



Sopwell Residents Association

NEWSLETTER

Issue 3
April 04

Resident's open meeting 15th June

The last residents' meeting in November was a great success. The committee gave a review of progress since the formation of the SRA a year ago and the general feedback from you was that you are pleased with what we have achieved on your behalf. The process is ongoing. We are still not satisfied with many aspects of the management of

Sopwell and we will continue to try to make Sopwell an even more beautiful environment in which to live and work. You too can help by reporting holes in roads, damaged pavements or anti-social behaviour such as litter, fly tipping, dangerous driving, abandoned trolleys, etc. See the contact list on p. 4

The next resident's meeting, which will also be our AGM, will be held on 15th June at St Julian's Church at 7.30pm. Put the date in your diary NOW! We will also be inviting your local councillors and the local community police to say a few words.

Sandy Norman

Calling council tenants!

Did you know that Sopwell is the largest ward in St Albans? Did you also know that our ward has an above national average number of council tenants? Council tenants may have different local concerns and so we desperately need to hear what these are in or-

der to work on your behalf. If you are a council tenant, have a little spare time and would like to join the committee (we are a very nice bunch), we would like to hear from you. Please phone our contact number, leave a message on our website or, alter-

natively, put your contact details in one of the suggestion boxes, and we will contact you.

Sandy Norman

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BIN IT, DON'T TOSS IT! PRIDE IN SOPWELL

Spring Clean Week 17-25th April 2004

'We've had enough of rubbish. We're fed up with the tide of litter that is bringing down the reputation of our ward, and we are sick of paying through the nose to get other people's junk cleaned up.' This is how the community feels about litter in the area.

And just to prove how much we loathe litter, the SRA committee is going to take to the streets from 17th to 25th April to pick up the litter. By showing how big a problem litter is, we aim to encourage more people to start disposing of it properly.

We need your help, so please come along on one of the dates below and lend a hand. Bags, gloves, pickers etc. will be provided.

- **Saturday 17th April 2-4pm**
Meet at the old railway bridge on Cottonmill Lane.
- **Sunday 18th April 2-4pm**
Meet at Doggetts Way bus shelter.
- **Thursday 22nd April 2-4pm**
Meet at entrance to the alley in Creighton Avenue.
- **Saturday 24th April 2-4pm**
Meet at corner of Coningsby Bank and Holyrood Crescent.
- **Sunday 25th April 2-4pm**
Meet at Sopwell Priory information board on Cottonmill Lane.

Anne Kaloczi

SUGGESTION BOXES

Suggestion boxes are placed in the following places:

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

PLANNING

Not in our Green Belt!

At our last open meeting, some residents expressed concern over plans they had seen for a large stadium and other developments on land round the Park Street roundabout.

As we understand it, these plans were part of a study done on behalf of the football club into possible sites for relocation from Clarence Park if they win promotion. Discussion as to which (if any) were feasible would have been included in the 'Local Plan Review' which the council was work-

ing on, and there would have been opportunities for comment by the public as part of the consultation process. However, due to various complications, including new government rules about local plans, the council decided in November not to continue with the present consultation, but to move straight to the new system. Consultation for this 'Local Development Framework' should begin later in the year.

When the new document comes out, it will be interesting to see whether the Cla-

rence Park relocation is still an issue, as it would seem that at present the football club is probably too busy avoiding relegation to be thinking much about a new stadium . . .

For more about the local plan, see www.stalbans.gov.uk/living/planning/local_plan.htm

Pizza at the Post Office?

As many readers will know, the Post Office is shortly to move from its current location at 37 Vesta Avenue to the Londis shop next door.

Many readers will also know that a planning application was made for a 'change of use' from retail to pizza outlet at no. 37. The SRA committee wrote to the council asking them, if

permission was granted, to make sure some conditions were put in place to address residents' concerns over issues such as parking, litter, noise etc. We have now heard that the application has been passed – but 'with conditions'.

Chris Pudsey

TRANSPORT

Singing in the rain!

Most of you will have noticed the brand new bus shelters that appeared around the route a few weeks ago. The SRA committee is extremely pleased about their appearance as improving the bus shelters was one of our long-term goals (see our first newsletter July 2003). Thanks also to Sop-

well councillors who helped put pressure on the council on our behalf.

But that's not the end of the story as there are still shelters needed, e.g. on Trumpington Drive. It is not much fun waiting there in the pouring rain. We have been told that

any allocated additional shelters are likely to be put in place shortly.

Sandy Norman

Travelling hopefully . . .

Users of the St Albans Abbey Station will be pleased to know that Silverlink have reconnected the blue 'information' and red 'emergency' buttons after the SRA committee wrote to them concerning the lack of user information. When there is a train delay the blue button should be updated with details. The red button should be answered by Watford Junction. They are attempting to reconnect the tannoy system, but have hit technical problems, so we will continue to encourage them to complete this work.

be built on the current site. We believe that the area around the pedestrian rail crossing is being considered for the new station. We want to hear from anyone who is concerned, or who has an opinion over this proposal, whether they are users of the service or not.

This proposal will affect those who commute into Sopwell and St Albans as well as those commuting away. If we get enough response we will arrange a specific public meeting to discuss the issue. We have already requested consultation on the plans when they are ready for review in a few months' time.

households in the two wards has no access to a car or van, as opposed to the district average of 14.7%. It has been suggested therefore that Sopwell might consider a counter-proposal to recommend adding a new station in the middle of Sopwell instead of moving or removing the existing St Albans Abbey station. Again, we would like to hear from residents on their opinion of this suggestion.

Martin Dennys

Station on the move?

Network Rail are proposing to move St Albans Abbey Station so that houses can

Sopwell and St Peter's (the city centre) wards are the most reliant in the district on public transport. This is clear from the results of the 2001 Census: over a quarter of

WHOSE RUBBISH!

We hope you have noticed a slight improvement in the amount of litter on the streets and open spaces in Sopwell. The SRA committee and Sopwell councillors have been working hard to clean up Sopwell. You too can help by joining in the litter pick – see front page.

McDonalds, a major source of litter on Griffiths Way, Wilshere Avenue and Doggetts Way, have been visited on a number of occasions by Councillors Harris and Smith, and by Tara Murphy, the Litter Enforcement Officer. They have agreed to pick up all McDonalds rubbish within a 100 metre radius of the restaurant and ALL rubbish within a 10 metre radius, and say they will do this three times a day.

You should also have noticed a reduction of the number of supermarket trolleys on the streets. Sainsburys have now fitted most of their trolleys with electronic devices that lock when the trolley is taken outside the car park. A

few are still escaping but a phone call to Sainsburys will get them quickly removed.

Other remaining litter hotspots in Sopwell include the rail crossing at Grindcobbe and the Transco land above Homebase. Members of the SRA committee have been in contact with Network Rail and Transco to negotiate their clearance. If this fails, the 1990 Environment Protection Act provides a way for us to put further pressure on them.

The problem with litter will not go away entirely until WE stop dropping it. There was a good example of this recently. The Vesta Avenue parade of shops has several litterbins and is cleared of litter twice each weekday by the council. Yet on a recent Saturday morning the seat outside the Post Office was surrounded by a mass of discarded fish and chips papers, beer cans, cigarette packets, etc. All this just five metres from a litterbin! The council is

very responsive to complaints about litter, but to combat this kind of behaviour they would need to come round on an hourly basis. It is worth remembering that if we don't drop litter, the council would not have to pay to clear it – and maybe our council tax would go down a bit!

Useful contacts

Litter hotline: 819465 or email moirawollington@stalbens.gov.uk

Sainsbury's trolleys: 847707

Abandoned vehicles: 819391

Information on litter and litter laws:
<http://www.encams.org>

Len Lewsey

DISCOVER A HIDDEN JEWEL

Sopwell Priory and Nature Reserve Cottonmill Lane, St Albans

It is proposed to start a 'Friends of Sopwell Priory' group for anyone willing to help preserve and enhance this wonderful local heritage site. 'Such an important area can only benefit from more local involvement' say Countryside Management Services, who are willing to facilitate this new group.

An inaugural open-air meeting is to be held on Sunday 27th April at 2pm, near the history board opposite the ruins on Cottonmill Lane, St Albans.

We will start with a general litter pick of the site. At 3pm, members of the Butterfly Conservation Association will lead us on a butterfly-monitoring walk

around the area. At least nineteen species of butterfly have been found at the nearby watercress beds nature reserve, and it is hoped that a similar number will be discovered on the priory site.

During the afternoon, plants that will attract butterflies into your garden will be on sale in Old Sopwell Gardens. These are being donated – contributions welcome! The stall will also have information about the Friends of Sopwell Priory and forthcoming plans and events.

Please come along and join the Friends of Sopwell Priory and discover the gem on your doorstep.

Anne Kaloczi

Community events!

St Albans Toy Library meets on Tuesday mornings in term time from 10am to 12 noon.

An opportunity to meet other parents and children and borrow toys for a nominal charge.

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

Salaam parent & toddler group

at St Julian's Church Hall,
Abbots Avenue Every Monday

Time 11:00 - 1:00 All Welcome! Only 50p per family!

LARKS IN THE PARKS 18th July, 12 noon til 4pm.

Come and join in the fun at 'Larks in the Parks' on 18th July in the Marlborough Club grounds.

Bring along your picnics and parasols.

There will be entertainment, including Cottonmill Clog Morris, stilt walkers,

games and events for kids, a mobile band and much, much more . . .

See our next newsletter for more details – but mark it in your diary now: 18th July, 12 noon til 4pm.

This is a community and family event, to which everyone is welcome – so do come along!

Jo Witt

Beat the banks and loan sharks

If you are having difficulty getting unsecured credit, why not go along to the Community Room next to Mandeville School to see if the St Albans District Credit Union can help you. Their 'Collection Point' is open during term time on alternate Mondays from 3pm to 5pm.

The Credit Union is a community bank organised by volunteers who are keen to encourage saving and stop the misery of huge debt repayments. Members who have demonstrated a commitment to saving can borrow an amount up to three times the amount saved. Interest is 0.8% per month and there are no additional hidden charges.

For more information, phone 859135, visit www.stadcu.org or call in at the main office at 135 Hatfield Road.

Anne Kaloczi

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