



NEWSLETTER

Issue 2

October 2003

Sopwell Residents Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING !

The next General Meeting for all residents in the Sopwell ward will be held on

- **18th November at 7.30pm**
- in St Julian's Church Hall
- Abbots Avenue

Please show your support and find out what your committee has been up to on your behalf over the past year.

Your feedback, views and ideas are invaluable and will help us identify key community issues to address over the coming months. We look forward to seeing you all there!

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Parking on pavements

We have made some initial enquiries with Herts Highways regarding possible solutions to the parking problems in some areas which lead to people parking on pavements or verges. The main solution offered, which won't of course work everywhere, is what is called 'verge hardening'. This can take the form of either reinforcing the verge with grasscrete or, if underground services etc. permit, replacing it altogether with parking bays.

We know this is an issue which affects

some streets more than others, and would like to start putting together a list of priority areas so that we can approach the council about getting something done. If you feel your road suffers badly from this problem and would like some help getting the ball rolling, please get in touch - and if you can suggest alternative solutions, then we would be very interested to have your ideas

Chris Pudsey, Ashdales

SUGGESTION BOXES

Suggestion boxes are placed in the following places:

- Vesta Avenue Butchers
- King Offa pub
- Abbots Avenue Butchers
- Archers, Cottonmill Lane

Conservation issues - Sopwell Priory site

An inspection tour of the Nunnery site by Residents and the Committee revealed nine serious Health & Safety issues.

One of the most hazardous is an old broken disused sewer drain at the rear of homes in Old Sopwell Gardens. This must be urgently removed by Thames Water.

Apart from a large pit dug out by vandals, the graffiti and rubbish, the lack of sufficient litter and dog excrement bins, the most serious fault of this public amenity is the lack of access for disabled residents. They are denied their rights to visit their

legacy from the past, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It was recently advertised by the Council as allowing FREE Access to visitors on Heritage Open Days.

Council Portfolio holders for Health, The Environment, Leisure and Verulamium Museum Director, C.S.M.S, all of whom manage the site, have been fully informed of these problems. A working party of concerned Residents has been formed by the Residents Association to check on progress and to try and prevent the desecration of the ruins and improve the environment of this struggling nature reserve.

For further details go to www.sopwell.org.uk or drop a message of support in the Suggestion Boxes.

Anne Kaloczi

Committee Representation

At present we have no active Council tenant representatives on the committee.

It's important that we represent the whole community, particularly as many of our residents are Council tenants. We need to be aware of your concerns.

If you are interested in being part of our active team, please come along to the meeting on the 18th November and introduce yourself to one of our committee members.

Your Committee Members are: Mr. Giles Hanford (Chair), Mr. D'Arcy Marlborough (Vice Chair), Ms. Jo Witt (Secretary), Mr. Martin Dennys (Treasurer), Ms Chantal Burns (Social Secretary), Mr. Mark Sansom, Mr. G Gardiner, Ms Val Langford, Mr. David Southheard, Mr. Len Lewsey, Ms Sandy Norman, Rev. Ruth Pyke, Ms Chris Pudsey, Mr. Christoph Lutz, Mr. Jamie Gibb

Meet your Sopwell Councillors!

Did you know that our locally elected Councillors have a walk in surgery every month at St Julian's Church Hall, Abbots Avenue?

They are there on the first Saturday of every month between 10 - 11.30am to hear our concerns. Go along to see them!

Rubbish!

"Litter, litter everywhere....."

The ongoing problem of litter, especially along the path by Homebase, and its accompanying vermin problems (yes, rats have been seen) has been tackled from many angles. We have written letters to the local stores and have made many phone calls. We have also kept the Council informed of the littered areas using the Litter hotline.

Now, prompted by us, our local Councillors have taken on the problem of the land which does not belong to Sainsbury's, Homebase or McDonalds where most of the fly tipping takes place.

Councillor Harris has been tackling the Council Environmental and Health department directly about removing the large rubbish items and all litter and they have finally agreed to take action. This is very good news.

There is however still the problem of the lack of litter

bins. McDonalds are willing to put in as many as are needed but, as they have an "M" on them, they have to have planning permission! And we still have the challenge of educating people not to drop litter or dump their rubbish everywhere.

We are reliant on Sopwell residents working as a team so please report these issues to the following contacts:

Council Litter Enforcement Office for Paths & Highways;

01727 819472

Council Leisure for Parks & Open Spaces eg: litter
01727 819 366

Let's try to make Sopwell an even more beautiful place to live. Ideas welcome.

Sandy Norman, Tavistock Avenue

Football in Sopwell

We aim to inform Sopwell residents about activities in the area. As part of this effort, we can report that girls and boys interested in football can join the St Albans City youth football club! Training is on the Sopwell field in the summer and in Francis Bacon School in the Winter. There is a large girls division with teams for under 11's, under 12's and under 13's. Training is on Tuesday evenings. The boys' team train and play their home games on the football field behind the Marlborough club.

Contact and more information:
Ian Woods, 01727 857458
Christoph Lutz, Cottonmill Lane

The Sopwell Allotments - update

We can report that some allotments have been taken since our last newsletter. There are still a number of allotments available and if you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity, please contact:

Leisure Services Division,
District Council,
St Peters St, AL1 3JE
Tel: 01727 819329
Christoph Lutz, Cottonmill Lane

Review of Sopwell Youth Club (off Leyland Avenue and Cottonmill Lane)

I paid a visit to Sopwell Youth Club to find out more about this vibrant club that has been running for more than 20 years. I approached Trevor, one of the qualified and experienced team of youth workers, who mid sentence suddenly pulled out his harmonica and started singing the blues - much to my astonishment and the amusement of the local kids!

There is plenty to do there: play

pool, 5-a-side football, basketball, Playstation, TV, arts and crafts, quiz nights, cooking and discussions or just chill out listening to good music and chat.

The club also organises supervised group activities including Quasar, Canoeing, Sailing and Climbing and even exchange trips to Europe.

It has a friendly and energetic atmosphere and is managed by Herts County

Council and their team of professional youth workers. It's open to 11-19 year olds from 7.30 to 9.45pm every Monday and costs just 40 pence per evening (you also pay a one off £1 joining fee.) For further details phone Herts CC Youth Services on 01727 753100 or visit their website www.hertsdirect.org/youth

Giles Hanford, Boleyn Drive

Save our trees!

Some of you will be aware of tree felling in the Sopwell Ward.

Residents in Berners Drive, concerned about the felling of all trees along the edge of the railway line, took action. They felt that this would not only destabilize the natural habitat but also destroy the scenic beauty of the area. A meeting with ADAS was held in August. Apparently, the maintenance of railway shrub and tree layers has been somewhat neglected over the past 40 years with the result that the extensive growth of trees and shrubs has developed into a natural habitat screening off the railway. However, because of the possibility of ageing trees causing accidents, controlled felling and replanting of the area with shrubs and trees, has to take place for liability reasons.

The three areas of concern are mainly in Abbots Avenue, Berners Drive and Priory Walk. Each area of concern will be addressed differently as a result of the variation in trees, shrubs and area of responsibility. Any tree or shrub that is on the West side of the metal fencing or between the metal fencing and the railway falls under the responsibility of the railway. In some cases the distance from the track to the edge may be less or more than 10 meters. This is important as there are defined regions where specific types of vegetation can be planted or grown. ADAS will be drawing up a replanting schedule and outlining which shrubs and trees they recommend for replanting. We are currently still waiting on the final report and will inform you of any updates or changes as a result of the report.

If you have views to express or want to read more about this issue, visit our website

www.sopwell.org.uk

Richard Daganais, Priory Walk

Community events!

TOTS & TEDDIES

Bring your favourite teddy, an adult and come and join in the fun! Stories, songs, craft and a prayer. Refreshments and play. Tots & Teddies is an activity especially for pre school children and their carers run by the parish of St Stephen and St Julian. Wednesdays: 10.30am - 11.30am at St Julian's Church, Abbots Ave, off Cottonmill Lane

The Revd. Ruth Pyke, Tel 01727 730746

The Revd David Ridgeway, Tel 01727 862598

New! Starting 6th October 2003

SALAAM PARENT & TODDLER GROUP

at St Julian's Church Hall, Abbots Avenue Every Monday term time 11:00 - 1:00 All Welcome! Only 50p per family!

CRAFT FAIR

St Julian's Church, Abbots Ave, St Albans
Saturday 8th November 10:00am - 4:00pm

Embroidery...Calligraphy....Lacemaking....Wood Turning

Lunches.....Refreshments

Entrance: Adults £1 Concessions 50p

Advertisement

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Enquiries welcome.

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Contact us

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St. Albans, Herts



Email: info@sopwell.org.uk
Internet: www.sopwell.org.uk

Newsletter distribution - A Big Thank you!

Our thanks go to all those who tramped the Sopwell streets delivering newsletters. Your help is always much appreciated.

We would be grateful for some new volunteers to deliver around the Riverside Road area. Please let us know at the meeting on the 18th November, leave your name in a suggestion box or send a message via our website.

Sainsburys lorries

Residents from Leyland Avenue, fed up with the noise from the refrigeration units and lorries reversing into Sainsburys in the wee small hours, have decided to do something about it. Two residents have written and telephoned Sainsburys as well as the Environmental Health Officer at SADC. They also kept a log of all the disturbances for the month of July. They write:

"Is anyone else suffering from disturbed sleep due to the excessive noise of Sainsburys delivery lorries? We are constantly awoken by the noise of the lorries

reversing and the noise of their refrigeration units. We are also occasionally unable to enjoy sitting in our garden on Sunday because of their noise."

We will continue to support them in their protest to Sainsburys and have suggested that they also canvas other houses in the street to back them up. If anyone else in Leyland Avenue wants to join in the campaign, please email the website or leave a message in one of the suggestion boxes and we will pass on their names.

Sandy Norman, Tavistock Avenue



St. Albans most established Pilates Practice is now offering Classes in Sopwell/Cottonmill area

PILATES - YOGA

at the **MARLBOROUGH CLUB**
Old Oak, off Cottonmill Lane

Morning, Lunchtime & Evening Classes
Men & women of all ages are most welcome a friendly atmosphere!

***Pilates is great for bad backs,
posture, toning and relaxation.***

We also offer classes for Seniors, Kids Yoga and ante-natal.
Special rates for unwaged, nurses, students etc

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