

Sopwell Residents Association

AGM 2006/7

Annual Report

Introduction

This is the annual report for the year ending 31st March 2007. It is the fourth annual report of our Association.

Management committee

Our management committee continues to work hard on your behalf. Since the last AGM in June 2006, we have held 8 committee meetings. Committee members also regularly attend meetings organised by the council and other organisations on litter (A Cleaner District committee), tenant participation, housing liaison, environment forum, Neighbourhood Watch, Abbey Line Community Rail Partnership, Sopwell Green Space Action Plan, Sopwell Community Partnership and the Youth Steering Committee. We have also participated in consultations on the NHS, the East of England Regional Assembly Plan, the Railfreight proposals, the St Albans District Community Strategy and the Draft Cycling Strategy.

Our constitution allows us to have 15 committee members with the possibility of co-opting others for specialist tasks. The following people have put themselves forward for re-election: Chantal Burns, Anne Fenton, Jill Gipps, Giles Hanford, Jack Hill, Joanne Tang, Len Lewsey, Christoph Lutz, Pamela Marshall, Sandy Norman, Chris Pudsey, Helly Sawyer and Rick Taylor.

The following wish to be re-elected as officers: Giles Hanford as Chair, Helly Sawyer as Vice-Chair, Sandy Norman as Secretary and Jill Gipps as Treasurer.

Special thanks go to those who have resigned in the past year and who have given a valuable service especially to Linda Bateman and to the Rev. Ruth Pyke who left us to go to a new parish in Caddington. Some of us attended her inauguration ceremony last October. Joyce Hood also resigned. There are now two vacancies on the committee which we would like filled by willing volunteers. Please, if you have public conscience and have a little time to spare, get in touch with any of the committee. You will be made very welcome.

Communications with residents

Apart from the AGM, we had two general meetings last year. Both of these were held in the Marlborough Club. They were fairly well attended.

We only managed to produce two newsletters during the year. There is a lot of hard work involved in producing them and also their distribution. Many thanks go to all those involved in their production (Chantal Burns, Christoph Lutz) and especially to our small band of willing volunteers and their co-ordinator, Joanne Tang, who post them through your doors. There is a high turnover of volunteers so if you have some spare time please help us deliver future issues. If you are new to the area or have missed some of the issues, the content of all the newsletters is available for viewing on the website.

Our website www.sopwell.org.uk is updated on a regular basis giving local information and links to other relevant sites. Please go and have a look and feel free to suggest improvements.

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 usually by putting them in touch with the appropriate authority. However, we are unable to take on individual case work. Our ward councillors are very willing to take these on for you. We continue to have good relationships with them.

Specific activities

Many issues and problems were discussed and dealt with during the year. Here are just a few of them.

Litter

During the year litter picks were organised in conjunction with the Council Litter Week in March 2007. The areas picked were Sopwell Priory and surrounding areas. We picked several bags of rubbish and recycling refuse although there was a noticeable difference in the amount from previous years. It looks like Sopwell may be becoming cleaner! We have made a concerted effort to tackle the fly-tipping and littering on the land above Homebase.

Sopwell Priory

The benches funded by the Awards for all grant were finally installed in December. Wildflower plugs were planted last September. We are involved in the next stage of the Sopwell Priory Green Space Action Plan (GAP).

Bulbs

A small team of us purchased and planted 300 bulbs on the green space opposite MacDonald's and around Mereden Court in Tavistock Avenue. Previously planted bulbs all popped up this Spring. Gradually we hope to make Sopwell 'blooming' marvellous!

Trolleys

These continue to be a nuisance despite constant phoning of Sainsbury's, Homebase etc to remove them. We sent a letter to the manager of Sainsbury's who promised to be more vigilant.

Children's Play areas

Some of these had been reported as being in need of repair. There is now a pot of money available from the Big Lottery Fund for play provision for under 18s. The Council are consulting at present for how to spend it.

Community events

The SRA was again heavily involved in organising Larks in the Parks in July 2006 which took place on the land beside the Marlborough Club. There was lots of organised entertainment for the children, lovely refreshments and a plant swap shop stall. It was a blisteringly hot day and great fun was had by all.

Sandy Norman, Secretary

May 2007