Useful Information for Visitors

Visitor Information Point:
The Guildhall 01608 866336
Open only Mon - Fri: Mar-Oct 9.30-5.30
Nov-Dec 10.00-5.30

Chipping Norton Town Council:
Town Clerk, The Guildhall 01608 642144

West Oxfordshire District Council:
Area Office, The Guildhall 01608 642144

Police Station:
London Road 0845 850 5555

War Memorial:
Over Norton Road (Priory buildings)

Doctors:
White House Surgery 01608 638000
West Street Surgery 01608 642129

Library:
Goddard’s Lane
Closed Thursdays and Tues. am & Sat. pm

Museum:
High Street (above Co-op) 01608 641712
Open Easter to end October
Tues-Sat & BHols Mon 2.00-4.00

The Theatre:
Spring Street 01608 642150

Churches:
CofE, St Mary’s, Church Street
RC, Holy Trinity, London Road
Methodist, West Street
Baptist, New Street
Community, Chipping Norton School

Schools:
Chipping Norton School, Burford Road
St Mary’s CE Primary, The Green

Market Day:
Wednesday VICTORIA DAY, every second Saturday of the month

Leisure Centre:
Mon-Fri 6.30am-10.00pm
Sat & Sun 8.00am-8.00pm

Outdoor Swimming Pool:
Info 01608 641188

Buses:
Stagecoach - Buses to Oxford, 01865 772250
Banbury & Stratford upon Avon www.stagecoachbus.com/oxfordshire
Worthys - Buses to Cheltenham, 01608 677322
Wiltshire also buses to Banbury twice a week
An Introduction to Chipping Norton

“Chipping” means a market and in the middle ages people came to buy and sell at the markets and fairs that gave Chipping Norton its name. There is still a weekly market every Wednesday and the “Top Fair” (once a hiring fair for servants) in September but today there is also a wide range of shops, businesses, hotels, restaurants, a theatre, schools and many other services both for residents and visitors in this small Cotswold town.

It began as a few houses with a church and a castle at the bottom of the hill. Only the earthworks of the castle still remain but the church is now a fine example of a “wool church”, enlarged by local merchants who grew rich on the trade, a new market place was laid out in about 1205 to provide room for profits of the Cotswold wool trade. To promote increased church”, enlarged by local merchants who grew rich on the town “of godly behaviour and charity for eight poor widows of the manor. Nearby is Pool Meadow, an artificial pond dominated the lives of local people, most of whom controlled the market. Later it belonged to the Fitzalans in the 12th century. It would have once the headquarters of a guild merchants founded about 1450. From their guildhall they provided a lower hall. This fine building is still the focus for the civic life of the community.

Chipping Norton is a flourishing centre with a strong sense of community, proud of its past but not living in it. A lively town “of godly behaviour and charity for eight poor widows of the manor. Nearby is Pool Meadow, an artificial pond.

St Mary the Virgin Church

This has been the parish church of Chipping Norton for almost a thousand years. It has been altered and enlarged many times, most notably in the 15th century when wool merchants paid for the rebuilding of the nave in the new “perpendicular” style. Some of their memorial brasses can be seen in the north aisle. (A guide book is available at the church.)

This large rectangular space was first laid out in about 1205 to provide room for markets and fairs, and Chipping Norton got its name (meaning a market) from this.

The Almshouses

Provided by Henry Comyn in 1364 as a charity for eight poor widows of the town “of godly behaviour and conservation”. Comyn was a leading citizen but was prosecuted by the Royalists during the Civil War for his Puritan beliefs. The original eight tiny cottages were converted to four in the 1950s without spoiling the appearance if the building. (Why does it have nine chimneys?)

Castle Mounds

Only the earthworks remain of what was once a sizeable castle, erected by Ernaulf d’Hesdin, a sizeable castle, erected by Ernaulf d’Hesdin, a

Diston’s Lane

Originally a lane beside William Diston’s farm, this quiet side street leading to the churchyard had both tautery and the town’s first gasworks located here built by William Bliss for workers at his mill, and some have a uniform design of barges and matching parachs. On the left hand side is a cottage converted from one of the original farm buildings.

The Theatre, Spring Street

Once a woolen mill specialising in the manufacture of high-quality tweed William Bliss built it to replace his earlier mill which had burnt down in 1872 and the building was completed in one year. Its impressive appearance if the building. (Why does it have nine chimneys?)

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The Guildhall

This was once the headquarters of a guild merchants founded about 1450. From their guildhall they controlled the market. Later it belonged to the corporation of Chipping Norton, set up by royal charter in 1607. Now it houses the Town Clerk, Visitor Information Centre and a District Council Office.

Kinds Head Court

This was one of several coaching inns serving travellers passing through Chipping Norton. It still has the high archway through which stage coaches could enter the courtyard behind. The former stables are now attractive cottages and the inn itself is divided into flats.

Town Hall

Built in 1842 as a demonstration of civic pride. It was designed by George Repton in classical style, but had open arches at the lower level like a traditional market hall. Those were later filled in with windows to provide a lower hall. This fine building is still the focus for the civic life of the community.

High Street

Sometimes called “Topside” because of its position overlooking the market place, most of the houses abd shops in the High Street were given fashionable “Georgian” fronts by their prosperous owners in the 18th century. These buildings stand on much earlier foundations dating from the early 13th century when the market place was first laid out. Behind each one is a narrow strip of land providing space for gardens and outbuildings.

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