

NORTH ASTON

News

December 2025

#422

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MERRY
CHRISTMAS!

NORTH ASTON NEWS

DECEMBER 2025, No:422

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Notes from the Chair

Another year seems to have whistled by – but at least the return of December means we are approaching the best event of the year in the village; the Carols on the Green. We get a great many visitors these days but, as it is so popular, I am sure there will be plenty of us there to outnumber the outsiders.

So I hope everyone enjoys Advent and the lead up to Christmas.

Best wishes,

Christopher

You can phone Christopher on 340358

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

Village Meeting - December 9th - Agenda

There will be a Village Meeting on Tuesday 9th December in the Old Bakery, starting at 7:00 pm. The outline Agenda is as follows:

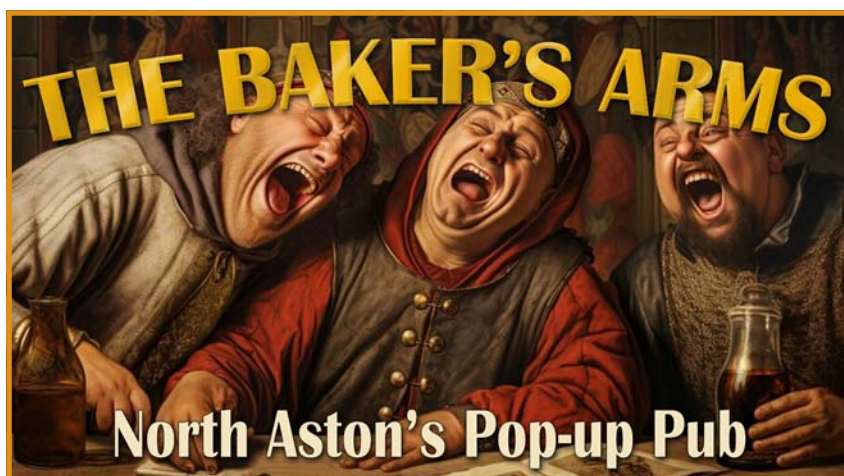
Formal Business

1. Welcome.
2. Approval of Minutes of last meeting (9 September 2025, and as published in the October issue of the News).
3. Treasurer's Report and setting Parish Precept for 2026/27.
4. Village bank accounts.
5. Village Insurance – Asset Register.
6. Election of Officers.
7. Traffic Calming - Update.

Informal Business

8. Mikron Theatre Company – Thursday, June 18, 2026.
9. Christmas Activities.
10. Defibrillator.
11. Any other business.
12. Date of next meeting.

Please check the village WhatsApp group for updates nearer the time. If there are any other topics you'd like raised for discussion, please do so under *Any other business*. It would also be appreciated if you notified Richard by email: secretary@north-aston.co.uk.



North Aston's Pop-up Pub, the unofficial "Baker's Arms", will be a regular fixture on the first Friday of each month through the winter. December's gathering will take place from 7 pm on Friday 5th December. Bring your own drinks, a selection of your favourite nibbles, and enjoy a convivial evening with friends at The Old Bakery.

Cover: Repairs to the church lychgate have begun, with the temporary removal of the stone tiles.

MP

Planning

Just a couple of new applications this month, and an update. 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/

The Peach Barns, Somerton Road, OX25 6HX. The application to allow *Change of Use* to that of on-site Farm Shop was approved. The shop opened in November. Ref: 25 / 02431 / F.

The Hall, St Mary's Walk, OX25 6AA. An application relating to Discharge of Conditions 3 (doors & windows), 4 (stone) and 5 (masonry) has been made relating to planning ref. 22 / 02859 / F. A decision is anticipated in January. Ref: 25 / 03041 / DISC.

Middle and Nether Cottages, St Mary's Walk, OX25 6AA. An application has been made to carry out roof repairs to the front elevation of both properties, including ridge and replacement lead. Comments must be submitted before the end of December, with a decision expected by January 20th. Ref: 25 / 02869 / LB.

Congestion Clarification

The Temporary Congestion Charge in Oxford continues to cause ructions, with businesses claiming to be losing trade as visitors and shoppers are deterred from entering the city centre. However, now that the system has been running for a month, there has been some clarification of the detail.

While, in general terms, the Charge relates to traffic entering within the ring-road, it only applies along certain streets and at certain times:

- Hythe Bridge Street (near Worcester College)
- St Cross Road (near St Catherine's College)
- St Clements Street (by Magdalen Bridge)
- Thames Street (Hythe Bridge to Abingdon Rd)
- Marston Ferry Road (Banbury Rd to Headington, but peak hours only 7am – 9am and 3pm – 6pm)
- Hollow Way (From Cowley towards the city centre, but peak hours only 7am – 9am and 3pm – 6pm)

There is no charge on any route after 7 pm or before 7 am. This also means that it is possible to visit the JR, for example, via the Headington Road roundabout (A40) or the B4150 without incurring a charge.

In addition to private cars, motorhomes will also be charged, but commercial vehicles (vans) are exempt. OCC is offering free Park & Ride bus journeys for the next 3 months. Up to two adults accompanied by up to three children can claim free travel to and from Oxford's Park & Ride sites with a valid parking ticket, costing £2.50 for up to 16 hours. For further information, please visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk.



November's winners were:

1st Prize (£10): Liz Nicholson (#17)

2nd Prize (£5): Tony Rees (#26)

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

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



Photo: MP

Norman West, 1933 - 2025

It is with enormous sadness that we note the passing of Norman West on the evening of Thursday 27th November. Born here in the village, Norman had roots going back through many generations of North Aston families. Aside from a period of National Service, he had spent almost his entire 92 years in the village. Over that time he had become a cornerstone of the community and it is impossible to overstate the importance of his contribution to North Aston life. He will be sorely missed. There will be a full commemoration of his life in the next issue.

Tractor Run

This year's festive Tractor Run in aid of the Katherine House Hospice will take place on Saturday 13th December.

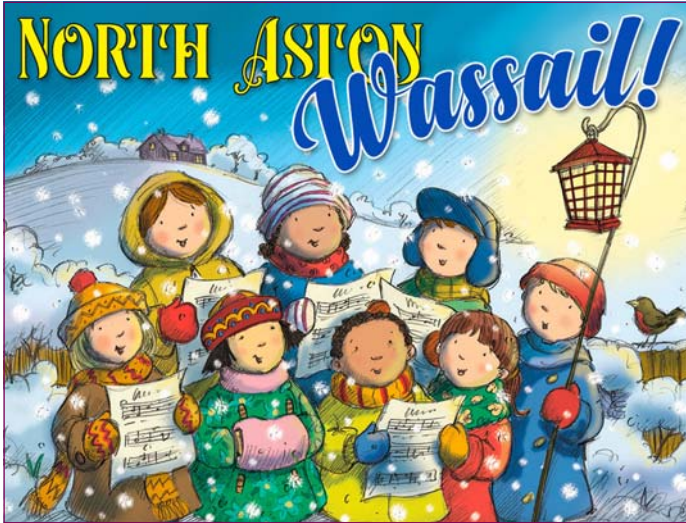
This year a fleet of around 100 fairy-lit tractors will be touring the local

villages to spread Christmas cheer and raise money for the charity. The Run will depart from Barford St Michael at around 5pm and follow a 20-mile route through many north Oxfordshire villages, including South Newington, Milcombe, Bloxham, Adderbury, Aynho, Clifton, Deddington, Hempton and on to Banbury.

This year the Run celebrates its tenth anniversary, and the target is to raise £100,000. It really is a sight to behold! There will be several notable local participants, and we understand that Robert has already started constructing his design. Find out more: www.khh.org.uk/tractor.



Photo: Katherine House Hospice



The traditional North Aston Wassail is back! There are plans for the carol singers to do a slightly abbreviated version of the village Wassail on Sunday 21st December, from 5pm.

Following on from the Carol Service in the church, on the same afternoon at 3:30 pm, the Wassail will call upon homes within the village on a kind of "request a carol" basis.

The organisers would love as many singers as possible to be part of this and the plan is to visit those who would like to be sung to, rather than trying to cover the whole village.

So, it would be lovely if you could Annie Savage know if you would be willing to join the troupe, and also, let her know if you'd like to be visited! The singers will be open to requests, so if you have a favourite carol, please let her know!

If you'd like to be involved, please drop a line to info@north-aston.co.uk, send Annie a message through the WhatsApp group, or have a word with her if you see her out and about.



The inaugural North Aston Christmas Market will take place on Saturday 13th December at the new Farm Shop at Peach Barns from 10 am to 6 pm. As well as beautiful British-grown Christmas trees and handmade wreaths, the shop will be fully stocked with all kinds of local produce, from the finest organic pork, beef, venison and chicken, to beers and wines. A select group of local artisans will also be offering a range of crafts and delicious edibles, from pies and cakes to chutney.

To get everyone into the festive spirit, there will be live music, hot stew, mulled drinks and boozy coffee, while the North Aston Carol Singers will serenade everyone with seasonal songs. The event is free entry, and there's parking on site.



This sounds like excellent news for Cherwell residents! From Thursday 1, January 2026 Cherwell District Council will be introducing kerbside glass collections as part of their "commitment to a greener, cleaner future".

This new service will mean it should be easier than ever to recycle glass bottles and jars by placing them in the blue wheelie-bin. No more trips to the bottle bank.

The change is part of the national *Simpler Recycling* initiative, helping to ensure consistent recycling across the country. CDC insists it's a big step forward for sustainability.

Aside from the request that glass should be rinsed and placed directly into the blue recycling bin, the details aren't clear yet. There is no need to remove labels or lids. However, more information about exactly how the service will work should be available in time for next month's issue of the *News*. Expect to find a tag attached to your bins over Christmas!

Deddington Leads the Way



Technology maintains its relentless advance, and after almost exactly 150 years, the original telephone exchanges are now being phased out. The first of some 4,600 redundant exchanges

in the UK has now been decommissioned, and it's the one that has served Deddington for the past 70 years.

Ironically, the Deddington exchange had the distinction of being the first in the country to be upgraded to all-fibre, which was completed in early 2013. Such is the pace of change that, just 12 years later, that "new technology" is itself passé.

The exchange handled its last call on November 30th. The future of the building itself remains uncertain.

There are new faces behind the bar at the Red Lion in Steeple. Bryan and Renée Walker took over last month, and have already introduced a few changes.

There are regular events, including a Quiz Night (the next on the 10th from 8 pm), Poker on Monday evenings (from 7 pm), and there will be Carol Singing on the 19th, between 6:30 and 7:30, with Nick Cleobury on the piano. A new Supper Club has just started. Pop in and find out more or visit the website.

theredlionsteepleaston.com



North Aston History Notes

With Stephen Rees

Wendy always says I worry about things too much, and that I think too much, and she's right. I can't help it! Something pops into my head and it sets me thinking, and that leads to thinking about something else, and so it goes on. It's the same when I sit down to write a piece for the *News*. I start with one idea, then my mind wanders onto something different, and before I know it, I'm miles away! You really don't have to read this, you know, but just in case ...

I had to go to Banbury a few days ago. It's something that I absolutely hate having to do, but as I sat at traffic lights, I found myself looking at the side of a house, covered in a big painting. I suppose some might call it graffiti, but it started me thinking.

Graffiti, right or wrong? Some love it, some hate it, and some would even pay a fortune to own a piece, especially if it was by Banksy. There's plenty of it here in our little village, although the cars that race through here probably haven't time for a second look. The village fountain, for example. It's covered in graffiti. There's hardly a spare inch that someone hasn't used to carve their initials since it was put up in 1863. If you peer round the back it's really like some kind of time travel experience, with the names of long-gone folk, as well as a few who are still here. I found my name, dated 1976. I also found my Dad's, but I couldn't quite make out the year. There was Eric Short and Mark Davidson, Fred Amor and, most poignantly, Norman West. All my brothers are there too. Graffiti or social history, I love it.

In the church, behind the organ, there's some original wood panelling, and it's covered in names and drawings from the countless choir boys who used to pump the organ full of air. Not just names, but pictures too — some rude, others of WW1 planes, as well as poems (again, mostly rude!) and names going back generations. It's amazing. If it was down to me, they'd be protected by a sheet of glass. Have a look next time you go in, and see if you can spot Bill Rees, my Dad, Billy my son, and me too.

Another place where you'll find some initials is on the stone pillars at the entrance to St Mary's Walk, while the hollow tree in front of the old school is covered, inside and out. Mind you, I'm too large now to get inside the hole, so perhaps we need to send a little feller in to photograph it.



Photos: Stephen Rees

There are lots of other trees on the estate and around the village with names etched into them, and the horse-mounting stone on The Green too. I don't know now if the ice house in the grounds of The Hall is still there, but I remember from years back that the red bricks, designed like an igloo, had names carved into them, but I've not seen it in probably 50 years.



Graffiti behind the church organ. Discernible surnames include Rees, Thomas, Mobbs, Bagg, Mold, Lee and Taylor.

I don't know the history of graffiti, but I believe it goes back to Roman times, and it's as near to immortality as common folk could get back then.

A couple of names have popped into my brain recently, and mentioning the old milking parlour last month made me remember an old boy called Alby. He lived where Marcus and Franca live now. I remember that he used to go down to the parlour with a tin on a

handle every day to get his milk. He was a great old boy, with loads of time for us kids, and telling us stories. I remember going with him one day when, all of a sudden, a dog fight broke out on The Green. He ran over and broke it up, then came back to us covered in blood. Undeterred, he carried on down to the milk parlour, dripping blood all the way. I was in awe of him from that day on! I don't know what happened to him*, only that it was one of the bravest things I'd ever seen.

Lastly, I'd really appreciate some help with another name that came back to me the other day, with some fondness. It was a bloke called Fred Abel, a traveller that used to come a couple of times a year in his old canvas-covered donkey-drawn cart. He'd stop here for a week or so, and used to come to Mum's house every night with an old tin and ask for some hot water. Mum would always fill it with tea while I stood on the step and talked with him. I can remember he asked me to find him some mushrooms, or catch him a pike. Dad was the bailiff then, so caching the pike was definitely not going to happen, but I did get him a bag full of mushrooms, and he gave me 2p out of an old leather bag. Isn't it funny. I can remember that like it was yestearday, but I can't remember what Wendy said to me last night. And then I wonder why she gets cross with me!

Steve & Wendy

*Alby's surname was Friend, and he lived with his half-sister Sophia, whose married name had been Burdon. They moved out of the village in 1985, to be nearer Sophia's daughter in Oxford. Alby died in 2002, Sophia in 2004, and both are buried here in St Mary's churchyard. Fred Abel travelled the roads with his 'one-man circus' until 1976, when he was robbed of

all his savings — some £200. A whip-round soon exceeded that, and Fred was persuaded to retire to a converted chicken shed in Tadmarton. Known widely as The Donkey Man, he died in February 1982 at the age of 72. MP



Photo: Rob Forsyth

News from NORTH ASTON FARM SHOP

We're delighted to bring you our December update from the new North Aston Farm Shop & Community Hub - and to finally catch our breath after an exhausting, but remarkable and unforgettable first few weeks.

It has been an awful lot of work getting this shop from idea to launch, but what carried us through was the generosity of this community - thank you so very much! Over the last month or so, we've been supported by an extraordinary group of local volunteers and we couldn't be more grateful. People have quietly stepped in, rolled up their sleeves and gone above and beyond to help us get over the line. A huge thank you, also, to the Taylor family for making this project possible...



Over 800 people came through the doors on our opening day, and the warmth and enthusiasm was very encouraging. Since then, the shop has been buzzing every weekend. It's been lovely to see so many familiar faces alongside new neighbours and visitors from surrounding villages. Whether people are popping in for their full weekend shop, a fresh loaf of bread, a thoughtful gift, a bottle of wine or a mug of fresh organic coffee, the shop is already becoming the warm, welcoming hub we hoped it would be. Families have been discovering The Peach upstairs, and we're beginning to see the first hints of how that space will grow and evolve.

Our Values

At the heart of the Farm Shop is a belief in food that shows real care - for the land, the air, our waterways, wildlife and the people who grow, make and enjoy it. Our aims are simple but important:

- To champion local farmers, landworkers and rural crafters & makers
- To support truly regenerative farming that actively builds thriving soils
- To be radically honest about what we sell and where it comes from
- To help make seasonal, organic food accessible and fairly priced for all
- To celebrate, connect with and contribute to our local community

These principles guide every decision we make, from the producers we work with to the way we source, price and present food. We've started with the essentials and are adding more each week, especially in the run-up to Christmas. If there's something you'd like us to stock, just let us know - we'll always do our best.



What's in the Shop

The shelves are already full of exceptionally good food and we're adding more each week. We will be selling fresh North Aston Farms organic beef most weeks; plus locally sourced venison; organic lamb, pork & bacon, and what we genuinely believe to be the gold-standard of organic chicken, produced by our friend Clare Hill.

We're also pleased to be offering Christmas birds from Lydiard Turkeys, a local family farm. Their Bronze birds roam orchard paddocks and reach around 25 weeks before processing - more than twice the age of most commercial birds - giving them exceptional flavour. Birds can be ordered from their website and collected from the Farm Shop on the 23rd or 24th. Pop-in to the shop to find out more ...

Alongside the delicious meat, we're stocking fresh dairy and ice cream, local cheese, charcuterie, sourdough and pastries (including Sue's incredible almond croissants), seasonal veg from North Aston Organics, household supplies, festive treats and a very popular booze selection!

Christmas Market

Saturday 13th December

Our first Christmas Market is on Saturday 13th December, with food, local makers, and live music - including the North Aston Carol Singers at 3pm - and the local contingent of tractors making an appearance on their way to Katherine House Hospice Tractor Run shortly after 4pm. We'll be serving hot stew, mulled drinks and boozy coffee, the bar will be open, and any remaining Christmas trees will be available for sale - as well as a shop full of festive food and gifts.

Christmas Opening Hours

We'll be closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, but open for some additional days on Monday 22nd, Tuesday 23rd and Wednesday 24th, as well as Monday 29th, Tuesday 30th and Wednesday 31st. The Honesty Shop will remain open throughout.

We're now sending weekly email updates and sharing regular news on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube @northastonfarmshop. Sign up to our mailing list at the shop or on our website www.northastonfarmshop.co.uk.

Wishing you all a peaceful and delicious December - and thank you again for your incredible support. See you at the shop!

Nick & the North Aston Farm Shop team
team@northastonfarmshop.co.uk



Several residents have already taken the plunge, and joined Gigaclear. So far, the feedback seems to have been very positive, with customers finding the process fairly painless, quick, and cost-effective.

Currently, Gigaclear has a special "Black Friday" offer that includes a low price of £17/month for their Superfast contract. This offers speeds of up to 200 Mbps. That's still three times the speed of the best village broadband. Their Ultrafast rate is £19/month (around 450 Mbps), while their top package, the so-called Hyperfast (potentially, 900 Mbps) is £29/month. All are based upon an 18-month minimum term.

If you are already tied into a broadband contract, Gigaclear will offer free full fibre broadband for up to 12 months while you wait for your existing contract to end. That means you can access the faster full-fibre service without paying twice.

If you would like to investigate the possibility of full-fibre broadband to your property, check the website and register your interest at www.gigaclear.com/locations.

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

- Telephone: 0370 7740 537 or 0370 7740 509
- Email: networkbuildqueries@gigaclear.com

Acoustic Nights in The Peach

The idea of an *Acoustic Open Mic Night* looks set to become a regular feature in *The Peach*, the village's new Community Hub. There have been two so far, and there will be more on the third Thursday of each month. Here's Annie's take on the first event, which took place in October:



"It came as an unexpected surprise to read that North Aston was to have an Open Mic Night, so I went along not knowing what to expect. A community space is very much at the heart of the new Peach Barn Farm Shop project, and it has been set up over what used to be the test kitchen for Peach Pubs. It's an intimate space which comfortably accommodated around 30 of us, with an area for the performers to do their thing. A bar had been set up downstairs so having grabbed our drinks, up we headed.

"The project is the vision of Nick Miller. He's been the mainstay of our own Honesty Shop and I'm full of admiration for what he is putting together, and hope the village embraces it. The evening started with Nick giving a brief introduction before launching into two piano pieces. Both were his own composition and they got the event off to an amazing start. Not only a great honesty shop creator but so talented on the keyboard!

"What followed was a couple of hours of really mixed and impressive performances - Julia singing two lyrical pieces whilst accompanying herself on her guitar (words by Steeple's own Lord Byron, Carl Tomlinson), Jack on one of his 30 harmonicas (the boy can sing the blues!) and Helen on guitar and vocals. No valley cultural event would be complete without Carl reading some of his poetry. All in, it was an impressive line up. The highlight for me was Nick and Arthur Dale joining each other in an unrehearsed piano improvisation. It was brilliant.



"The next event will be on Thursday 18th December. There's no obligation to perform or that awful moment when audience participation looms and eye contact is avoided! Genuinely a joyous evening.

Annie Savage

NORTH ASTON FARMS & DAIRY

*Organic, pasture-fed meat, ice-cream & more
... right on your doorstep!*

Order Online	Fresh Beef Boxes plus individual cuts of beef, lamb and rose veal, ice cream & more! Free Delivery within 15 miles (on orders over £40) or collection from the farm.
Visit our Shop	Open 7 Days a Week 8 am – 7 pm Fruit & Veg — Meat & Dairy Cupboard Essentials Find us at: The Old Bakehouse, North Aston, OX25 6HX
Join a Milk Round	Twice-Weekly Deliveries Monthly invoice Reusable glassware Delivery before 7:30 am Milk, Yoghurt & Cream Extras including Bread, Butter, Eggs, Juice, Meat and Ice-Cream

Find out more at
www.northastonfarms.co.uk

North Aston Choir

It's not too late to join the North Aston Choir! Rehearsals are held on Monday evenings from 6pm at The Old Vicarage, by the corner of The Green. Be prepared to create some lovely Christmas music for the Carol Service on Sunday 21st December. Contact Miranda Doggett on 340625 or 07834768015 for more details.

Service of 9 Lessons & Carols

Sunday 21st December

Spicing up Local Government

When 6 Become 1 (or 2, or 3)

There are three proposals on the table regarding possible reorganisation of local government in our area. Currently, there are six separate councils responsible for administering most of Oxfordshire, but that's about to change.

One possibility would see these six all combined into a single "Oxfordshire" unitary authority, which would absorb the responsibilities of the current Oxfordshire County Council as well as the five district councils, including Cherwell.



The second sees Oxfordshire split into two, with one authority covering the north (roughly equivalent to Cherwell, the city of Oxford and West Oxfordshire) and a second responsible for the south (South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire) called Ridgeway.

The third option would result in three new authorities, separating out an enlarged Greater Oxford Council (covering not only the city, but also the surrounding 'green belt', up to and including Kidlington) alongside a North Oxfordshire Council and a south Oxfordshire "Ridgeway" Council.

This month, our local CDC Councillor, David Rogers, offers an initial oversight of what may be involved. In next month's issue, Gareth Epps, our OCC Councillor, will give his own take on what it all means for us.

The three alternative ideas have been developed from the core criteria of:

Efficiency & Capacity: New structures should be large enough to achieve financial efficiencies, have stronger financial stability, and improve overall capacity to deliver services.

Population Size: A guiding principle is a population of 500,000 or more to achieve efficiencies, though proposals can set out a rationale if this figure is not appropriate.

Single-tier structure: Proposals should generally seek to establish unitary local government, merging district and county council responsibilities into a single authority.

High-quality service delivery: The new structure must prioritize and be designed to improve the quality and sustainability of public services.

Collaboration: Councils must demonstrate cooperation with each other to build a shared evidence base and reach a consensus on proposals that reflect local needs.

Community Engagement: Proposals need to show genuine opportunities for neighbourhood empowerment and include community views in the planning process.

Ultimately, these decisions will not be agreed locally but made in Whitehall by a Secretary of State.

Unitary government will be a win in terms of "joining up" services which can at times seem confused and disjointed.

The challenge is one of economies of scale versus local accessibility and accountability.

The savings stated are in the realms of tens of millions of pounds after a number of years of settling in. This is against a budget of £1.1 billion for the current County Council which would have to take on the functions that the five District Councils currently provide plus the establishment of local committees.

I went to the Oxford Civic Society on Saturday 1st November for the presentation of all three proposals. The debate was led by an academic who stressed the importance of ignoring the politics of this and focusing on the needs of the people, the delivery of services and the importance of the size "sweet spot." Not too large and not too small.

There are pro's and cons with all three options. We have little say on what will be imposed upon us and I would be very interested to hear your feedback.

David Rogers

You can send your thoughts to:
david.rogers@cherwell-dc.gov.uk



While you await Gareth's follow-up next month, here are some useful links you may wish explore in the meantime:

One Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire
<https://oxfordshire.gov.uk/oneoxfordshire>

Two Councils

Oxford and Shires | Ridgeway
<https://twocouncils.org/home>

Three Councils

North Oxfordshire | Greater Oxford | Ridgeway
<https://www.oxford.gov.uk/three-councils>

The maps work through from the current situation, via the One Oxfordshire solution and the Two Councils option, to the Three Councils, above

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



Keep Calm, it carries on ...

One of the topics at the forthcoming Village Meeting will be *Traffic Calming*. The groans reverberate around the village at the very thought! However, after almost thirty years of debate and discussion, things are actually moving a little faster at long last ... and not just the traffic.

Some may have spotted that the "20's Plenty" sign that graced the edge of the Green for the past ten years or so has now been replaced by an official 20 mph speed limit sign. Whether being to the statutory design has any greater effect remains to be seen, but that's just the beginning.

As Howard Ionascu, North Aston's designated Traffic Officer, confirms, "OCC has agreed to provide some temporary or trial build outs to replicate chicances, so that the village can assess their likely impact before the official consultation. We are awaiting a date for this and it will require some detailed feedback on their effectiveness."

"There seems to be a great deal of confusion between OCC and local councillors about the status and amount of Section 106 funding," he adds. "Figures of how much may be available to us have ranged from £25k to £75k, but most seem to think it will be in the upper region, especially once the next round of house building is completed at Heyford Park. OCC is confident that we could go ahead with chicances, if that is our preference following the trial period and consultation."

In addition, Gareth Epps, our local OCC Councillor, writes to explain that he has had the first in a series of meetings to progress the village traffic calming measures in our area. One aspect for discussion includes possible changes to speed limits. "It would be really helpful if any changes requiring a Traffic Regulation Order, including changes to the speed limit, can be clarified," he says. "This is so that the legal process can be scheduled. The parishes of Somerton and Ardley are looking to bring in a 40mph limit on the Port Way route, and there has been discussion about extending this to the Duns Tew (Fox) crossroads. If there is support, this could be progressed as one project, splitting the cost of the TRO and helping the S106 funds go further."

He believes that "the scheme is now scheduled for 2026-27, and costings are in process. I've asked that we be collectively be updated if there are any issues on that front; there is some flexibility now built into the process. Once these details are clarified, there should be a date for public consultation in early 2026, and a final decision to be taken shortly thereafter."

This reduction in the speed limit would be in addition to the revised limits already scheduled for the A4260, Banbury-Oxford road, which have already been approved.

Gathering Winter Fuel ...

Thames Valley Police issues regular advice about scams. Earlier this year the Government confirmed that the Winter Fuel Payment scheme would be reintroduced for individuals in England and Wales born before 22 September 1959. Since then Action Fraud has received around 3,000 reports of crimes relating to Winter Fuel Payments, with victims reporting losses totalling over £27,000.

These payments are made automatically. Those eligible do not need to do anything. If you receive any text messages or emails about Winter Fuel Payments, they're a scam.

Do not click links or respond to texts. If you spot a suspicious message, you can report it for free by forwarding it to 7726.



Gather friends, family, or colleagues this festive season and celebrate together at The Yurt at Rosara.

The Christmas menu has been created by head chef, Andrew Carr, showcasing the best of the season's ingredients - local, sustainable and full of flavour.

Enjoy dishes such as wild duck leg croquette with truffled potato aligot, pan-roasted hake with Jerusalem artichoke and mussel chowder, or a festive roast three bird ballotine served with all the trimmings. For those who prefer plant-based options, our winter squash and wild mushroom arancini is a delicious alternative.

Finish on a sweet note with indulgent desserts such as dark chocolate tart with kirsch cherries or Christmas pudding ice cream with poached winter fruits.

The Michelin-Recommended Yurt provides a beautiful, relaxed setting for family gatherings, team lunches, or festive get-togethers with friends. Let them take care of the details while you enjoy delicious food, fine wine, and good company!

The Festive Party Menu is served from Tuesday to Saturday lunchtimes, 12:00 – 14:30, with a two-course menu costing £30, and three courses for £35. Spaces fill quickly during the festive season, so early booking is advised.



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PCC Meeting

At their Meeting on 11th November, the PCC discussed among other things:

Safeguarding. We are now on level 3, which is where we ought to be, and no issues have been reported.

Roof lead. Smart Water, which identifies lead that is stolen, has been applied to the church roof and windows, and warning stickers applied.

Card payments. We decided to acquire a Goodbox standalone contactless payment device that will live in the Church, secured, and will allow anyone to make a donation to the Church with a Card, mobile device, etc. St Mary's will now have caught up with our near-cashless society, and we do hope everyone who comes to the Church will use it for giving, for however small an amount.

Lych Gate: We got the go-ahead to start work on this. The roof has been supported by acrow props, and the tiles have been removed and safely stored. The next phase will be to dismantle the whole structure, and then the detailed and expert work on its complete restoration can begin

Fire Risk. A fire risk analysis has been prepared and a number of needed actions will be undertaken.



General repairs. The most urgent jobs highlighted by the 5-year architect's report have been commissioned, but with a lot more to come.

Los Pasadas. A new initiative this year, where figures of Mary and Joseph spend a day and a night with a different family for 9 days from 16th to 24th December. They may or may not go out to do different things in the world. This represents the quite long and difficult journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, and the lodgings along the way. You may see some of their progress on the village WhatsApp.

Upcoming Events

Sunday 21st December. *Carol Service.* 3.30 pm. With the wonderful North Aston Choir, and parts to play for children.

Wednesday December 24th, Christmas Eve. *Carols on The Green* from 6:00 pm.

Thursday December 25th. *Christmas Communion.* 9:00 am.

Sunday 28th December. *United Benefice Service* in St Mary's starting at 10:30 am.

Sunday 4th January. *Epiphany Family Service.* 9:30 am.

Tuesday 6th January. *Epiphany Taize Service.* 6:00 pm. More about this in next month's News.

KBB



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 Nicholsons offers a varied events programme consisting of dining experiences, seasonal fairs, talks, demonstrations and workshops.

We hope to welcome you soon.

www.nicholsonsgb.com | 01869 340342 | The Park, North Aston, OX25 6HL



The Church MATTERS



Advent & Christmas

In the church the countdown to Christmas officially begins on Advent Sunday (the 4th Sunday before Christmas). Many people today countdown the 24 days of December with an Advent Calendar, and in the church we countdown the Sunday's to Christmas with our Advent Wreath.

The lead-up to Christmas is a delightful and busy mix of events and preparations, from parties and Christmas plays to shopping and cooking. In all this excitement and business it is worth taking a moment to pause and think about what we are looking forward to and preparing to celebrate. The Advent Wreath helps us to reflect as we light the four outer candles, remembering the people and their dreams in the long journey through time towards Christ's first coming at Christmas.

The Patriarchs or fathers of the Christian faith, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Hope they had for the future.

The Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) who told us of the birth of Christ, who would bring Peace between God and us, and one another.

John the Baptist, who in God's Love was sent to prepare the way for Jesus.

Mary the mother of Jesus who responded with Joy at the news of Christ's coming.

As we listen to the news of wars across the world and abundant suffering, we are reminded again of the importance of holding on to, and working together with Hope, Peace, Love and Joy. As we Hope for a better world, we build Peace with small simple acts of Love, helping everyone to find Joy everyday.

Building this better world filled with Hope, Peace, Love and Joy takes time, and continues beyond Christmas Day into 2026. If you would like to think about how to find Joy in the simple things, then please click on the QR code (top right) or search 'Twelve Joys' of Christmas', (cofe.io/TheJoyOfChristmas) for a series of meditations written by Nicholas Papadopoulos the Dean of Salisbury Cathedral.

I wish you all a Christmas filled with Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.

God bless,
Harriet

Please note – my usual day off is a Monday.

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 contact 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, Jeremy Taylor, Kildare Bourke Borrowes, and Sarah Godwin (co-opted).



Church Services in December 2025

NORTH ASTON	S.ASTON	TACKLEY
Sunday December 7th		
9:30 am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	11:00 am Holy Communion Book of Common Prayer	5:30 pm Evensong
Sunday December 14th		
9:30 am Morning Prayer	11:00 am Family Service	5:30 pm Holy Communion
Sunday December 21st		
3:30 pm Carol Service	7:00 pm Carol Service	9:30 am Said Communion 5:30 pm Carol Service
Wednesday December 24th - Christmas Eve		
6:00 pm Carols on the Green	4:00 pm Crib Service 11:30 pm Midnight Mass	4:00 pm Crib Service
Thursday December 25th - Christmas Day		
9:00 am Christmas Communion	10:30 am Christmas Communion	9:30 am Christmas Communion
Sunday December 28th		
10:30 am United Benefice Holy Communion	No Service	No Service
Sunday January 4th		
9:30 am Epiphany Crib Service	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

Announcements

Deddington Farmers' Market

The Christmas Farmers' Market in Deddington will take place on Saturday 20th December, between 9 am and 12:30 pm. As well as all the usual food and craft stalls, Thames Valley Police will also be there. If you have any concerns, questions or local issues you'd like to discuss with them, they'd welcome a chat.

Dog Walking Service

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

Pop-up Pub

The North Aston Pop-up Pub returns to the Old Bakery on the first Friday of the month from 7pm. See Page 2 for more details.

Sold Out!

Tickets for the Duns Tew Drama Group pantomime have sold out! Sorry if you missed the cut - try again next year!

Somerton Table-Top Sale

There will be a table-top sale in Somerton Village Hall on Saturday 6th December, between 10 am and 2 pm.

Road Closure

Advance warning that the dual carriageway section of the A4260 will be closed for a couple of nights next month. The temporary measure will extend from the 14th to 16th January, between 8 pm and 6 am, to allow for re-dressing the road surface.

Bird Flu

An incidence of Bird Flu was recorded nearby in November. If you find any dead or sick birds, do not touch them or their feathers, and keep dogs away. Notify Defra on 03459 335577.

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December Birthdays

Paul Brown
Clementine Le Clercq
Stefan Liberadski
Joshua Potts
Tony Rees
Caroline West & Peter West



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



Advent in North Aston

'Las Posadas' is an Advent tradition in Latin America, which over recent years has spread to include the UK, and this year, North Aston!

'Posada' is Spanish for 'inn' and over the nine nights leading up to Christmas Day, the celebration recreates Mary and Joseph's journey, looking for somewhere to stay.

Wooden figures of Mary and Joseph will be hosted by a different household each night from 16th December, finally joining *Carols on the Green* on Christmas Eve.

Many people, especially with children, take the figures out and about as part of their daily activities, and post pictures for the community to see. We have several young families in our village, and hopefully the not-so-young will join in too!

If you'd like to offer Mary and Joseph a place to stay, look out on the village WhatsApp, or message Ginny on 07842925595

Hempton Christmas Fayre

The annual Hempton Christmas Fayre will take place on Saturday December 13th, between 11:30 am and 2:30 pm in The Old School Room. There will be hot lunches, refreshments, festive stalls, a raffle and tombola, followed by an Auction of Promises.

North Aston News

The *North Aston News* is edited by Marcus Potts and designed and produced by CMC Graphics. It is printed by Nicholsons of North Aston, and distributed monthly, free of charge, to all the residents of the Parish of North Aston. A full-colour electronic edition is also sent out to an extensive emailing list every month. To be included in that list, please contact the *News*, stating your wish to be added to the mailing list. Contributions are welcome, which need to be in an electronic format (except Classifieds and Announcements, which may be hand written). To submit an item please email: info@north-aston.co.uk. All images should be at the highest possible resolution. The Editor strives to adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, and reserves the right to amend or modify content, where appropriate, and to express editorial control. All content is copyright the original author and/or CMC Graphics. © 1997 - 2025.

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