

NORTON NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2023 ISSUE 542

The Newsletter Chairman and Committee wish our readers a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year

IMPORTANT NOTICE: So that the January issue of the Newsletter can be produced before Christmas and the New Year holiday, the deadline for news items will be a week earlier than usual on Tuesday 12th December. **Also please send all entries for the newsletter FROM NOW ON to the new email address of nortonnewsletter24@hotmail.com**

REPORT FROM THE NEWSLETTER AGM HELD ON 8th NOVEMBER. Chrissie Way and Rowena Alsey have offered to share the editorship of the newsletter from January 2024 after Janet Hutton stepped down after 21 years. Chrissie O'Brien is continuing as Assistant Editor. Tony Brook also stepped down after retiring as Treasurer in 2021 and 26 years altogether on the committee. Both were thanked for their wonderful contribution over the years. The current committee is: Chairperson: Daphne Bishop, Secretary: Jennie Harris, Treasurer: Pam Rastall with Janet Hutton staying on the committee with Anne Fairweather. Finances were discussed and more information will be put in future newsletters. It was decided that the adverts should be increased to £3.00 per item - £36.00 per annum. Tony Brook was thanked for performing the audit.

Note from the Treasurer, We are pleased that the newsletter will continue for another year and it was wonderful to see the support from the village at our AGM - thank you to those that attended.

2023 was a difficult time for us as our very reliable printer retired. Fortunately we found a local printer in Stable Print who were competitive in price. However, our costs have increased by £100 per month and even though we have decided we need to increase the price to our advertisers we will still be in deficit by approx. £1000 per year. We are pleased to say we have already received a few generous donations. Can I respectfully request that when villagers and groups are submitting items for the newsletter (which goes to over 380 households) you consider donating either by bank transfer : Bank details are Santander Bank. Sorting code 090152 a/c number 22744308 or by cash in the Norton Newsletter Box on the Post Office Counter. A suggestion of £4/5 per item - Every little helps. Anyone wishing to support the Newsletter can make a donation - we would be pleased to receive it ! Thank you. Pam Rastall

PLEASE SEE THE PARISH COUNCIL REPORT BELOW FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION WHICH WILL AFFECT OUR VILLAGE.

NORTON SHOP WEBSITE:
<https://www.nortonshop.co.uk>

FESTIVAL WEBSITE: [https:// www.nortonfestival.org](https://www.nortonfestival.org)

PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE
<https://nortonsubhamdonpc.co.uk/>

FRIENDS OF NORTON CHURCH WEBSITE:
<https://nortonsubhamdonpc.co.uk/friends-of-norton-church/>

VILLAGE HALL WEBSITE. <http://nshvillagehall.co.uk>

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM PAM AND MIKE RASTALL. We hope you understand that we will not be sending greeting cards locally but making a donation to the Red Cross charity.

THE READING ROOM COMMITTEE would like to thank all our Customers for their support this year. We hope that everyone has a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you in 2024.

CHURCH FLAG The George Cross flag will be flown from the Church Tower **from 24th December to 6th January for Christmas to Epiphany**

ADVERTS AT END OF THIS NEWSLETTER:
Accommodation in Norton and Community Caring Service

COMMUNITY LAND TRUST AGM 23 OCTOBER 2023: REPORT We are very pleased that 50 people attended the AGM. A re-cap was given since the last AGM and the SGM of where the shop and post office's futures were projected and explained that a lot had happened since then in the way of community financial support, actively reducing costs, and attracting more people to use the shop. Lindsay Higgins then gave a presentation with regard to the current finances. A summary was given of how last year, potentially an extra £1000 per month (due to energy and general price increases) was a threat and that appeared to make the shop and PO no longer viable, combined with the trading loss the previous year. Support generated by the communities has raised over £15,000 to date. In conclusion, the board's target was to get the shop and PO onto a self-sustaining footing,

without being dependent on the generosity of the community's donations. However, the donations received have allowed the 'buying' of time to make changes towards achieving this goal, and the estimation is a minimum of 2 years of trading. A presentation on our current trading for the first five months of this year revealed the shop has made a small trading profit. Niall Clifford provided a solar array update. Covenant issues have arisen in the project, but there is still an opportunity for the CLT to make a possible income. The next board will have to determine whether to seek legal advice to investigate the possibility of negotiating the covenants. We are delighted that we received two director nominations. We welcome Anne Fairweather and Rowena Aalsey. Thanks were then given to Colin McDonald, Jane Naughton and John Forsyth, who have all stepped down, for their hard work and support. We thank everyone for supporting the shop/Post Office.

CRAFTY CRITTERS will be in the **Reading Room on Monday 4th December between 1.30 and 3.30pm.** Come and join us for a friendly chat whilst we work on our own projects. £2.00 per session including tea/coffee and biscuits. Contact Tricia Walton on 882646 for more details.

IT HELP AT THE READING ROOM: We will be running another IT drop-in session in the Reading Room on **Saturday 2nd December from 10.30 to 12.30.** There is no charge, but a small donation to the Reading Room maintenance fund would be appreciated. In our first session we helped with online forms, speaking to a "digital assistant", QR codes and inserting and formatting pictures. If you would like a 20 minute one to one session please ring 01935 881505 and leave a message for Chrissie Way or email nortonrrbookings@gmail.com. It would be helpful if you could let us know in advance what you would like help with.

LADIES GROUP A fun afternoon was had when we formed two teams for ten pin bowling, and we look forward to competing again in February, with a very expensive trophy for our champion! Our Christmas Party will be held on **6th December, 12.30 - 4pm in the Village Hall.** Silly hats, jumpers and tinsel are optional but add to the fun. This year we shall require a £3.00 donation from members and £5.00 for non-members to help with costs and payable on the door. Don't forget your wrapped gift if you wish to participate in Secret Santa. We hope for an enjoyable afternoon of fun and companionship. We are looking forward to the Trip to Wells for the Christmas Market and Carols in the Cathedral on **13th December.** A review of our meeting on 21st November will appear in the next newsletter. Enquiries Sue Lowder 881805

THE VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE is holding a Table Top Sale at **Norton Sub Hamdon Village Hall.** On **Saturday 9th December. 10am - 1pm.** If you are having a sort out before Christmas, and want to sell some stuff on, or just want to pick up a bargain...or have a cuppa, and natter, please come along. Tables are available to hire at £10 each. To book one please contact Jennie Harris 01935 881718. There will be refreshments, and a raffle. Everyone welcome. Hope to see you there. Proceeds go towards The Village Hall Redecorating Fund.

MERRILY ON HIGH Chiselborough Four-in-Hand Ringers - Sian Humpherson, Vivien Jewsbury, Angela O'Neill and Anna Terrell – will be joined by Bill and Cilla Caswell (Piano and Flute) and Chris Denman (organ) for an afternoon's entertainment, 'Merrily On High,' in **Norton Church at 2.30pm on Sunday 10th December.** The Concert, which will provide a variety of seasonal music, is supporting the Parish Church and The Children's Society. Admission is by donation as will be Refreshments. There will be a Draw and an afternoon's enjoyment is guaranteed.

MOBILE LIBRARY AND BOOK CLUB. The Mobile Library will call in **Chiselborough** opposite the Hall on **Tuesday 12 December from 1.10–1.50pm** and in Higher Street, **Norton from 2.00–2.25pm.** The book club will meet on that same day but contact Janet Hutton on 881566 or Anne Fairweather on 882620 for venue details and times.

VILLAGE CAROL SINGING You are warmly invited to come along and sing/play Christmas Carols in the **Jubilee Garden at 6.30pm on Thursday December 21st.** Please bring a torch and some loose change and help us collect for Shelter Box, an excellent West Country Charity who help to aid the many displaced people in earthquake, flood and disaster zones. You are welcome to continue around a short village route and end by singing in the Lord Nelson, by kind invitation of Helen and Mark. Also, Bill and Cilla and friends will be playing outside Norton Shop on a couple of occasions during the previous week to start their collection. Thank you

ADDITIONAL NHS SERVICES The winter months are now with us, and we can expect the usual increase in seasonal illnesses. Whilst the recent Flu and Covid vaccination clinics will have helped greatly to prevent sickness, we still anticipate increased pressure on the Hamdon Surgery. Whilst the GP service is always there to help patients in need, do be aware that the more serious medical issues will take the priority of available resources. When seeking advice, do please also consider the additional NHS services available. NHS England have developed new pathways over the months to assist in reducing the pressure on GP Surgeries and allow them to concentrate on the

more urgent clinical cases. They have developed a model whereby the initial point of contact for minor illnesses should be the local Pharmacy, where considerable funds have been spent in additional training. Pharmacists are there as the first port of call for everyday minor issues. They have highly qualified clinicians who can provide expert clinical advice, as well as offering over the counter treatments when necessary. Should you consider your medical issue is more serious, there are two ways to obtain support. If the issue is for an existing condition, it is obviously right to contact your Surgery either by using the online "AskmyGP" service in the morning or by telephone once that service closes. However, if it is a new issue on which you seek advice, the NHS 111 service is a good, fast and efficient way forward. Calls to their service (just dial 111 on mobile or landline) are triaged and, when unable to be answered by the receptionist, are referred to clinical staff and where necessary to a Doctor. This might entail a return telephone call from the Doctor when the appropriate action is taken (including the issuing of prescriptions where needed) or by generating a message to the Surgery for them to arrange an urgent appointment. Whilst NHS 111 is not an "immediate" service, it does provide fully qualified medical support and is a good way to resolve new problems. Many of you will have seen the NHS posters explaining the 5-stage escalation approach, developed and funded to serve all patients. 1. Self help for minor cuts, grazes, stings etc. 2. Pharmacy for initial medical advice, treatment for minor ailments 3. NHS 111 for initial support and treatment and referral if appropriate 4. GP Surgery for diagnosis, on-going support and regular clinics 5. 999/A&E for emergency and life threatening situations. Let's hope we all stay fit and well, but the full range of NHS services are there and should be used when really needed. Hamdon Medical Centre, Patient Participation Group.

FRIENDS OF NORTON CHURCH WINE CLUB. The draw results for **November 2023** were as follows: Niall Clifford (3), Penny Cudmore, Nicky Brodie, John Forrest, Richard Raven, Nick Hale, Jeremy Reid and Rowena Alsey. To join the wine club contact Mary Batstone on 07967604681 or email marybatstone@gmail.com

NORTON VILLAGE COFFEE MORNINGS: Thank you to everyone who attended October's "Sweet Things" themed coffee morning at Rendells in Little Street. Over £200 was raised for the church and we thank Pam and Mike Rastall for their warm and generous hospitality. The November coffee morning will be reviewed in the next edition and please remember no coffee morning is held in December. May we take this opportunity to thank everyone who has hosted and supported the coffee mornings this year, as over £1,700 has been raised so far. We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and 2024, and we meet again at

10.45am on 24th January, 2024 at Debbie and Simon Bradley's home, **Norton House** in Great Street. Sophie Hale and Sophie Snow

JUBILEE GARDEN. Thanks to all my friends and family, especially those that have helped in any way to make the garden the special place it is - somewhere to relax with a coffee, tea and snack from Katy's or a place for fun and a game of table tennis or badminton in the summer months. Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Healthy New year. Please don't forget Carol singing around the Christmas tree in the garden on **Thursday 21st December 6-30pm**. Wrap up warm and bring a torch, also some change for the donation pots. Lynn Orchard

NORTON CHURCH Services for December
Sunday 3rd 9.30am Morning Prayer **Sunday 10th 9.30am** Communion **Sunday 17th 6.00pm** Candlelit Carol Service **Monday 25th 9.30am** Christmas Day Communion **Wednesday 27th 9.00am** Said Communion **Sunday 31st 10.30am** Communion
Details of all services and information about the Benefice are on the website www.hamhillchurches.org and Church notice boards. Rev Nick Clarke 07485789968

FESTIVAL FIESTA Norton Festival is planning a Fiesta Weekend over the Early May Bank Holiday (**3rd to 6th May 2024**) to involve all village groups and individuals in a variety of events. Details to follow but please book the dates now.

THE VILLAGE DEFIBRILLATOR. As many readers will remember an appeal for a Village Defibrillator was made. Through the generosity of many residents, village local societies and groups, and our Parish Council sufficient monies were raised to buy one and have it placed outside the Shop. What was never thought about at the time (or since) was **who actually owned the machine**. Last week it was discovered the batteries within it needed replacing - but who was to pay? Luckily Hamdon First Aid have said they will hopefully lend us one from their stock for a short while. However we urgently need to raise **£250.00** to repay their kindness. Both Lindsay Clayton and myself were asked "Who owns the defibrillator?" - sadly neither of us could say. What we do know is that it is imperative the village has one and perhaps if we raise sufficient funds - we can purchase another. It has always been thought we need to have 2 in the village - after all Stoke has 5! By the time of this publication, we hope to have received a reply from our Parish Council asking for a donation, but in the meanwhile if there is anyone, a village group, village society or local business who feel they would like to help out with the initial £250.00, please contact either Lindsay Clayton (nee Elliott 881 074) or Peter

Callaghan (881850) or leave a message for one of us at the shop.

THE PUB QUIZ to raise funds for the RBL Poppy Appeal was held at The Lord Nelson on Sunday 5th November. Over 60 quizzers in 13 teams took part in a very competitive match which culminated in a tie for first place. The Skinny Broads from Broadmead Lane won the tie break and took the top spot. Contributions for the raffle from generous Villagers meant lots of prizes at the end of the evening. A fantastic team effort from Simon, Debra, Jo and Austin hosting the quiz with ticket sales and donations from the participants resulted in the raising £413.40 for RBL funds. Many thanks, as always to Helen and Mark and to everyone who took part.

PARISH COUNCIL REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2023

Planning: There was one planning application to discuss this month. Application Number: 23/02259/FUL Proposal: Siting of 1 no. shipping container on land Location: Land Adjacent 15 Broadmead Lane Norton Sub Hamdon TA14 6SS. The Parish Council discussed this at great length. It was a unanimous decision to **OBJECT** to this planning application for the following reasons.

Conflict with EQ2 (General Development) -

- Failure to “conserve and enhance the landscape character of the area.”
- Failure to “reinforce local distinctiveness and respect local context.”
- Failure to address “site specific considerations” – eg narrow nature of Broadmead Lane for access. Lack of parking. Also addressed below under objection via TA5.

Conflict with EQ3 (Historic Environment) –

- Failure to “Safeguard or where appropriate enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets” (no due regard to the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area).
- Failure to “make a positive contribution to its character through high standards of design which reflect and complement it and through the use of appropriate materials and techniques.”

Conflict with policy EQ5 (Green Infrastructure) –

- Failure to “enhance and/or maintain the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape.”
- Failure to give consideration to the “pressure/disturbance” this development may

have on nearby Ham Hill (a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Scheduled Ancient Monument, and Local Nature Reserve).

Conflict with policy TA5 (Transport Impact of New Development) –

- Failure to ensure that “the expected nature and volume of traffic and parked vehicles generated by the development would not have a detrimental impact on the character or amenity of the area and would not compromise the safety and/or function of the local or strategic road networks in terms of both volume and type of traffic generated.” There has been no assessment of the suitability of the access, e.g. visibility splays for ingress/egress to the site including suitability for on-site parking on horticultural/agricultural land. If no on-site parking proposed, then this will have a detrimental impact on residents’ parking which is already incredibly limited.

To read the full report sent to planning, please read the November Parish Council minutes.

A warm welcome to our new Parish Councillor:

The Parish Council was delighted to be able to Co-opt Caroline Riley onto the Parish Council at the November meeting. Caroline will already be well known to many of you, having lived in the village for a large part of her life. Caroline’s knowledge of the local area will be a huge asset to the Parish Council and we really look forward to working with her.

Somerset Council Declares Financial Emergency:

Last week the Somerset Council Executive declared a “Financial Emergency”. Somerset Council have informed us that their overspend position is not because of poor control or oversight, nor policy decisions or legal action – it is simply an exceptionally large increase in their costs for demand-led services, set against their constrained ability to raise additional income. Somerset Council’s current financial year 2023/24, the in-year overspend is a projected £27.3 million. This is an “adverse variance” of 5.5% of the Council’s net revenue budget (£493.4 million). In the next financial year (2024/25), based on cost pressures, they’re currently predicting a budget gap of around £100 million. With total General Fund Reserves just under £50 million, their ability to fund services will be jeopardised and could lead to them declaring a “Section 114” (effective bankruptcy) unless urgent corrective action is taken. The consequence of this would be that unelected, highly paid commissioners would come in to stabilise the council’s finances, selling off whatever they could, cutting all services except for those they legally have to provide, and raising council tax above the government’s cap. This financial situation is being driven by a number of factors, but first and foremost is the soaring cost of providing Children’s Services and Adult Social Care.

These are both statutory services (they're legally obliged to fund them). Here in Somerset, inflationary pressures have pushed the average cost of care from £577 per week to nearly £850 per week (+47%). The Government has also dropped its plans for social care reform (the so-called "Fair Cost of Care" reforms), so now Local Authorities have to pay for these increases in full.

HOW IS THIS GOING TO AFFECT THE PARISH COUNCIL AND SUBSEQUENTLY YOUR VILLAGE?

The mess that Somerset Council is in is going to have a huge impact on the Parish Council. We are currently working hard to complete the budget for next year so we can set a precept (the precept is the amount of money that the Parish Council receives to cover the services we supply - There are 279 parishes in the Somerset Council area. All local councils set a precept. Every Council has a budget - the amount of money required to fund its operations. Parish and town councils raise their money by adding an extra cost known as a "precept" to council tax bills in each parish).

However, on the 11th Nov, all Parish Councils received a letter from Somerset Council. It was titled Assets and Services Devolution. The letter was informing us of the financial crisis that Somerset Council are in and have requested that Parish Councils pay for some (or all) services that, up until now they have supplied to the village at no extra charge. Many Parish Councils across Somerset are furious that they had received this letter so late in the day when Parish Councils are trying to finalise their budget for 2024-25. They feel this letter should have been sent out at least 6 months ago so we would have had a better understanding of the situation and costs this would incur on to the Parish Council. In order for Norton to still receive the services we currently get will mean that the Parish Council will have to fund them and in order to be able to do that, we will need to have a considerable rise to our precept. The services we currently get include • Provision and collection of litter bins and dog waste bins • Street lights • Street Cleaning • Winter Service - filling grit bins • Roadside verges maintenance including grass cutting • Vegetation clearance and cutting on the Rights of Way network • Drain jetting/Gully cleansing • Hedge trimming • Weed treatment • Minor Highways functions such as footway and footpath repairs, • Fly tipping • Street lights. These services are not cheap. For example, the emptying of dog and litter bin a week would cost the Parish Council approx. £3,600 a year. Grit bins - filled twice a year, would cost approx. just under £3,000 a year! In Norton, a major concern is that Somerset Council own and maintain Minchington Rec and play area. Somerset Council are keen to transfer the ownership and management of some assets and services to the local level. If we were to take on Minchington rec (we already have the main rec that we

manage), we would be looking at an extra cost of something in the region of £4-5k a year on top of everything else. We are all working hard to reach a conclusion that will work and benefit the village. We will have to pay for these services in the future if we want Norton to remain the beautiful village it is. Comments on this proposal can be made to the clerk or any member of the Parish Council by email.

Flower Show: A letter had been received from the former Secretary of the Flower Show Committee. Although they had 15 people attend their recent AGM, only 4 people had agreed to serve on the committee and no one was prepared to take on the roles of Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer. The constitution requires 8 people to constitute a forum. Unless more people are willing to get involved the flower show will have to be disbanded. If anyone is willing to help in any way then please let Caroline Riley know by emailing her on: rileypeacehaven@icloud.com
The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Monday 11th December 2023 at 7.30pm in the committee room in the village hall. Members of the general public are more than welcome to attend. Louise Brooks (Clerk to Norton sub Hamdon Parish Council) nortonpcclerk@outlook.com

THE TRIANGLE TRUST is holding its Christmas Bazaar at Stoke Memorial Hall on Saturday 2nd of December 11 - 2pm Gifts and Craft stalls. Refreshments - Home made cakes, mince pies, teas and coffees. Tombola and Grand Raffle. Everyone welcome. For any info. Please contact Jennie Harris. 01935 881718. Thank you.

STOKE-SUB-HAMDON GARDENING CLUB
Season's Greetings from the Gardening Club
Our next meeting is in January 2024. If you're interested, please contact: sec.sshgardeningclub@gmail.com for details. We meet on the fourth Wednesday of the month
Venue: The Memorial Hall, Stoke-sub-Hamdon. 7.15 for 7.30 p.m.

THE STOKE VILLAGE ARTISTS GROUP is a very friendly group of amateurs who meet at the Stoke Memorial Hall on Tuesday evenings 7.30 to 9:30 pm and Friday mornings 10.00 to 12.00 noon during school term time. We share an enjoyment of traditional art at all levels and seek to develop our artistic skills through discussion and an encouraging environment. Should you wish to learn more about our group, please contact Andrew on 01935 823691
SSHTheVillageArtistsGroup@gmail.com Facebook: Stoke Sub Hamdon The Village Artists Group - We look forward to hearing from you.

MERRIOTT SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB is looking for new members for its club in the Village Hall. We meet on **Wednesday evenings from 7pm to 9.30pm** and

play matches from time to time with other clubs in the area – we play in a relaxed atmosphere, and play to enjoy the game. The club has three mats and can provide woods for those who wish to try their hand; it is a game for all ages, for both men and women, beginners and experienced alike, we play all year round – in the dry! Prospective players are invited to phone the secretary on 01308 862203 or 07956 598894 Rob

HAMDON COMMUNITY CHURCH (HCC) Look out for us during 2023 on posters, newsletters, Facebook and Instagram @hamdoncommunitychurch. You are very welcome to join us for any of our activities. For any further information contact info@hamdonchurch.co.uk Paul & Naomi, Matt & Hannah and Rachel

ADVERTISEMENTS:

ACCOMMODATION. Annex to charming cottage in centre of Norton sub Hamdon available informally for

visiting friends & family of local residents. Double bedroom, private shower room, sitting room & fully equipped kitchen for self catering. £65 a night. Minimum 2 nights. (Small single room also could be available for extra £20 a night) 01935 881233 or email: woodiana39@aol.com

ALISON'S HELPING HANDS COMMUNITY CARE AT HOME My name is Alison and I have lived in Norton for nearly 4 years now. I am starting up a Care at Home service, and will be offering services in the home for anyone who is in need of help in the surrounding villages. I am quite prepared to be adaptable and undertake a range of duties to include help around the house, shopping, companionship, dog walking, personal care if necessary and can also help with any administrative tasks. I have a clean driving licence, DBS Certificate, Safeguarding Certificates. If you think you might be interested, please contact me on 07544 683 873 or email Alisonshomecare@outlook.com and I can arrange a visit to discuss your specific requirements.

NORTON EVENTS DIARY

Saturday 2 December IT session Reading Room 10.30am
Wednesday 6 December Ladies Group Christmas Party Village Hall 12.30pm
Saturday 9 December Table Top Sale Village Hall 10.00am
Sunday 10 December Festival Christmas Concert 2.30pm
Monday 11 Parish Council Meeting Village Hall 7.30pm
Tuesday 12 December Mobile Library Higher Street 1.40pm
Thursday 21 December Carol Singing in Jubilee Garden 6.30pm
2024 Wednesday 24 January Village Coffee Morning Norton House 10.45am
Friday 3 – Monday 6 May Norton Festival Fiesta

ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER should be in the box on the Post Office counter, or sent by email to: nortonnews@hotmail.com by 4.00pm on the 19th of each month. In December the deadline is a week before.

NEWCOMERS TO OUR VILLAGE. If you know of anyone who has moved in to Norton, please get their details and ring or email the editor so that we can welcome them to our village.

THE NEWSLETTER is produced monthly by the Newsletter Committee and is distributed free to every house in the village by volunteers who give their services free of charge. The Editor is Mrs Janet Hutton (881566) and Assistant Editor Mrs Chrissie O'Brien, email: nortonnews@hotmail.com NB. All emails are replied to as soon as possible - please check if no acknowledgement is received by the deadline date

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