

Sopwell Residents Association

Annual Report 2004/5

Management committee

We now have a lively and willing committee working on your behalf. During the last year we have held 7 committee meetings and two general meetings. Many new people have expressed a wish to join us so we have several new faces this year including a tenant representative.

The following people have put themselves forward for election and re-election: Linda Bateman, Chantal Burns, Giles Hanford, Helly Sawyer, Len Lewsey, D'Arcy Marlborough, Sandy Norman, Chris Pudsey, Jo Witt, Jack Hill, Jill Gipps, Rick Taylor, Anne Fenton, Pamela Marshall. Rev. Ruth Puke and Jenny Owen (SADC) and Judith Tucker (SADC) have also expressed a wish to continue as non-voting co-opted members.

Special thanks go to those who have resigned in the past year and who have given a valuable service especially to Martin Dennys our treasurer, and to our founder, Anne Kaloczi, who has unfortunately had to resign due to ill health. Anne has been a rock and an inspiration to us and without her we would not be here.

Communications with residents

We have managed to produce two newsletters during the year. This is quite an achievement as the production and distribution is a long process involving many people. We rely heavily on our small group of willing volunteers to deliver them. Many thanks go to them with the hope that they will continue to be so willing. Our website www.sopwell.org is updated on a regular basis giving local information and links to other relevant sites. The contents of all the newsletters is available for viewing on the website along with issues of interest. We even have a gallery of photographs of the area.

The Secretary has received several communications from residents by email and letter over the year. We try to act on these as quickly as possible. Residents may also leave communications in the suggestion boxes which are situated in various shops in the area.

Liaison with local Councillors, Council and other organisations

The relationship with local Councillors is strong and we are in regular communication to try to resolve the issues and problems in Sopwell.

Our tenant representative on the committee, Pamela Marshall, has represented SRA at meetings of the Housing Liaison Consultative Forum. Len Lewsey and Anne Kaloczi represented SRA at meetings of the Council's Tidy St Albans Committee and Linda Bateman represented SRA at the Community Safety Consultative Forum. In April this year, Sandy Norman was asked to speak on a subject 'dear to her heart' on the Three Counties Radio soapbox slot. She chose litter. Sandy was also asked to speak on the

activities of the SRA to years three and four of Mandeville school at their community day in May. The SRA also had a poster display at the school.

Local schools were asked to produce a winning design for a poster for the Sopwell litter pick at Sopwell Priory. The winners both came from Mandeville School. The winners were presented with book tokens.

During the year, SRA was asked to respond to the Council consultation paper on alcohol consumption in public places and on the sports and leisure facilities consultation.

Activities

Litter

Litter is still the biggest issue concerning residents. During the year litter picks were organised in conjunction with the Council Litter Week and ad hoc. The area picked was Sopwell Priory to coincide with the judging of the Green Pennant Award. Rubbish and fly-tipping offences are constantly being reported to the Herts Direct website.

Motorbike nuisance

Many complaints were received about youths riding motorbikes dangerously on pavements and roads. Complainants were encouraged to log the times of the nuisance and to report the offences to the police. The police now have the powers necessary in being able to deal with the problem and have been successful in removing the bikes.

Parking on verges

The SRA in liaison with the Council consulted the residents of Wilshere Avenue and Doggetts Way about parking on grass verges.

Green Pennant Award

On behalf of the SRA, Anne Kaloczi was instrumental in applying to the Civic Trust for a Green Pennant Award for the Sopwell Priory Open Space. But while the judge was impressed with the site, the award could not be given because of a technicality – the SRA did not manage the site. Hopefully, the Council can achieve the award next year.

Marlborough Club

The SRA were asked to gauge the concern by residents to the greater use of the Marlborough Club which at present is under-used and costs the Council (and ratepayers) a lot of money to keep up. The SRA held a committee meeting and an open general meeting to discuss the Club. The Council is planning a consultation later this year.

Ver Valley walk

The SRA and the local Councillors and other interested groups were asked to assist in assessing the viability of opening up that part of the Ver Valley footpath which passes through Cottonmill. Although the SRA was enthusiastic, the Council did not agree.

Larks in the Parks

The SRA was involved in organising this social event which took place last July in the land beside the Marlborough Club.

Sandy Norman

Secretary

June 2005