

ASTONS NEWS

Part of the Comms information group:

Astonsnews: enews@theastons.net, theastons.net

The Astons Villagers Facebook Community

Astononline Twitter (X)

March 2026 issue 621

WHAT'S ON IN MARCH

BINS: Green & Brown: 5, 19 GREY: 12 & 26

The SODC Binzone app is no longer supported due to internet security changes. Go to SODC Website

ARTICLES LIST Page 3, ADVERTISERS' INDEX Page 5

Weekly Events

Day	Time	Event	Location	Page
M to F	various	various classes	Village Hall	13
Tues	10-00-12.00	Astons Café	Village Hall	9
“	10.00-12.00	Post Office	“	9
“	10.00-12.00	Free Superfast Internet Access	“	9, 19
Fri	9.30-11.30am	Toddler Group (Term time only)	Centre for Reflection	29
Sun	7pm-8.30pm	Indoor Cricket Nets	Moulsford School	15

Monthly

4th Sun	2pm-4pm	Reclaiming Picks Field with ANRG	Picks Field see back page	7, 34
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Events in March

1	9.00am	2nd Sunday in Lent	All Saints'	27
14	7:30pm	Choral concert	Dorchester Abbey	24
15	9.00am	Mothering Sunday	St. Michael's	27
17	10:30am	Have your say meeting	VH	7
17	10am-12 noon	Astons online	Village Hall	9,19

19 **MY BIRTHDAY!!!**

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

April 3-6	Easter		P		P
April 11	NM Book Sale	24	May 3rd	Astonathlon	31
April 18	Rec clear-up day + Spring Clean	-	June 27th	ASTONBURY	The rec -

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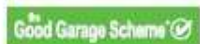
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ARTICLES

- 1 What's on at a glance
- 3 Articles, Copy deadline, Asylum welcome -bicycles sought, Cholsey repair shop
- 5 Advertisers' Index, Advertising rates
- 7 Editorial, Church flowers- help wanted, Picks Field regeneration project, Have your say meeting with the police (village hall), Village Hall 5 year plan update
- 9 Astons Café
- 11 Village Hall revamp progress report
- 13 Village Hall
- 15 Astons Cricket Club- New season: Indoor Nets and opportunity for village newcomers to play, PC meeting
- 17 Astons Pavilion
- 19 Astons online
- 21 Astons enews, Astons CIC, Astons Fb page
- 22 Olly Glover MP, Matthew Barber Police Commissioner
- 23 Astons Outdoors
- 24 Astonathlon, Toddler group, SM preschool, NM book sale, Benson Choral society concert,
- 25 Astons History Group
- 26 Speedwatch, Woolpack
- 27, 28 Church Services, Rector's Reflections
- 29 URC
- 30, 31 Recommended tradesmen, U3A
- 32 Baby sitting
- 33 Community services and police information
- 34 Village Representative Organisations & Village Information

Cholsey Repair Café

The Cholsey Pavilion, from 10.00 to 12.45 on Saturday 21st March. Repair domestic items of all sorts and this includes tool- and knife-sharpening, bicycles, small electrical appliances. The aim is to reduce landfill, conserve raw materials and pass on repair skills. As ever, repair help and advice are given free but a small contribution to operating costs is welcome. You can find helpful information at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com

Asylum Welcome

Asylum Welcome is always looking for more donated bikes for men, women and children. We can only accept donated bikes if they are in reasonable working (rideable) condition. Please contact Nasser, or Mark and Tino, our Bike Project volunteers at bike@asylum-welcome.org -Tessa Mayhew, tessamayhew@btinternet.com.

DEADLINE for the APRIL edition is MARCH 19th

SEND COPY TO: editorastonsnews@gmail.com

(*Send in Microsoft 'WORD' main text in **font size 11**, or as a PDF)

OR in writing to: Astons News, The Barn, Baker Street, Aston Tirrold Oxon OX11 9DD

Editor: Jeremy Imbush. Treasurer: Marcus Holburn

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ADVERTISERS INDEX

Also see Recommended Tradesmen on pages 36,37

<u>Accommodation</u>	page	<u>Home & Office Services continued</u>	page
Middle Fell B&B	4	Specialist dress maker	20
The Red Lion, Blewbury	4	LesleyAnn Gentry Interior Design	20
Where It All Began Travel	18	Maths Tutor	4
<u>Art</u>		<u>Horticulture</u>	
Anna Dillon	2	First Class Tree services	14
<u>Body & Fitness</u>		J J Woodage Tree & Ground maintenance	20
Caroline Kinash Physiotherapy and pilates	6	Mossinator roof cleaning service	14
Clippers hairdressing	8	N. Drum Landscaping	14
Principal Pilates	8	<u>Pet Services</u>	
Sweet Lavender Facial & Beauty Treatments	8	Astons Pet Services	10
Resonate Hearing Centre	6	Vet –Larkmead	10
Toe-Tally Perfect foot health care	8	<u>Trades etc</u>	
<u>Children:</u>		Didcot Plant Hire	12
Babysitting	32	Highwood Bespoke Joinery	12
<u>Food + Wine</u>		Howard Chadwick Funeral Service	14
Le Clos Wine Bar	4	JF Kleen carpet cleaning + repairs	20
Olivier at The Chequers	4	Longpine roofing & property maintenance	14
Red Lion	4	Orchard Building	12
<u>Garage Services</u>		Oxford Window Repairs	12
Chequers Garage	2	Pest Wizards	20
Scotlands Ash Garage	2	Ridgeway Funeral Services	6
<u>Home & Office Services</u>		Secure Electrical Ltd	18
Didcot Home Care	10	SCS Oxon Surfacing Contractors	16
Jackie's Care	8		

ASTONS NEWS Advertising Rates 2026 (Community Adverts are free)

ASTONS NEWS Advertising Rates 2026

Advert size	width	x height	10 issues	5 issues	1 issue
1/8 page	(90mm	x 65mm)	£55	£40	£15
1/4 page	(90mm	x 135mm)	£80	£50	£25
1/2 page	(185mm	x 135mm)	£145	£85	£35
A4 page	(185mm	x 270mm)	£200	£130	£45
Loose inserts (Flyers)			£25		
Community adverts & flyers free					

Please note that there are no issues in January or August

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Editorial:

Events to note:

- ◆ **17 March, 10:30am Village Hall.** A Have your say meeting with Thames Valley Police. This is an opportunity for the community to come and speak to us about any issues and concerns, or just a chat, rather than any kind of official talk about a particular subject.
- ◆ **19th March -MY BIRTHDAY;** I don't think that I have mentioned it
- ◆ 18th April is the rec clear-up and spring clean day, when winter's ravages are repaired, and the pavilion and rec are spruced up for the summer. Please be ready to help- even an hour can be useful.
- ◆ 3rd May Astonathlon (P24) *Update next month*
- ◆ June 27th Astonbury is back! Save the date. Helpers are always needed. *Update next month*
- ◆ Well done Nichole and her team for all their excellent hard work raising funds for the village hall revamp - Top work!
- ◆ Astons Nature Recovery Group are regenerating Picks Field to return it to chalk downland so that rare downland flora and fauna can return. If you'd like to help with the project, contact Jolyon at oxtid2@hotmail.com
- ◆ **Christmas Quiz winners:** Congratulations to the Wigg family who found a magnificent 73 out of 75 Tube stations, and even some that weren't there!. Bottle of Champagne and a box of chocolates on their way to Chalk Hill. A Special mention for the Machworths for a sterling effort. Coates family: could do better- more effort required. See me after school!- Ed
- ◆ **Floods and Potholes.** I'm sure that everyone has been aware of the floods and potholes on Baker Street and Chalk Hill last month. As far as the flooding on Baker Street is concerned, SODC and OCC are arguing over who is responsible for clearing the blocked pipe. If the floods are still there when you read this, then some public-spirited intervention might be welcome!
- ◆ As far as Chalk hill is concerned, the drainage ditches on the right side above the old rec entrance, and on the left side from the speed signs up to the A417 are blocked due to lack of maintenance. Combining this with the drainage channels from the road being blocked by mud, has meant that the water is just pouring down the sides of Chalk Hill, exacerbating the pot hole problem. The PC has no legal recourse, so the more individual villagers who complain about the potholes, the more likely things will get done.
At the time of writing, I've painted around the worst of them, and put traffic cones in them, but still watch out. I've cleared some of the drainage channels, but the ditch is so full that water is coming out, rather than draining in, from the road. Where is Riparian Rights enforcement when you need them..... Anyone got a digger?
- The final word on Baker Street floods, thanks to Greg Locke, Richard Cox, Debbie Coates, for helping to rod the blocked pipes and clearing the drains from the pipe next to the church footpath down to Somerfield House, to drain the flood across the road, and all the telecommunications pipes. An 18 inch water fountain coming from a manhole is not good for broadband speeds! Outstanding, if wet and cold, work.

VILLAGE HALL 5 YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORKS UPDATE

Thanks to the wonderful recent fundraising event, direct donations and grants we are going to be replacing the village hall floor in July/August. The hall and stage will be decorated in late March with the woodwork being done once the new floor is down.

We have also been re-taping the joints of the ceiling boards, a mammoth task as the ceiling is approximately 5m/16.5 feet high at the highest point. No mean feat working up that high.

The committee is extremely grateful for the support of the village and individual volunteers. Nichole West

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- **History table:** always something interesting to see
- **Wi-Fi:** internet & email
- **BBC/ITV iPlayer**
- **Community book scheme:** books to buy, borrow and donate
- **Children's corner**
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Pick-up & drop-off service available for those who aren't easily able to get to and from the Café - let us know if you would like a lift.

The Astons Café is a 'low maintenance' community effort, sponsored by the Village Hall Committee, which gives village individuals and groups an opportunity to meet and chat, sell or donate items for use or re-use, publicise their activities or fundraise, and village enterprises an outlet for their initiatives. Your support is appreciated.



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Café contacts: Margaret Morant (850895), Louise Binder (851433)

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The Astons Village Hall

Our Village Hall came into being following a talk in 1943 on 'Reconstruction after the War'. The hall stands on land bought by public subscription in 1945 as part of Winston Churchill's postwar village hall programme. In 1945 a Trust Deed was drawn up to define the responsibilities and constitution of the management committee and in 1950 the hall and its lands were vested in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands (now the Official Custodian for Charities).

The hall is an important community asset and to ensure its future ability to serve the community and attract new trustees, the current trustees are in the process of replacing the current (unincorporated) charity with a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This is an increasingly popular structure to which many village halls have converted. Nothing will change in the way the village hall operates.

The new CIO will:

- ◆ Have the same objects to the current charity – supporting the local community through provision of a community building.
- ◆ Be registered with and under the oversight of the Charity Commission (as at present).
- ◆ Be run by trustees who are residents of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upton or co-opted (as at present) or be members of an organisation within the village.
- ◆ Hold meetings at least six times a year and present the hall's report and accounts once a year to an AGM open to the public (as at present).
- ◆ Continue to be run principally by volunteers (as at present).
- ◆ Continue to offer rooms for hire, storage for village organisations and other facilities (as at present).
- ◆ Remain as a community asset, safeguarded by charity law and the Charity Commission.

The trustees of the CIO will benefit from limited personal financial liability (currently it's unlimited) and the hall will have incorporated status which means that:

- ◆ It may find it easier to obtain grants.
- ◆ It will have a modern constitution in line with current charity law and good practice.

The process of transfer from the existing charity to the CIO is:

- ◆ Trustees of the existing charity have considered the options and have agreed to transition to a CIO.
- ◆ The existing trustees have approved the formal application to the Charity Commission and applied to the Charity Commission to register the new CIO and for approval for the assets, liabilities and activities of the existing unincorporated charitable trust to be transferred to the CIO. The Charity Commission approved the application and registered the CIO on 9th February 2026.
- ◆ The trustees of the new CIO (who are in the most part the same as the trustees of the existing trust, except for the normal rotation of roles) will set up new bank and savings accounts as appropriate and inform utilities and insurance providers.

Once the CIO is fully operation, the current charity and its bank and savings accounts will be closed. This change is administrative and will have no effect on the way the village hall serves our community.

If you have any questions, please contact the committee at villagehall@theastons.net.

To book the Village Hall please e-mail: astons.vhbooking@gmail.com

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Weekly

Monday	Yoga	12:30-1:30pm 8-9pm
Tuesday	Astons Café	10am-12
	Post Office	10am-12
Thursday	Pilates	9:30-11:30am
	Yoga	8-9pm

Monthly

3 rd Wednesday	Parish Council	8pm
3 rd Tuesday	Tea & Tech (Astons Online)	10am-12

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ASTONS CRICKET CLUB



Cricket may feel a long way away with this winter's daily drizzle inundating the village, but spring isn't far away now, and neither is the next glorious summer of cricket!

And in case you didn't know, the Astons' are lucky enough to still have a thriving cricket club that offers senior cricket to all comers.

For over 40 years now, the club has played friendly (non-competitive) fixtures every Sunday afternoon against local villages, providing the opportunity for villagers of any standard to play cricket.

Fundamentally, cricket in the Astons has always been more about the social experience for the players (standing around in a field in the sun with friends and eating sandwiches halfway through), which is the main reason the club has thrived in recent years when other village clubs have struggled.

Indoor Practice nets start on Sunday 1st March at Moulford Prep School 19:00-20:30pm; you don't have to come for the whole session. Games start in mid-April.

So if you're interested in discovering what it's all about, please do contact me:

Ralph on 07340 346 511 or at astonscricketclub@hotmail.co.uk

Parish Council Business

Parish Council meeting 18th February 2026 was held face to face in the village hall.

Roads and Traffic

Pot holes on Chalk Hill are particularly bad. The PC have reported on Fix my street and to OCC/Highways.

SODC/OCC

See link for SODC report

[Moulford Parish Council DC Report 120226.docx](#)

See link for OCC report

[County Councillor Parish Report Feb 2026.docx](#)

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 18th March 2026 and will be held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm.



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astonspavilion@gmail.com



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**Astons Village Hall (OX11 9EQ) on
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you support and advice**

***Book your 30 minute appointment by
email theastononline@gmail.com or
telephone 07780958249***

Website: www.astononline.uk

Astons Online CIC supports people who want to be digitally confident on the Internet, with smartphone apps or online services like health and banking.

Astons Online CIC events and support are free of charge and open to everyone.

Astons Online CIC is available for Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp or telephone one-to-one sessions on Tuesday mornings between 10:00 and 12:00.

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Astons eNews

Over the past few months Astons eNews has changed. Until this year, eNews emails were sent out to the Astons community from a personal Gmail address. This has been replaced by a web mail app made available by Web Boutiques who host our community website.

There are now 7 editors taking turns distributing Astons eNews emails. Astons eNews has become a resilient service instead of relying on one or two people if or when they were available.

Astons eNews Protocol

All Astons residents are welcome to sign up to the Astons eNews - the Astons community email service. About 250 already have done so.

Astons eNews sends infrequent village-wide emails with important news/information that cannot wait for the next monthly Astons News.

The following criteria apply to eNews emails:

- The email will be available to everyone in the two parishes.
- Addressees will be invisible to all other recipients to preserve privacy.
- There is an unsubscribe facility on every email.
- No commercials, no jokes, no opinions etc - just succinct information about events/activities.
- eNews are normally sent out at the request of the Parish Council, community clubs/groups or individual residents. Occasionally editors may send one out if, for example, they have spotted an unadvertised road closure.
- eNews emails are not sent to highlight individual community events; these are included in the monthly round-up eNews emails sent out a week before each Parish Council meeting.
- eNews requests received within 36 hours of, for example, road or post office closures, power outages etc will be processed if editorial resources are available.
- Email addresses supplied to Astons eNews are not used for any other purpose nor are they passed on to other groups, clubs or organisations.

Please email enews@theastons.net to receive eNews.

Astons Online CIC

Astons Online community interest company (CIC) has been providing support to computer users since 2011. We started as a community group with a BT grant resulting from the Race to Infinity, won by Blewbury exchange area, which included the Astons. We also had generous support from our Oxfordshire County Councillor, Astons Parish Council and Astons News.

Astons Online has provided support to over 600 computer users, free of charge. People have contacted us from all over South Oxfordshire. Astons Online CIC has recently been highlighted on the Oxfordshire County Council website and in a survey of digital inclusion in the county. We mainly support older people who are uncertain or apprehensive at the rollout of digital services replacing their face-to-face, telephone and postal services. We do this by reaching out to community groups that focus on older people, offering our support to their members.

The Astons Villagers Facebook Community (AVFC)

The Astons Villagers Facebook Community is an Fb group for residents of the Astons only (plus a small number of approved non-villagers). It is a closed group, so posts cannot be seen by anyone outside the membership. It is a valuable channel for all types of local information and knowledge-sharing in real time.

TO JOIN: If you already use Facebook, please search for Astons Villagers Facebook **Community**; For any questions about the group, please contact Kathryn Hawkey at kathryn.hawkey@gmail.com who is the administrator for our Facebook group,.

Olly Glover MP

Potholes and flooding: With services such as adult social care experiencing huge levels of demand, and Oxfordshire County Council facing a £24.1 million cut in government funding, I raised the need for additional resources to repair potholes at Prime Minister's Questions. I didn't get much of an answer, but I will continue working with our local councils to secure the funding required to keep our roads, cycle paths, and pavements safe and serviceable.

I also questioned a Home Office minister about the mishandling of a domestic violence case by Thames Valley Police, highlighted the lack of safe cycle routes along the A417 and A338, and spoke about the impact of changes to Indefinite Leave to Remain rules on valued employees in local scientific businesses.

I presented a bill to create a Rail Passengers' Charter, to secure better train services, including high-speed WiFi, improved accessibility at stations like Cholsey, and adequate seating for passengers.

It was great to welcome Dark Horse Roastery and Hendred Vineyard to Parliament in January as part of an event promoting Oxfordshire's independent hospitality businesses. I also had the pleasure of meeting students from Uffington Primary School during their visit to the House of Commons. Schools and other groups that would like an educational tour of Parliament can learn more at www.parliament.uk/education or email me if you need a hand to book a visit.

I wrote to the Environment Secretary requesting a meeting to discuss the spiralling costs of the proposed reservoir, which appear to undermine the business case for allowing Thames Water to proceed, which bill payers would ultimately fund. Thames Water joined me, business leaders from Didcot, the Environment Agency, and local councils to unblock measures needed to prevent flooding on Milton Park and Trident Business Park.

If there is anything you feel I can help with, please do not hesitate to contact me and my team at olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk or by leaving a voice message on 0207 219 7657.

Olly Glover, MP for Didcot and Wantage

Matthew Barber TVP Police Commissioner

53 more neighbourhood police officers despite Home Office underfunding

the Government announced the funding for Thames Valley Police of nearly £9m less than they had previously indicated! The funding from central government will barely cover the costs of inflation and pay increases for police officers. In addition the Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, confirmed at the end of January that the Government would only fund 40% of the cost of new police neighbourhood officers, putting more pressure on your local council tax bill and squeezing other parts of policing.

Despite these financial pressures, I am confident that we will be able to deliver 53 more neighbourhood officers this coming year, on top of the 218 extra officers delivered in the last three years.

This Government has published a White Paper on Police Reform. It sets out radical changes including the regionalisation of policing into mega-forces that could see the abolition of Thames Valley Police.

As well as plans for force mergers the document proposes the creation of a new National Police Force and suggests changing the law to introduce more direct control by ministers for the first time, risking the end of operational independence.

Despite some good intent around better sharing of information between police forces to tackle serious and complex crime, overall I am deeply concerned by these plans which will do nothing to deliver better policing locally and are likely to see less money available for the police in our area. I will continue to challenge the Home Office on these plans and stand up for policing locally.

Greater efforts on crime prevention, alongside more police officers, are making a difference, with crime falling across Oxfordshire. Locally the priority will always remain cutting crime and catching criminals despite the pressures imposed by the Government

Matthew Barber matthew@matthewbarber.co.uk

Astons Outdoors

Appreciating the small things, such as having access to so many lovely local walks and a garden, whatever its size, is a reminder of how fortunate we are to live in this area. If you are thinking of starting something new this year have a look at the volunteering opportunities at the Earths Trust.

Website : earthstrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer or
email : volunteering@earthstrust.org.uk.

The UK, meteorological spring always begins on 1 March and ends on 31 May. However, with the early blossom and Astons spring bulbs appearing, spring seems to have arrived a little earlier this year, bringing with it more to see each day. It's a happy time for being outside when we can, so here's hoping we don't get caught out by late frosts!



MEANWHILE.....here are a just a few jobs for March that, regardless of your gardening experience, can be done:-

CONTAINERS / POTS: Check if they need top-dressing (remove the top 2.5cm / 1 inch of soil and replace it with fresh compost).

SLUGS & SNAILS: As the weather warms up these critters will appear from nowhere and head straight for new spring shoots. They are a popular food source for reptiles, birds and hedgehogs so it's very important use garden and wildlife friendly deterrents, so that other wildlife is not harmed.

PRUNING: Roses, winter flowering Jasmine, Clematis (early flowering varieties – once the flowers have finished – best to check the variety before doing so)

FEED & FERTILISE: When your soil is workable dig a 5cm (2 inch) or more layer of well-rotted manure or compost into your beds, trees shrubs and hedges to prepare them for the growing season. You could also use pelleted chicken manure or fish, blood and bone feed. **Roses, Hydrangea, Daphne & Camellia's benefit from fertiliser developed specifically for their type**

DEADHEAD: **Daffodil flowers** (let the foliage die back naturally to feed the bulb for next year).

Hydrangeas – Before new growth appears (cut to about one third of last year's growth and thin out weaker / overlapping growth)

Winter Pansies – to stop them setting seed. This also encourages new flowers throughout the spring.

'Blooming' light-hearted laughs....

Why did the gardener quit his job?

Because his celery wasn't high enough.

What's the difference between spring and a dating app?

In spring, you actually *want* to see things bloom after a week.

What do you call a rabbit with fleas?

Bugs Bunny.

How do bees brush their hair?

With a honeycomb.

Have a fantastic Spring !

Please contact Naomi (contactnaomi@icloud.com) Louise (louise.binder@live.co.uk) or Emma (emma.machin2018@gmail.com)



The North Moreton Book Sale

Saturday 11th April in North Moreton Church, 10am until 3pm.

As usual, thousands of books will be on sale, with all proceeds going to support the village hall and church. Tea, coffee and home-made cakes will be available. Free entry and car parking. Donations of spare books are always welcome.

Email northmoretonbooksale@gmail.com or call 01235 818900 or 07908314771

if you have any books to give, and the organisers will happily collect them.

Benson Choral Society: Johannes Brahms' Ein Deutsches Requiem.

Dorchester Abbey, Saturday, 14th March at 7.30pm.

Experience with Benson Choral Society one of the most powerful and moving choral works ever written. We will be performing the original version for Piano duet.

Tickets are available online at www.bensonchoralsociety.org.uk

Seats: £20 reserved, £17 unreserved



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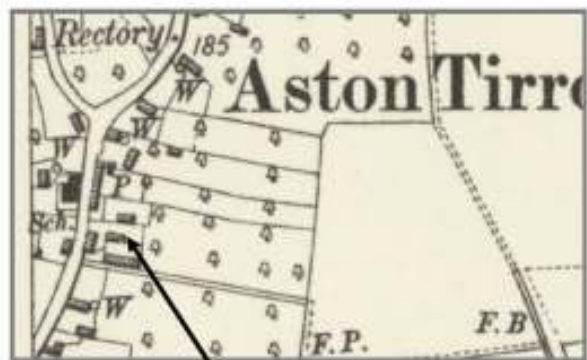


THE ASTONS HISTORY PROJECT

FOLLOWING ON:

from last month's item on the Astons Playgroup photo album, I showed Penelope Curtis one of the photos from the album showing a Playgroup 'float' passing her and George's home of Blacksmiths Cottage in Aston Street. *(The float was part of the villages' celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee in 1977).*

Because at that time the hedge in front of Abbey Thorn Cottage had only just been planted, in the photo you can see across to two tiled barns behind their house. The second, nearer barn confused us as there is none there now - she said however there had been a lot of tiles in the garden, which might fit in with that scenario. The 1900 Ordnance Survey map also seems to show buildings around there (below).



The arrow points to the mystery barn

The picture below is a postcard from the 1950s and shows another lost barn, this time attached to no.9 Aston Street. The postcard is from the Tom Powell Collection - given to us by Tom's niece, Judy Powell. Tom lived at no.9 from his marriage in 1931 until his death in 1991. Judy (Anna Dillon's mother) wrote a marvellous history of no. 9 - "An Astons journal. The 'diary' of Stephen Elliott and Tom Powell: 1885 to 1984". All our publications are on view at Tuesday morning's Astons Café, or alternatively our contact details are given below.



Remember you can see photos in **colour and zoomable** detail on the village website copy of the Astons News.

Astons History Project contacts: Jancis Smith 07734 44414 and Anna Dillon 07786 876411.

Astons Community Speedwatch

“A national initiative where proactive members of local communities join, with the support and supervision of their local police, to record details of speeding vehicles using approved detection devices in their local community”

More volunteers always welcome



Our Speedwatch activity is about raising awareness of the dangers of driving fast in a residential area with no pavements, narrow roads, children, older people, walkers and dog-walkers.

We are a small band of volunteers who give an hour of our time when we can to gather statistics and to raise awareness with those driving at excessive speeds.

Volunteers needed please!



Speeding is a real problem in our villages. If **we** make every effort to drive within the 20mph speed limit it should encourage others to do the same and slow down those following us.

We would appreciate your feedback on what we are doing (in confidence) and are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Please help us if you can.

Contact: 07887 567261

bob_picken@hotmail.com

The Woolpack



The Woolpack meets every Tuesday at the Astons Café in the village hall from 10am to 12 noon. We hope to see you there and we'd love to see all types of crafts represented, so if sewing is your thing or you're bonkers about beading, come on in! Margaret Morant 07899 748209

Churn Church News and Services March 2026

date	Event/time	Prayer Focus
+Sunday 1st March	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT 9.00am All Saints' Aston Upton: Parish Eucharist	Sidesmen, those who help with hospitality & catering. Flower arrangers
+Sunday 15th March	MOTHERING SUNDAY 9.00am St Michael's Aston Tirrold: Parish Eucharist	Families, family services & Mothers' Union

How to contact us:

Bookings for weddings, baptisms and funerals can be made by contacting the Benefice Office **01235 850267** or **office@churnchurches.co.uk**

You can contact the clergy & staff on: -

Father Jason St. John Nicolle	01235 850267	office@churnchurches.co.uk
Revd Louise Butler	07837 009730	revlouiseb@aol.com
Revd John Clarke	01235 510073	jphclarke@gmail.com
Revd Dr Mark Rhodes-Smith	01235 850267	mark.rhodes-smith@churnchurches.co.uk
Elaine de Ridder	01235 850267	office@churnchurches.co.uk

The Benefice Operations Manager, Elaine de Ridder, is in the office from 9.00am - 2.30pm, Monday to Friday.

The Astons Churchwarden email is **tirroldupthorpechurch@gmail.com** if you wish to find out information locally.

Online Services

The online services continue every Sunday at 10.30am. Login after 10.00 to chat beforehand or to check your technology. We will also have Christmas services, including a carol service!

For login details and how to join, go to the Churn Churches website :

<https://www.churnchurches.co.uk/services-this-week/sunday-service.php>

The new permanent link for the Sunday service is <https://meet.goto.com/ChurnBenefice/sundayservice>

Weekday evenings Compline at 8.00pm for 10 minutes. Access via <https://meet.goto.com/312446493>

Home Communion

Home Communion is available to anyone who is unable to get to church through sickness or frailty, either for a short time or on a long term basis. If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact Elaine in the Office or Revd Louise Butler on **07837 009730**.

Singing Stainer's Crucifixion Passion Sunday, 22 March at 6pm St Andrew's Hagbourne

Performed by the combined choir of St Andrew's Hagbourne and surrounding areas. Everyone welcome! **It isn't too late to join the choir!** Weekly rehearsals are on Thursdays at 7.30pm at St Andrew's church with a final dress rehearsal on 22nd March at 3pm. For more information and to download music, please see

https://colin-windsor.github.io/HomePage/Stainer_Crucifixion.htm

Sunday 1st March 5pm Free organ recitals at St Andrew's East Hagbourne OX11 9LP

Every first Sunday of the month at 5pm.

A programme of organ and 'cello music with Mo Windsor and Lindsay Benton All welcome!

Lent started on Wednesday 18th February.

We are putting on several Lent courses and activities, including

* The very popular Lent Soup Lunches every Saturday during Lent from 12.30-2pm at St Andrew's Hagbourne. The last one being in aid of Sobell House on Saturday 28th March

* Father Jason's tour of some of our churches starting Thursday 26th February at 3pm. This year he will be looking at depictions of Jesus through the ages. Father Jason will do a short repeat online on Friday 27th at 7pm.

* Revd Mark will explore the meaning of Holy Communion which is at the heart of Christian spirituality (online), starting Wednesday 25th February at 7pm.

* Our Ecumenical group will be looking at John's Gospel with the help of the book "Meeting God in John". Starting Friday 27th February at 10.30am.

You are welcome to join any of these groups at any time.

Details are in our Lent leaflets which are available in our churches and online

<https://www.churnchurches.co.uk/content/pages/documents/lent-leaflet.pdf>.



One of the key MU objectives is to help those whose family life has met with adversity. In Oxfordshire one way we do this is to arrange holidays, days out or treats for individuals and families who have not been able to have a break or time away. More recently our charity has been able to pay for children to go on school trips and educational holidays when

family finances have been tight. MU Members take part in fundraising activities throughout the year raising funds for **"AFIA" – AWAY FROM IT ALL.**

The local MU branch, The Churn MU, will be raising funds for AFIA in March when they host one of the Lent Lunches at Hagbourne Church on 7th March. These run every Saturday lunchtime 12.30 to 2pm through the weeks of Lent. Come and sample homemade soups, bread & cheese, delicious cakes and hot drinks. You will not be disappointed. If you know of any family or individual who would benefit from an AFIA holiday or break, please contact Revd Louise Butler in confidence or go direct to the Oxford MU website: www.muoxford.org.uk.

Our branch also meets monthly for a Holy Communion service followed by refreshments. This is at 10am at St. Mary's Church, Upton on Thursday 19th March. All are very welcome. Join us and Join in.

Revd Louise Butler 07837 009730, leader, Churn MU branch

Rector's Reflections: What do you think about AI?

I wonder if you have been thinking about the growing impact of AI in the way we do things? Are you worried about AI, or do you take it in your stride?

AI has become a part of normal life. Students use it to help them with their work, at school and University. Modern computers seem to take the general use of AI for granted, and AI is routinely used in offices to help with straightforward but time-consuming tasks.

Are we to be worried about the impact of AI on our lives? Is it going to take away our jobs? Will AI get so clever at doing things that it will become smarter than most human beings? Will AI take over the world?

Opinions vary. Some serious and well-informed people worry that AI is poised to change our world for ever – and not necessarily for the better. Other people think that the impact of AI is not going to be as catastrophic as some might fear – human beings have lived through the adoption of new forms of technology in the past, and some think that the coming of AI will be similar to the coming of the railways, the telephone, or the computer

Continued on next page

AI Continued from previous page

Things will change, and some jobs will be lost; but new jobs will be created, and life will generally carry on much the same as always. It will simply be that some things will be quicker, easier and perhaps cheaper than they were before.

Whatever your thoughts about AI, I think it is important for us all to think about its impact, not least so that we can maximise its benefits and protect ourselves against its risks. To this end, I'm starting a series of informal talks about the impact of AI in different areas of our lives. We'll be looking at the impact of AI in areas such as science, education and the world of work.

The first of the series will take place on Sunday 8th March 2026 at 6pm at St Andrew's Hagbourne, as part of our celebration of British Science Week. The topic will be "Science in the Age of AI", and will be aimed at a general audience - you don't have to be a scientist to come along! The talk will take place within our very informal 6pm service. Details of the other talks in the series will be finalized shortly – do contact the church office for more details.

Why am I writing about AI? It is because AI is all about science, and I see science as one of God's greatest gifts to human beings. There is no conflict between Good Science and Good Religion (there can be a conflict between Bad Science and Bad Religion, but that's another matter!) One of the roles of Christianity is to promote the common good, so that every human being can flourish. How might AI help human flourishing? Come along on 8th March and share your thoughts. It will be lovely to have you with us.

- Father Jason

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March news and Services.

For a Zoom invitation please contact by email:

JULIAN GALLOP – jgallop@freeuk.com

Sunday 1 March 11am	Morning Worship with communion led by Rev Dr Richard Bittleston.
Sunday 8 March 11am	Morning Worship led by Cath Sefton and Rachel Tole.
Sunday 15 March 11am	Morning Worship led by Rev Phillip Mader-Grayson.
Sunday 22 March 11am	Morning Worship led by Andrew Glennie.
Sunday 29 March 6pm	Evening Worship led by Rev Glyn Millington – tea and cake beforehand.

Refreshments in the Centre for Reflection after the service. All are welcome.

The next Quiet Garden Day will take place on Saturday 7 March 10 – 4pm . Please bring your own lunch. Suggested donation of £10.

To book please contact Josie.midwinter@gmail.com.

The Meditation Group meet twice monthly on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 11.45am. The Writing Group meet on the first Thursday of the month at 1.30pm. Due to the refurbishment of the Centre, the venue for the meditation and writing groups have changed.

Please contact Julian for further information. jgallop@freeuk.com

Recommended Tradespersons

If you have a personal recommendation, send it to editorastonsnews@gmail.com

Recommended Tradesmen Advice: You are advised to contact the recommender before you employ the tradesperson, especially if the last recommendation is several years old. Tradespersons are kept on the list for three years, after which they are removed, so they need a new recommendation in order to stay on the list after that time.

Name	Comments	Recommended by
Builders, Decorators, Property Maintenance, Handyman		
Luke Porter porterluke9873@gmail.com 07714788423	Luke Porter is a local tradesman living in the village whom I have used on many occasions to replace fascias / gutters; repairs to flat roof ; drive refurbish etc etc Luke is conscientious; hard working and cost effective ----- Highly recommended	Tim Millin 01235 850207 0770 666 36 31 middlefell@ic24.net (2024)
Ben Whitehead BPW Painting & Decorating, 24 Blake Crescent, Swindon SN3 4LR Email: bpwpainting@hotmail.com Tel: 07532262077	We have used him for four years for different jobs, recommended to us by Greg Locke, and he has been in the VN as a recommended supplier. Ben is young, very hardworking and produces great results every time. He works with a number of people in the Astons.	Peter Le Conte peterleconte20@gmail.com (2024)
Jamie Weatherley. Mobile: 07951 852690 Landline: 01189 615234	We use Jamie regularly for internal and external painting and decorating. He has recently repainted our windows and doors externally, all to his (and my!) usual high standards. Recommended unreservedly.	Mike Hill 851149 (2024)
Ridgeway Carpentry Ryan Quinlan info@ridgewaycarpentry.co.uk 07881 361595	Ryan has done a really good job refurbishing the washrooms at the Village Hall. He is a bit of a perfectionist, reliable, brought in any extra trades when needed and always returned my calls. I can recommend him for large or small jobs/projects. You can find more reviews on Checkatrade.	Margaret Morant margmorant@gmail.com (2024)
Computers + electronics etc		
Steve Wicks, PC Technician 01491 825449 , 07513 297 547 www.thepctechicians.co.uk , contact @thepctechicians.co.uk	Desktop / laptop / tablet / printer? Problems with hardware/software, e-mail, internet, wi-fi, or peripherals? Steve makes things very simple and straightforward and manages not to make me feel like an IT simpleton!	Christopher Hawker 850534 c.hawker433@btinternet.com (2023)
Domestic: Cleaners, Ironing etc		
Carpet, Rug & Upholstery Cleaner Garlands - Colin Garland 0118 950 0365. 0797 475 4056 www.garlandsclean.co.uk	We had Colin Garland clean our 35 year old Persian rug. He took great care and the rug is looking much brighter and cleaner as a result.	Mike Hill 851149 (2024)
Carpet cleaning J F Kleen 07961511903 josh@jfkleen.co.uk Crisp Road Henley-on-Thames RG9	We've had our sitting room and bedroom carpets cleaned by Joshua Fahey of JFKleen. He is such a professional and thorough person and his prices are really good value. I would recommend him to anyone.	Peter leConte ajlecontel@gmail.com (2025)
House Cleaning Gabriella 07845 782906	Gabriella has worked for several villagers and currently has space for another client. I can thoroughly vouch for her as hard working, with attention to detail and honest..	Lizzie Thornton-Allan 851732 (2023)
House cleaning Magda 07805375872	Magda has worked for several villagers over the years and has been cleaning our house since we moved to the village in 2022. I look forward to her visit every week where she leaves our house looking spotless. She is very hard working, reliable and I wholeheartedly recommend her services.	Lucy Cantwell 6 Lower Ham Yard Lucyecantwell@gmail.com (2025)
Theresa James Ironing 07780 820754	Theresa will pick up and deliver your ironing back within a couple of days. A friendly, reliable and quality service.	Lizzie Thornton-Allen 851732 (2019)

Recommended Tradespersons Continued

Electricians

Robin Wilkinson Causeway Electrical Solutions Ltd. E-mail: info@causewayes.co.uk Mob: 07802 487159	Robin has done lots of excellent work in the churches, in the Village Hall and in my house. Efficient, reliable, reasonably priced and very competent, I have always been more than happy to entrust him with any electrical task or project	Christopher Hawker 850534 c.hawker433@btinternet.com (2019)
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Plasterer

mitchpurvisplastering@yahoo.co.uk 0756 3079829	Mitch Purvis We have used Mitch for many years for our various plastering/rendering requirements. He is fast; efficient; tidy and cost effective. Highly recommended.	Tim Millin 01235 850207 0770 6663631 middlefell@ic24.net (2020)
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Plumbing and Heating Engineers

Adam AAD Plumbing Services, 0776 3221 257 www.aadplumbing.co.uk aadplumbing@gmail.com	Adam is a tidy fast worker with excellent results at a reasonable charge. He offers free estimates with no call out charge and covers anything from a simple leak to a complete bathroom installation, including associated electrics and tiling. A very experienced expert who has done many jobs for me over the last few years. Adam came replace the thermostat in our immersion heater. Excellent service!	Penelope Curtis 01235 850794 (2023)
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KWC Heating Services Ltd www.kwc-heating.co.uk contact@kwc-heating.co.uk 01235 537389	Michael Clarke is a first-class heating engineer who I have used for many years (and his father before him) Professional Engineer with many years' experience in all types of boiler/central heating/plumbing/under floor heating etc. Cost effective and very tidy. Gas Safe certified Highly recommended	Tim Millin 01235 850207 0770 6663631 middlefell@ic24.net (2020)
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Seamstress		
Sophie Morris Mobile:07765 355217 Landline 01235 815316.	Sophie has altered dresses, jackets and a coat beautifully for me. She has made clothes and done alterations for a number of others in the village. She is a former Annabelinda seamstress based in Didcot. A really lovely and helpful lady. Highly recommended.	Katharine Verrill kmvrrll@gmail.com (2023)

TV & Aerials		
Oxford Aerials (Shaun Guard) SHAUN@OXFORDAERIALS.CO.UK	came out v quick , helpful and reasonable priced	Tim Lake 07887 987 900 tim.lake@stepienlake.co.uk (2024)

Window Cleaner		
LB Windows Mobile 07936 493556 www.windowcleanerdidcot.co.uk	Liam Barson does a good and thorough job. He offers both traditional and waterfed pole window cleaning, gutter, solar panel and patio cleaning.	Lizzie Thornton-Allan 01235 851732 lizziethorntonallan@gmail.com (2025)

U3A (UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE) meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 2pm at Didcot Civic Hall. Visitors are welcome to come to one meeting as a taster before joining. For further information go to the **WEBSITE:** didcot.u3asite.uk or email membership@didcotu3a.org or visit <https://www.didcot.u3asite>

PLEASE NOTE:

**PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
THEIR CHILD'S WELFARE AT ALL
TIMES WHEN EMPLOYING A
BABY SITTER**

Claire Belcher (39)

Experienced mother of two boys, with previous care and babysitter experience. Available for babysitting, evenings and weekends. References available. Weekday evenings £8phr, Weekend evenings £10phr.

07568 477 599

Zara Butcher (17)

Available for babysitting in the evening
Lives in the Astons

07377 115093

Mia Diamond (16)

Available for baby sitting
Lives in the Astons

07769 182367

Sam Ferguson (19) Phone 07555549201

Available for babysitting or pet sitting
weekends, evenings and school holidays.
Lives in the Astons

Katie Ferguson (17) Phone : 07523178076

Available for babysitting or pet care week-
ends, evenings and school holidays.
Lives in the Astons

Eliza Haigh (16)

Available for babysitting/petsitting
weekends, evenings and holidays
Lives in the Astons

Has a recent first aid certificate

Mobile: 07884960386

James Hart (17)

Available for babysitting
weekends and school holidays.

Home 01235850517

Mobile 07485284784

Lottie Hart (16)

Available for babysitting
weekends and school holidays.

Home 01235850517

Mobile 07484295323

Eve Lancaster (16)

Available for babysitting
at weekends, evenings
and during school holidays.

Mobile: 07962 182844

Roselle Isaac (16)

Available for: Babysitting
Pet care/pet-sitting
weekends, evenings and school holidays
Lives in the Astons

Please contact: 07751195432

Alex McCarthy (17)

Available for babysitting
Saturday nights and during school holidays

Mobile number 07599 209177

Olivia McCarthy (20)

Available during school holiday
Lives in Aston Tirrold

07544 109 504

Billy Vallings (15)

Available for babysitting and pet care
(weekends and school holidays)

07510 495937

01235 850659

Lucy Vallings (16)

Available for babysitting and pet care
(weekends and school holidays).

07568 629963

01235 850659

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND POLICE INFORMATION

DEFIBRILLATOR SITES: VILLAGE HALL Car park [outside library room] & PAVILION at The REC. Ring 999 to get an access code to open the cabinet door.

Thames Valley Police Team for the Astons area

Police Community Support Officers and Non Urgent Polices Calls: 101; For Emergency calls: dial 999.

Inspector Neil Byrne: He is the overall responsible officer for the neighbourhood policing team.

Dan Howard: A Sergeant who **supervises** the constables and PCSOs.

Alex Glover: A Police Constable.

Beverley Kaur: A Police Constable.

Christopher Druce: A Police Constable.

Curtis Emery: A Police Constable.

Dan Mellor: A Police Constable.

Beth Saunders: A Police Community Support Officer (PCSO).

Emily Collins: A Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

Police and Crime Commissioner to the Thames Valley matthew@matthewbarber.co.uk

Reporting Rural Crime: report it to police by calling the **non-emergency number, 101.**

If an incident is in progress, or there is **an immediate threat to life**, you should **call 999.**

Other agencies:

SODC Councillor: Ben Manning 07946 476733

SODC Councillor: Anne-Marie Simpson 07770 781 233

Citizens Advice Line: 08444 111 444

Waste collection information: southoxon.gov.uk/wastecalendar (or call Biffa on 03000 610 610)

Fly-Tipping– How to report it:

Go to southoxon.gov.uk, then click on ‘**services and advice**’ and type ‘**fly-tipping**’ into the search box; click ‘**Fly-tipping**’ when it appears & fill in the ‘**report fly-tipping online**’ form, or phone **03000 610 610**

Reporting Potholes in the Astons

Report potholes and other hazards on the roads in Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe to:

www.potholes.co.uk and www.fixmystreet.com

Nuisance phone calls: To register your number with the telephone preference service to help prevent the receipt of live unsolicited sales and marketing calls, phone **0800 398 893** or go to **www.tpsonline.org.uk**. It will not stop computer generated calls or calls that are not sales and marketing related.

Didcot Volunteer Drivers

DVD volunteer drivers provide transport in their own cars for local people who are unable to use public transport, or for those living in rural areas where it is not available, to hospitals, health centres, clinics and other activities. They take telephone requests and make bookings for transport each weekday from 10.00 am to 12 noon (except Bank/Public Holidays). There is an answering machine on at all other times. Tel: 01235 816709

Countywide Dial a Ride Service for the disabled & mobility impaired.

0845 3101111 <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-dial-ride#routes>

Cineworld Didcot:-----0871 200 2000, cineworld.co.uk/didcot,

Cornerstone Arts Centre:01235 515 144, cornerstone-arts.org

The Corn Exchange:---01491 825 000, [Wwww.comexchange.org.uk/boxoffice](http://www.comexchange.org.uk/boxoffice)

Village Representative Organisations & Village Information

AT & AU Parish Councillors

Jane Imbush (Chair) and H&D	07739 644064
Simon Young (Vice-chair) & Housing and Development	07934 401377
Joanna Hart (ARC)	01235 850517
Peter Butcher (Footpaths)	07956 976159
Jane Barr Knight (Roads & Traffic)	07968 300282
Neil Carter	
Mary Severin (Village Hall)	
Tom Mooney	
Sarah Munro (ARC)	

Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Tim Lake (Chair and Churchwarden)	01235 850468
Amanda le Conte (Churchwarden)	" 851546
Christopher Hawker	" 850534
George Curtis (Deanery Synod Rep +treasurer)	" 850794
Penelope curtis (Secretary)	" 850794
Joanna Hart	" 850517
Email	tirroldupthorpechurch@gmail.com

Village Hall Management Committee (CIO 1216788)

Email: villagehall@theastons.net

Bookings: astons.vhbooking@gmail.com

Nicole West (Chair)	07939 265555
Andrew Blakeman (Treasurer)	
Maria Martin (Secretary and History Group)	
Charlotte Kerr (bookings)	
Louise Binder (Astons Outdoors)	
Rachael Peterson (Sustainability)	
Tracy Briggs (Events)	
Mary Severin (Parish Council)	

Astons Recreation Committee (ARC)

Gillian Golding (Co-Chair)	
Joanna Hart	01235 850517
Joanna Hart	01235 850517
Amberley Diamond	07771 995906
Liz Pattison (Bookings/ Co-Chair)	astonspavilion@gmail.com
Susan Pallett	
Jo Walshe	
Sarah Munroe	

CLP Groups

Roads and Traffic:- Jane Barr Knight	07968 300282
Housing and Development :- Simon Young:	
youngastonspc@gmail.com	07934 401377
Environment Group Anna Dillon:	
	dillon.anna@gmail.com
Astons Nature Recovery Group	
Jolyon Tidmarsh	oxtid2@hotmail.com

Village Clubs & Organisations

APAC	Emma Machin	07840 862946
	Emma.machin2018@gmail.com	
Astons Artists:	astonsvillages@gmail.com	
Astons Café	Margaret Morant	07899 748209
Louise Binder		07713 314662
Astons History Project	Jan Smith	07714 734441
Astons Outdoors	Naomi Simmonds	01235 859218
	Louise Binder	01235 851433
Bell Ringing	Rachael Marffy	07780 814257
Book Club	Sarah Dalton: dalton_family@hotmail.com	
Church Cleaning	Katharine Verrill	07866 435377
Church Flowers	Penelope Curtis	01235 850794
Astons Cricket Club: Tom Swainston		07595 695668
	Tom.swainston@hotmail.com	
Community speed watch	Bob Picken	07787 567261
	bob_picken@hotmail.com	
Football: Adam Griffiths		07815 105760
Pavilion Hire: Liz Pattison	astonspavilion@gmail.com	
South Moreton Pre-School		01235 819647
Thames Valley Alert	Tirrold: Steve Morant	07561 315882
	Upthorpe: Ian Clark	01235 850103
Toddlers' Group	asonstoddlersgroup@gmail.com	

Astons Comms team

Astons Enews & website team:	
Bruno Brunskill, Anna Dillon, Jeremy Imbush, Charlotte Kerr, Rachel Marffy, Anne & Steve White.	
Astons News:	editorastonsnews@gmail.com
Astons enews team:	enews@theastons.net
Astons Website team:	webmaster@theastons.net
Astons Facebook:	Kathryn.hawkey@gmail.com

Agencies and Emergency numbers

Citizens Advice Bureau	0344 411 1444
Didcot Volunteer Drivers	01235 816709
NHS non-emergency number	111
Police: non urgent calls	101
Police crime stoppers	0800 555 111
Power Cuts	105
Thames Water	0800 316 9800

Astons Village Hall Post office

Tuesdays 10.00am-12noon
[Pangbourne Post Office: 01189 842294]
Blebury Post Office: Mon/Tues/Thurs/Friday 9-3pm; Wed 9-12noon. Closed Sat & Sun
Cholsey Post office (inside Tesco) 6a.m.-10.00pm
East Hagbourne Post Office Mon-Fri 9am -12.30pm.

Bus: 94A The Astons To Didcot [Orchard Centre & Station]
 Mon to Sat: 08.08, 10.44, 12.44, 1444, 16.19, 18.54
 Sunday: no service
 Stops at N & S Moreton only. Runs Anticlockwise only