Ardley Station for passengers. Do look that up online if you're not familiar. Gareth's contact details are featured in the panel on the left.

Cover: *Playing with AI. A photo of GWR North Aston Hall converted to a painting, 1930s style. MP*

Planning

Just one updated application this month. To examine any applications in detail, search for "North Aston" on the CDC Planning Register web page, which can be found at www.planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/

3 Greenside Cottages, North Aston, OX25 6HU. A further request has been made relating to the fitting of replacement windows and seeks to amend the details of a previous application (23 / 03027 / LB). The new reference is: 25 / 02156 / LB. A decision is expected by the end of October.

While there are few applications for works within the village, there are many on the books for the surrounding area. Please see the article on Page 8-9, and also refer to Howard's report (on Page 2) regarding progress on traffic calming.


When the Sun Shines

It is proving difficult not to make this month's issue all about planning, but these are important issues.

Most residents will be familiar with the solar farm that was created on Hill Farm in Duns Tew in 2017. It is visible to the west as you drive down the hill towards Deddington. The existing park occupies around 25 acres. IPV Flexgen now has plans to extend this, doubling the acreage, and tripling the potential power generation.

Meanwhile, also in Duns Tew and alongside the road to Worton, stands Spring Farm. ILOS Energy now proposes to create another solar farm here of around 60 acres (25 hectares) capable of generating 12 Megawatts of power.

The developers have arranged for a Public Consultation Meeting in Duns Tew Village Hall on Wednesday 25th November, between 3 pm and 7 pm. Alternatively, you may view details online: www.ilos-energy.co.uk/springfarm (not yet live, so check back if you get a 404 error.)




September's winners were:

1st Prize (£10): Mel Oakley (#19)
2nd Prize (£5): Rebecca Brown (#94)

Congratulations! If you're feeling left out, and 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!



Costly Congestion

With the nights drawing in and winter fast approaching, thoughts turn to congestion. Not so much of the nasal variety, but of the proposed Temporary Congestion Charge for the City of Oxford, which comes into effect from the 29th October.

This will cover various streets at the heart of Oxford, including Hythe Bridge Street, St Cross Road, St Clements Street, Thames Street, Marston Ferry Road and Hollow Way.

Anyone working in Oxford, or planning a Christmas shopping trip, needs to be aware that driving within the 'ring road' (A40, A34, A423, A4142) may incur a £5 cost per day. ANPR cameras will log all vehicles, and any that are not exempt, and have not paid the fee by midnight the following day, could face a £70 penalty. If you work, live or travel regularly within this area, free permits are available that will offer exemption, but you need to register.

The system is in addition to the city centre's existing Zero Emission Zone, and is likely to remain in force at least until the reopening of Botley Road.

For clarification, please visit <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk> and search for "Congestion Charge" or "ZEZ", or both.



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- Wide variety of fresh seasonal organic vegetables at affordable prices
- Minimal packaging & zero food miles
- Supporting the local economy



Too busy? Why not try our Veg Box Scheme?

Fresh vegetables delivered straight to your door!

Email: northastonorganics@gmail.com

Tel: ((01869)) 347702

visit the website at:
www.northastonorganics.co.uk

A plan showing the possible locations of the three build-outs, as originally envisaged following lengthy debate in 2018, but now the basis for ongoing discussions with OCC

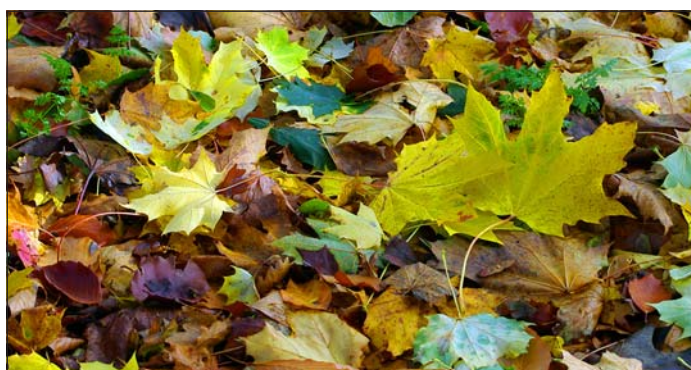


North Aston History Notes

With Stephen Rees

As I sit and write this, we are just a few days away from October which, I think, is one of my favorite months of the year. I like it when the nights begin to draw in and we start to light the log-burner and draw the curtains, although big brother Tony always hates it, saying there's still stuff to do outside and not enough hours in the day. He gets fidgety if he's indoors too much, but I love the long indoor nights!

October is the real month of change. The temperature starts to drop away properly now, as do the hours of daylight. Change is definitely afoot! The trees start to absorb all the goodness from their leaves and fill them with waste material they don't want, which is one reason why they change colour. The scientific bit of all that is a bit complicated for me, but they shed their leaves to reduce water loss and also to reduce weight on their limbs, to help them cope with high winds and heavy dumps of snow.



All this normally makes for a beautiful show of colour, and great fun walking through the leaves, kicking them about, and generally acting like kids again. The acorns drop, as does the beech mast and the chestnuts, although the conkers

Photo of deer rutting by Stephen Rees



normally fall a bit earlier. Apples fall off and feed an abundance of mammals, large and small, as do the cob nuts. The squirrels have been busy for a few weeks now, burying them ready to dig up in the winter, although I have no idea how they know where to find them again!

Many of our hibernators are really busy now, trying to put on stores of fat that will see them through the long winter's sleep. I would love to hibernate through the winter too! The main hibernators in our country are Dormice, Bats and Hedgehogs, though lots of other mammals do have long sleeps, but get up now and then to feed.

Fungi have started to pop up everywhere, some growing huge and looking most impressive. I went through a stage a few years ago of photographing the little tiny ones and enlarging the photos. They look so amazing! Like things from another planet. We always used to walk past them, but then Wendy and I had great fun crawling about through the woods, looking for different ones on old tree trunks and branches. There are over 15000 different varieties in this country alone, making for so many colours, shapes and sizes. There's always something new to see, but not to touch or pick!

Wendy saw loads of Swallows down Long Meadow the other day (26th September), all furiously feeding, and getting ready for their epic journey back to hotter places. By now they will all have gone, and new migrants will be arriving soon to over-winter with us. Many different geese, ducks, waders and swans come to Britain for the winter. We love visiting the flood meadows in winter, and look forward to seeing the flocks of Teal and Widgeon. Redwings, Waxwings and Jays all arrive now, as do many more Thrushes, Blackbirds and some of the smaller migrants from Scandinavia. It's a good month for bird spotting of all sorts.

Our owls are busy hunting and calling in the evenings now, making beautiful sounds. They call a lot at this time of year, as they establish their territories for winter hunting, and to attract a mate too.

So October really is the month of change. There's so much to see, making walks more interesting. If you can, get out there and have a look. Even a short walk is good for your body and health, and more so for your mind.

Here's a list of spots worth looking out for: mushrooms and fungi, including Shaggy Ink Caps on The Green, under the big Sycamores. Owls. Migrant birds. Wild fruit, such as Sloes, Rosehips, Blackberries, Rowan berries, Crab Apples, Hawthorn berries, Elderberries and many more. Then there are fir cones, conkers and nuts. You could collect fallen leaves and press them into the pages of a heavy book. Admire spiders' webs in the morning mists, or perhaps the chance sighting of Roe or Fallow Deer, as we enter the rutting season. Wrap up warm, get out there and enjoy!

Steve & Wendy

OXFORD ceramics Fair 2025

25 - 26 October 2025
10 am - 4 pm
St Edward's School
Oxford
OX2 7NN

www.oxfordceramicsfair.com

Tickets: £8.50
Concessions £7.00
Under 16 free

Work by Laura Scobie. Photography, Shannon Tuffs

Craft Potters Association CERAMIC REVIEW

NEWS FROM THE FARM

Happy First Birthday to the Honesty Shop!

It's hard to believe it's been a whole year since we opened the doors to the North Aston Farms Honesty Shop.

What began as a small experiment has far exceeded even our wildest expectations — and we're delighted it's become such a well-loved part of village life. Huge thanks are due to Nick Miller and the farm team for turning the seed of an idea into a thriving community shop.

We thought you might enjoy a peek behind the scenes.

In the past 12 months, our tiny self-service shop has seen:

- ❖ 10,125 transactions.
- ❖ 1.5 tonnes of fresh meat sold.
- ❖ 4000 litres of milk, cream and yoghurt sold.
- ❖ 2000 loaves of bread baked and bought (That's a lot of very early mornings for Sue!)
- ❖ 1750 boxes of eggs collected
- ❖ 2500 bags of salad sold

We are amazed at its success.

As some of you may know, Nick, who has been working for us for the last four years (and Mark & Ginny for 18 months before that), was the driving force behind the creation of the shop which grew from Mark's former veg stall into a successful collaboration between us and North Aston Organics.

Nick did all the interior design and construction himself. He sources all the third party produce and creates the very special atmosphere in the shop. His success in leading this new enterprise for us has given him the confidence to spread his wings and set up his own new venture.

With our support and encouragement, he will be opening a new shop at Peach Barn in the Park Farm yard (as well as continuing to manage the honesty shop's third party produce as part of his new independent business). Read on for more details from him and his business partner Pete.

All the best, *James, Vicky & Jeremy*



Background photo: Angie Hanna. Thanks Angie!

NORTH ASTON FARMS & DAIRY

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Order online	Visit our shop	Join a milk round
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Find out more at www.northastonfarms.co.uk

Greetings from NORTH ASTON FARM SHOP

We're very excited to be opening **North Aston Farm Shop & Community Hub** at Peach Barns from **Friday 7th November**. The Honesty Shop will continue as your everyday village store, while the new shop will hopefully become a place to do your bigger weekend shop locally — it will be staffed, and with a much wider range of fresh organic meat, bread, cheese, alcohol, coffee and more, plus a bookshop, community library and upstairs events space.

The Farm Shop will probably be open on Fridays and Saturdays (10am-6pm), plus Sundays (10am-4pm) - we will confirm in the next issue - along with many more exciting details.

Before we dive in, I want to start with a **big thank you** to James, Vicky and Jeremy, and to Mark & Ginny, for employing me on the farm these past five and a half years, for all the experience I've gained, and for letting me put into practice some of my crazy ideas. And thank you for helping in the planning of this farm shop. Without your trust and support, it wouldn't be happening. Also a huge thank you to all of you who I've spoken to over the past years (as I built and then managed the honesty shop) and who have provided me with encouragement, ideas and support. It's been hugely appreciated.

About us

For those I haven't met yet — I'm Nick. I've worked and lived in North Aston since 2020, first in the cob house, then in my converted bus, and now at Number 16 with my partner Kara. I've worn a lot of hats over the years — music promoter, Christmas tree logistics manager, carpenter, event manager, lorry driver, cheeseboard reviewer, veg grower, farmhand, and most recently sales & marketing manager for North Aston Farms. The common thread has always been building things, starting projects, and bringing people together.

Pete, who will be helping me run the farm shop, grew up on a farm in Cumbria, trained in drama and spent many years acting in film, TV and theatre, and worked in the Christmas tree trade with me before settling near Abingdon as a painter-decorator and handyman (with occasional acting work!).

Our values

The farm shop will build on the North Aston ethos of thrift, resourcefulness and doing things properly. It's not about fancy branding or throwing cash at problems — it's about reusing, repurposing and making the shop accessible to everyone.

At the same time, we believe things can be beautiful and welcoming as well as affordable.

Our values are clear: **integrity, sustainability, community, transparency and quality.**

This will never be a Daylesford or Diddly Squat. No gloss, no exclusivity, no waste. Just good food, fairly traded, regeneratively-produced, and honestly sold, in a space that feels warm and human.

How you can help right now

- ❖ **Volunteer:** We're hosting work weekends through October to fit out the shop. Any skills welcome — from carpentry to cooking, decorating to gardening.
- ❖ **Jobs:** We're hiring a farm shop assistant (Fridays–Sundays) and a part-time cleaner.
- ❖ **Wishlist:** We still need kit — chest freezers, picnic benches, baskets, mugs, plant pots, artwork, and more. If you've got treasures in a shed or attic, we'd love to give them a new life.
- ❖ **Support us financially:** We're pulling this together with savings, family loans and credit cards. If you'd like to invest, loan, or donate, please get in touch. We have a full business plan available.

For more information on all of the above, please visit our new website www.northastonfarmshop.co.uk

Save the dates

- ❖ Thursday 16th October
Acoustic Music Night / Community Fundraiser
- ❖ Saturday 8th November OR 15th November (TBC)
Farm Shop Grand Opening
- ❖ Saturday 13th December
Christmas Market

For now, you can reach me on nick@northastonfarms.co.uk or 07751 084168. You can also follow our project on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube [@northastonfarmshop](https://www.youtube.com/@northastonfarmshop)

Thanks for reading — and thank you in advance for your ideas, your help, and your support in bringing this to life.

Cheers and we hope to meet you down at the shop soon,

Nick (& Pete)





After another brief lull, the Gigaclear contractors are back in action again this month. The Middle Aston Lane will be closed to through-traffic, at least during regular working hours, for the first ten days of October. It may already be closed by the time this is published.

There are other temporary stoppages planned for the weeks ahead, including the Somerton Road through the middle of the village. This will involve partial and sometimes full closure between 13th and 24th October. Householders should have had a letter through the door about this. Access to properties should be possible, but you may need to negotiate with the contractors if they're actively digging outside your home! The farm's Honesty Shop may have to move to Peach Barns during this period, so please check with Nick.

As some will have discovered, it is now possible for a number of North Aston homes to be connected to the new full-fibre network. It depends on how far the infrastructure has progressed immediately outside your property.

Those residents who have already registered their details through the website will be contacted soon after this becomes possible, either by email, or with a telephone call. If you haven't completed the registration process, the link is below. Just enter your postcode and complete the details.

Once the property has live access to the network, you'll be able to book an installation. This is a fairly easy process and can be done online or, if you'd rather discuss it with a human, by calling the customer service team. The install team are booking roughly two weeks in advance, and householders may choose their own date for this to happen. It will involve either an overhead cable, if that is how your home is currently connected to broadband, or by the digging of a short trench linking the building to the nearest node on the main network, typically in the pavement outside.

Since Gigaclear has installed the network, it will (at this stage) be necessary to take out a new contract with them (or one of their recommended agents) to access the full-fibre system. If you already have a broadband contract with another supplier, and it has some period still to run, Gigaclear will offer up to 12 months free access, to run alongside your existing contract. To take advantage of this, you must discuss this with the customer sales team directly - it cannot be arranged online at the moment.

Why would you move to full fibre? The simple answer is speed. The broadband network in the village will peak at around 70 Mb/s download, and perhaps 20 Mb/s upload. Connected to full-fibre you can expect speeds up to ten times quicker than this, and with almost no drop-off during peak times.

To register, visit www.gigaclear.com/locations.

If you have any specific concerns, you can contact Gigaclear's Customer Operations team by phone or email:

- Telephone: 0370 774 0537
- Email: networkbuildqueries@gigaclear.com

Nerxt month we hope to publish a first-hand account from a village resident of what it's like to have the system installed, and how it changes connectivity.



The Bicester Bridge club has been active in the town for over 50 years with a weekly evening session, currently based at the Highfield Social Club in George Street.

While most of the current members play a competitive, fast-paced game, it was felt that there are others who may prefer a more relaxed game and so the club are starting a new Afternoon Social Bridge, starting on Thursday 2nd October.

It will also be at the Highfield Club, with ample parking and not far from the town centre. Refreshments will be provided beforehand, with play starting at 2pm and finishing at 4pm.

A host will be available for anyone without a partner, and someone will also be there for advice, if needed. The cost will be £3 for a 12 board session.

If interested and would like more details, contact the secretary on 07749 953125 or email bridgebicester@gmail.com.

Give it a try; play for free during October

Bicester Green

The next two dates for the free Repair Café at the Bicester Green shop on Sheep Street will be Saturday 8th November and Wednesday 17th December, between 10am and 2pm.

Join the team for a fun and friendly time when the skilled Bicester Green volunteers will be on hand to help repair a wide range of items, including electrical items, household gadgets, DIY tools, and leather goods.

If something's broken, bring it along – they'll do their best to get it working again!

While you're there, relax with some tea, coffee, and homemade cake, and enjoy the opportunity to see the repairers in action. You might even pick up a few tips and tricks to help you fix things yourself in the future!

16 Sheep Street - see you there!
www.bicestergreen.org.uk



A Plethora of Planning

Little may be happening here in North Aston on the planning front (Page 3), but the same can't be said of North Oxfordshire. Within a radius of just three or four miles, the world around us is set to change, and some might say, not for the better.

Last month you should have received, through the post, a four-page glossy flyer outlining the plans for the Oxford Strategic Rail Freight Interchange, OxSRFI for short, which is earmarked for a plot (marked **C** on the map below) in the north-east corner of Heyford Park, on the edge of Ardley village.

The leaflet introduces the period of a Statutory Public Consultation on a project which has national significance. Very briefly, the SRFI is intended to take heavy goods vehicles off the roads of the south east, away from the Channel ports, and move them nearer to the middle of the country. Goods and freight arriving in the UK will head to Ardley by train, where it will be transferred from rail to road. HGVs will then leave the SRFI to join the M40 at Junction 10, there to distribute their containers and heavy loads around the country. By the same token, goods destined for export will arrive at Ardley from the industrial heartlands of the Midlands, be loaded onto trains, and then sent off to Europe and the coastal ports.

To enable this, some 6.5 million square foot of warehousing will be constructed, some of it 25 metres tall. That's about 80 foot. More importantly, the surrounding road infrastructure will be completely updated. There will be by-passes for Ardley and Middleton Stoney (the latter to ease access to Bicester's burgeoning industrial estates), several new roundabouts will be constructed, some roads will be closed and, most critically of all, Junction 10 will be completely revised.

What will this mean for North Aston? In truth, perhaps not very much. The village is "protected" from larger vehicles by the various bridges in Somerton, which are either too narrow, too low or too weak to accommodate HGVs. What we will see is a significant improvement in traffic flow around Junction 10 and along the B430 from the motorway towards Bicester. We may also be able to see some of the taller buildings on the skyline, as we look east across the Cherwell Valley,

although these may be masked by the trees beyond Somerton.

If you haven't yet done so, please do read the leaflet, and decide how you think this may impact on our community. As a project of national significance, the Public Consultation is, perhaps, largely symbolic. It is almost certain that the SRFI will be built, and with it, all the associated infrastructure. It's mainly a question of when and how, not if.

Towards the end of August, an application to create a new warehousing complex (**A**) to the west side of Baynard's Green roundabout was given the green light. Its not a done-deal but it looks likely to go through. A similar development (**B**) on the eastern side was turned down, but is likely to go to appeal, and could then also be approved. Both are vast complexes of concrete and steel. They provide jobs, but add further stress to the existing infrastructure. As with the SRFI, the direct impact here may be slight, but they are symptomatic of the creeping industrialisation of this corner of North Oxfordshire.

On September 1st another major application was submitted to Cherwell District Council. This involves the creation of an English version of the famous Puy du Fou "theme park". The French original, more often termed a *parc d'attractions*, has been repeatedly voted the best in the world. It is nothing like Alton Towers or Thorpe Park, but offers live theatrical shows based on historical re-enactments. To be sited (**D**) beside the B4100, east of Baynard's Green and north of Bucknell, it will include about a dozen show venues, three hotels and a conference hall. The parent company is looking to invest £600 million over ten years, and will offer around 2000 jobs. The NAN is not the ideal platform for detail, so visit the consultation site for more information: www.puydufouconsultation.co.uk

What will this project mean for North Aston? Again, in immediate terms, perhaps not very much. Most road traffic is expected to arrive via the M40 or A43, while the planners hope a significant proportion of visitors will use rail or coach. A handful of additional vehicles may pass through North Aston each day, *en route* to Baynard's Green, but in the grand scheme of things, they may go unnoticed. Some argue that the benefits, in terms of employment, economic investment, and prestige, outweigh the disadvantages. We shall see.

That may not be the case for the revised application submitted by Dorchester Group for the construction of a further 9000 homes on Heyford Park. This had been on the cards for some time, although just 6000 were originally envisaged.

Since the application was submitted, Heyford Park has been adopted by the Government as one of its flagship "New Towns". This rather suggests that 9000 may be just the beginning. Oxfordshire is committed to building 100,000 additional homes before 2031, and perhaps 20,000 of those may end up being erected around Bicester. The rest? The prediction is, Heyford Park will have to accommodate many more yet.

On the plus side, the plans recommend the re-opening of Ardley Station to rail passengers, which could be a notable improvement to local public transport and connectivity.

Will the plans for Heyford Park have an impact on the village? Almost certainly. Through-traffic will increase as residents from these new homes, heading west, are tempted to pass through Somerton and North Aston to get to the A4260. Aston View in Somerton, the lane (currently a no-through road) that branches south-east from the Heyford Road, could become an access road to and from Heyford Park. That might make the route through North Aston even more appealing.



Then there's the view. The published plans and drawings show a townscape similar in form and style to Milton Keynes, with tall buildings, tower-blocks and wind turbines. The outlook across the valley, currently largely green with just the aircraft shelters dotting the skyline, will change irrevocably.



Does that matter to you? As with the SRFI, there's little we can do as individuals or communities to stop this happening, but we can influence *how* it happens. You can visit the CDC Online Planning Register, search for these applications, and comment on them, but the deadlines are approaching fast, so you'll have to be quick.

As mentioned in a round-robin email in September, there are other proposals that may be of interest. At a Mid-Cherwell meeting of local parishes staged last month by OCC Councillor Gareth Epps, it was suggested that the Mullin Automotive Museum at Enstone may still go ahead, despite the death of Peter Mullin in 2023. A similar museum in the USA has now closed, so it seems unlikely that the development will proceed exactly as planned, but something else may take its place, given that approval has been granted.

It may be associated with the future of Soho House. Having racked up massive losses, the business was sold off in August for a reputed £2 billion. Ron Burkle remains the majority stakeholder in the Soho House Group, and acquired the option to purchase the Mullin Automotive Museum site, which stands adjacent to Soho Farmhouse. The Museum plans, as they were approved, provide for around 30 holiday "lodges" as well as apartment buildings and other residences. There must be a strong temptation to go ahead with this, and link the two developments, and simply abandon the 'museum'.

Will this impact on North Aston? Yes, certainly. The Somerton Road is already the favoured route for visitors to Soho Farmhouse, as demonstrated by the regular flow of gleaming minibuses with blacked-out windows and elegant Porsches and Bentleys that stream through the village. Their numbers will increase.

All of these developments will have a cumulative effect on the area where we live. It also seems likely that they will all go ahead, in one form or another, so it's not a case of stopping them happening, but on mitigating their impact.

Some may bring benefits, in terms of financial investment, jobs, the local economy and even improved road and rail infrastructure. At the same time, they will result in more traffic and fundamental changes to the environment that surrounds us. Our focus should be on influencing the minutiae of each proposal, and encouraging the councillors and politicians that represent us to use their influence to minimise the negative impact and enhance the positive.

In the meantime, here in North Aston, Howard has been working hard to advance the plans for traffic calming through the village, so please refer to his report on Page 2. *MP*



Our purpose is to connect people with climate and nature through meaningful experiences. We place people, principles and planet before profit.

We invite you to explore our carefully curated Plant Centre and Rosara retail space featuring locally-grown, fresh cut flowers courtesy of The Chipping Norton Flower Farm. Enjoy generous hospitality from our Michelin-recommended Yurt restaurant and brand new Tiny Café.

To spark your curiosity, Rosara at Nicholson's offers a varied events programme consisting of dining experiences, seasonal fairs, talks, demonstrations and workshops.

We hope to welcome you soon.

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North Aston Village Meeting

Tuesday 9th September 2025 ~ The Minutes

Officers present: Christopher Woodhead (CW, Chair), Stephen Walters (SW Treasurer), Richard Hinzl (RH, Secretary).

Those present: Howard Ionascu (HI), Marcus Potts (MP), Nick Miller (NM), Trudy Busby (TB), Clive Busby (CB), Mark Stay (MS), David Rogers (DR), Mary Healy (MH), Tony Rees TR), Cllr Gareth Epps (GE).

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

Formal Business

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting dated 14th April 2025, as published in the May issue of the *North Aston News*, were approved (CW proposed, MP seconded, Approved).

2. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that use of the NA Parish bank account has had issues, with the two local Post Office paying-in facilities not being able to work with the NatWest system, so money from the Fête has not been banked. Bev Rees will try again at NatWest Banbury this week.

Further, that as Niel Nicholson still maintains the online computer programme for the accounts and is away on vacation, SW has not been able to access all the information he requires to finalise a report.

SW noted we may need to request an increase to the precept for next year to put the village in a more secure financial position, given the general increase in costs across the board, not least with current insurance costs. As soon as SW has all financial and banking information, he will forward an updated summary to MP for inclusion in the next available village newsletter.

3. Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (MCNP) Review

MP was able to help the attendees understand the purpose of the MCNP and its benefits and disadvantages. The purpose of the plan was to bring together all the surrounding villages as one group in order to give a stronger united voice that advocates development proposals that are more agreeable to the residents. The various villages have agreed certain sites within and alongside their neighbourhoods that would be appropriate for contained development in accordance with the development goals mandated by national government to local councils.

Due to unique circumstances, NA has no development sites deemed appropriate within or alongside its boundaries at present. By approving the plan, NA is in a slightly more secure position in terms of not being earmarked for inappropriate development. By not approving the plan, NA on its own could possibly face development being forced upon it.

The developer of Heyford Park, Dorchester Group, has increased its formal proposals for a further 9,000 homes from the 6,000 it had previously submitted, including infrastructure, such as a hospital, schools and working toward the reopening of the old Ardley Station. Heyford Park is not within the MCNP and acts independently.

It was noted and understood that while the MCNP may be helpful, anything can change at any time at the will of government.

CW proposed we agree the MCNP, RH seconded and it was approved with 3 abstentions.

At this point Councillor Epps joined the meeting.

4. Traffic Calming

The plan for chicanes that had been approved by the village in 2018 was handed out. There is also a new plan that has been created that is very similar to the old plan, but includes chicanes at either end of the village as well as one in the middle of The Green. The village sign would also move further down the road toward the junction to Duns Tew.

HI has been leading this in discussions with William Evans from OCC, who will come out again September 19 to have another look and discuss concerns and answer questions.

GE informed attendees of next steps, which are: (1) finalise design, (2) hold a public consultation that allows for a balance of views but is NOT a referendum, (3) after the consultation is finished and the village is ready to proceed, a project manager from the council is assigned to aid with drawing funds from existing S106 funds available from the Heyford Park development (approx. £25,000 currently) and coordinating the installation.

Opinions are diverse. CB on behalf of the local farming community, communicated a preference for raised platforms and other attendees agreed that would be their preference. Cllr Epps informed that raised platforms cost in the region of £50,000 each, and that level of funds would not be available for at least three years and entirely dependent on development progress at Heyford Park.

General consensus was reached to move forward with chicanes for now as a phased approach that would then be supplemented by raised platforms when further funds from Heyford Park become available.

The September 19 site meeting with OCC will be attended by HI, SW, CB and RH to determine optimal placement of chicanes to frustrate traffic speed through the village, while also ensuring clear sightlines and safety for residents. It will also be asked if the village could have "moveable" chicanes which could be more easily repositioned if the initial positioning proves not to be the best. Further, that two proper 20 limit signs will be requested to replace the "20 is plenty" sign, as the latter is seen as a request rather than the current law. (See page 2)

The safety of the Duns Tew junction was also raised, as there are increasingly accidents and near misses occurring there.

Cllr Epps reported that speed limits on the A4260 have been reduced in places. Our stretch of the road varies from 50 mph to 70 mph, where we have dual carriageway, then to 60mph toward the Hopcroft's Holt junction. Cllr Epps will look into the possibility of further reducing and harmonising the speed limits along the A4260, as has been done on other sections.

There is also progress being made to make the road between Somerton and Ardley a 40 mph road, and it was thought helpful if this was to be extended to North Aston. However, there is a separate highways team that deals with this. We are to be put in touch.

The speed signal at the Somerton end of the village is currently not operational. The sign at the Duns Tew end still functions.

The bus stop at the A 4260 junction impedes view when the bus pulls in. Cllr Epps will look into this.

CW will contact the owner of the Manor and request that he has the trees trimmed on his property near the 20 limit sign at the Somerton entrance to the village to ensure better visibility.

Informal Business

5. Village Fête

Overall, this was considered to have been a successful year for the Fête. The Gazebos worked very well on the day. A decision will be made at the next Fête meeting, which will be scheduled for early January, as to whether the village goes all-in on gazebos and retires the old marquees. The approximate revenues contributed by each stall were published in the August issue of the *North Aston News*.

MH noted that the bar made considerably less this year and part of that is because she tries to keep prices low to emphasise this event as a "loss leader". It delivers atmosphere rather than huge profits. This raised the question as to whether this was the correct direction to go, or should we increase prices to effect more profit? Attendees agreed that keeping the bar process low feels more in keeping with the ethos of the Fête generally.

It was also mooted that to increase future revenue we may want to start the Fête at midday rather than 1 pm, to attract greater sales from the food stalls and bar during lunch time. The question of whether the run time goes from 3 to 4 hours needs further discussion at the next proposed January Fête Meeting.

6. Defibrillator: No update.

7. Any Other Business

CB to be paid for mowing the green as a thank you.

7. Next of Next Meeting

Scheduled for Tuesday, December 2, 2025, to discuss *Carols on the Green* at Christmas and other seasonal issues.



The Church MATTERS



October Festivals

The month of October is bookended by two festivals. We begin the month celebrating Harvest, giving thanks for all the wonderful gifts God has give us. October ends with Halloween, traditionally All Hallows Eve, the night before we celebrate all Saints day, when we remember our loved ones who have died.

The Harvests this year have been very mixed, with the farmer's crops being hit by the lack of rain, whilst the hedgerows seem to have produced a bumper crop of plums and blackberries. Which lead me to thinking about the harvest we produce in our own lives. In August 16 and 18 year olds received their exam results, and we could think of these as a harvest of their hard work over the two previous years. The world likes to prioritise these and sporting achievements as our Harvest, yet we are so much more than results and accolades.

Personally the greatest harvest we can produce is when we touch another person's life with love. The special personal anecdotes that we remember and share are like berries, juicy and sweet, giving bursts of flavour in our lives. The memories of laughing and crying together like rich fruit provide taste and texture.



Church Services in October 2025

NORTH ASTON	S.ASTON	TACKLEY
Sunday October 5th		
9:30 am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	11:00 am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	5:30 pm Harvest Festival & Auction
Sunday October 12th		
9:30 am Morning Prayer	11:00 am Family Worship	5:30 pm Holy Communion
Sunday October 19th		
9:30 am Holy Communion	11:00 am Holy Communion	5:30 pm Evensong
Sunday October 26th		
9:30 am Morning Prayer	11:00 am Morning Prayer	9:30 am Family Communion
Sunday November 2nd		
9:30 am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	11:00 am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	5:30 pm All Souls Service
Sunday November 9th		
9:30 am Remembrance	11:00 am Remembrance	5:30 pm Remembrance



Photos: Sarah Bourke-Borrowes

Just as we celebrate the land's harvest with our harvest festival services, so we also annually celebrate the lives (harvest) of our loved ones with a special 'All Souls Service' at St Nicholas Church, Tackley on 2nd November at 5:30pm. Everyone is very warmly invited to come and join us, lighting a candle as we remember and celebrate the harvest of their lives.

God bless,

Harriet

Please note – my usual day off is a Monday.

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

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

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 Richard Bailey, Tony Godwin (Treasurer), Vicky Taylor (Secretary), Annabel Bevan, Ginny Stay, Jane Jana, Jeremy Taylor, Kildare B Borrowes, Sarah Godwin co-opted.

Announcements

Road Closures

Various road closures coming up this month, starting with the **Middle Aston Lane**, which will be closed between Grange Farm and Valley View House from 29th September until Friday October 10th for the installation of fibre optic cabling. Through-traffic will be restricted, but access to properties should be maintained.

The **Somerton Road** through the middle of the village will be closed between 13th October and the 24th, for the same reason. Because of this, the **North Aston Farms Honesty Shop** (or a version of it) will be moved up to Peach Barn for the time of the road closure, as will the collection point for Vegetables and Dairy.

A little further away, **Earl's Lane in Deddington** (round the back of the surgery, linking to Clifton) will be closed from 20th October, potentially for three months, while a water main is replaced.

The Upper Crust

Just a reminder that the next *Convocation of the Deddington Pork Pie Appreciation Society* will be staged in the Deddington Arms on Sunday 12th October, starting 4.00pm.

Pouring Oils on Troubled Waters

Following the popular E H Shepard exhibition, the *Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum* in Woodstock will be hosting another art exhibition this autumn entitled *Remembrances of War*.

It will feature works by painter, photographer, and filmmaker Paul Joyce. It sets Joyce's paintings alongside artefacts from the museum's collection which explore how everyday people rationalise and live through extraordinary events and conflicts. The exhibition will run through to 18th November, and is open Tuesday to Saturday 11am to 5pm, and Sunday 2pm to 5pm.

Sold! Ross wields the Gavel!

Local antiques celebrity and long-time auctioneer, Charlie Ross, will be hosting an evening of chat and reminiscence at Somerton Social Club on Saturday 18th October, from 7:30 pm. The bar will be open, nibbles will be free, and tickets for the evening are £15, with all profits going to St James's Church. **Sold!** is also the title of Charlie's autobiography, published last year. No doubt signed copies will be available on the day! Should be a laugh.

Creative Women

Deddington History Society will host a talk by Katherine Bradley at the Primary School on Thursday 9th October that will focus on the women involved in the *Arts and Crafts Movement* in Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds around the turn of the last century, c1900, including Jane and May Morris. Tickets at £5 on the door for non-members.

Getting back to Base

Many of us can remember the roar of the F111s as they took off over the valley. Upper Heyford Heritage now runs regular tours that visit the former USAF base's Cold War relics like Victor Alert QRA and the nuclear weapons bomb store. The next tour is on Sunday October 5th, from 9:30 am - 2 pm. Register at the Heritage Centre, Castle Street. Tickets £25. Email uhheritage@outlook.com.

October Birthdays

Daniel Durnin
Olivia Durnin
Tom Godwin
Lia Hammond
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.

Deddington Farmers' Market

This month's Farmers' Market will take place on Saturday 25th October, between 9 am and 12:20 pm.

Dog Walking Service

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

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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 Stay: 347806



North Aston News

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