



# NEWSLETTER

Sopwell Residents  
Association

Issue 7  
March 06

- **Interested in local issues affecting your environment?**
- **Want to have a voice?**
- **Next Residents public meeting:  
Wednesday 26<sup>TH</sup> April 2006 - Marlborough Club**

Please put this date in your diaries. This is the date of the next residents' open meeting which will take place in the

**Marlborough Club, Old Oak, off Cottonmill Lane between 7.30 and 9.30pm.**

Speakers include our local police representative Sharon Foster who will update you on what they are doing in the community.

Our local councillors should be there, as will Ken Lane - Neighbourhood Watch and Richard Bullen who will talk about the Credit Union. There will also be a speaker from the newly formed Sopwell Community Partnership (see below) and the current Deputy Mayor, Eileen Harris, will also give a short presentation on the history of Sopwell Priory.

This is also your opportunity to air your views on any issue of importance to you and to discuss those which have already been ongoing in the newsletters over the past year. Please come along, we cannot exist without you. We represent you and want to see as many of you there as possible. This is your prime opportunity to have a voice and be heard.

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## Sopwell Community Partnership

The SRA was represented at the inaugural meeting held in January, of the Sopwell Community Partnership. This Partnership is a sub-group of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which is reviewing the impact of deprivation and child poverty on health inequalities, and access to health care in Sopwell, Batchwood, London Colney, Park Street, Colney Heath, St. Peters and Cunningham wards. It also exists to develop a strategy to address the issues identified.

In September last year the LSP agreed to develop a pilot project in Sopwell Ward, as member agencies are already investing resources, or have allocated resources, to work in this ward which can be built on through a wider partnership approach.

Did you know that Sopwell is one of the 20% most deprived wards in the East of

England, according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation? It is the second most deprived in the District and the 35th in Hertfordshire. The aim of the Partnership is to increase community engagement in Sopwell as well as to improve quality of life.

Over 60 people attended the initial meeting, not only from Sopwell but from community organisations across St Albans (i.e. the rugby club) and nearby areas. Education, youth, the elderly, environment and crime issues were discussed among others. Pamela Marshall, our representative, will be attending further meetings and will make occasional reports on progress at committee meetings and in the SRA newsletter. Anyone wishing to know more should leave a message via our website [www.sopwell.org.uk](http://www.sopwell.org.uk) or write to our secretary

Sandy Norman and Pamela Marshall.

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## Watch this green space!

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In collaboration with the Countryside Management Service (CMS) and St Albans Council, the SRA has been successful in applying for and obtaining a grant from the Awards for All programme in order to make improvements to the Sopwell Priory green space. (Awards for All England is a joint Lottery grants programme supported by Arts Council England, Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Sport England). The amount awarded, £4,403.00, is being used to fund three projects:

- Firstly, moving the Ver Valley Walk path further away from the riverbank and improving it's surface. Some of you may have noticed that this work has already been completed. It has involved some removal of scrub and other vegetation to provide a suitable path width. Half of the amount needed for this project was funded through a Watling Chase Community Forest small project grant. (Watling Chase Community Forest (WCCF) is a long-term project to enhance the countryside on the urban fringe of south Hertfordshire and north London.)

- Secondly, two benches will be installed within sight of the old Priory ruins.
- In addition, the riverbank along the Ver will be improved by the installation of planted coir rolls to reinforce the riverbank and improve it's habitat.

These projects are part of the Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) for the Priory site which was put together by CMS, SRA and SADC to provide benefits for amenity and wildlife. Work on the GAP began last year with the installation of the "easy access" bridge over the ditch. We, as the Residents Association, have responsibility for promoting these aims as well as a specific duty to keep the Priory tidy, hence the annual litter pick which will take place again in March.

This funding has been a fantastic opportunity to improve a lovely open space within the heart of Sopwell and will also provide a fitting memorial for our founder, Anne Kaloczi, who sadly died last year. Anne would have been very proud of this.

Sandy Norman

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## Days out in St Albans!

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Are you looking forward to sunny days, blue skies and the chance to get out? Several events for the summer are planned round and about Sopwell. So why not put them on the calendar, avoid the traffic and enjoy some low cost, eco friendly days out, without the car!

### ■ Larks in the Parks!

#### **Marlborough Pavilion Playing Field, July 2<sup>nd</sup> 12.00 - 5.00pm**

Another opportunity to picnic near to home. Enjoy the travelling entertainment provided by Leisure Connexions as part of the citywide festival programme. This will be the second time that Sopwell have been involved in Larks in the Parks and we want to make it even better than last time, with a wider variety of stalls and sideshows.

Watch out for the Festival Routemaster bus outside the town Hall and on Market Days. Look out for the Review coming into Mandeville to work with the children on a project which will be continued on July 2<sup>nd</sup>. So, on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, leave the car at home and walk to the park for a lazy Sunday afternoon.

### ■ Duck Race on the river Ver - May 1<sup>st</sup> 2.00-3.30pm

**Organised by St Julian's Church as part of their building fund project.**

Plastic ducks will be raced down a short stretch of the river with a prize for each winning duck. For £1 you can enter a duck for a race. Then watch anxiously as they bob down the river. Money raised will be used to improve the entrance hall and kitchen at St Julian's Church, Abbots Avenue. Make a day of it and bring a picnic to the Sopwell Priory site.

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## **Interested in environmental issues in your area?**

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- Save money – and the planet! Energy efficiency grants are available from the council for cavity wall and loft insulation, and funding for solar hot-water systems should be available soon. For information on these, contact Kirstin Elder on 819380. For general advice on energy efficiency and local and national grant schemes, contact the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512012. You'll be surprised how much money you can save on gas and electricity bills with very little effort.
- Parking on verges and pavements: A council working party is looking into how to tackle parking issues in different parts of the district. If you feel your street has a problem with verge/pavement parking, get in touch with one of the local councillors and let them know if you think a) wardens should be asked to visit, or b) more parking needs to be provided by converting verges.
- Vandalised street names: The council is working to replace these, but the rate of damage is now exceeding the replacement rate budgeted for, so there is a backlog. It's therefore a good idea, if your street sign is damaged, to make sure you report it straight away and secure a place in the queue.

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## **Springtime in Sopwell!**

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After the success of the daffodil planting in 2005, it was decided we should do some more in time for spring this year. So, with permission from the council, five members of the committee spent a pleasant Sunday afternoon digging holes in the public grass along selected streets.

We have planted **320 bulbs** of small types of daffodil at the junctions of Tavistock, Vesta and Wiltshire Avenues, along Mandeville Drive, on the 'square' in Holyrood Crescent and in Abbots Avenue. Hopefully, by the time you read this there will be some spring colour showing! We'd like to make this an annual event, working our way around the ward, and involving more people. If you'd like to join in next time, or have a suggestion about where to plant, let us know.

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## **St Stephen's Open Space**

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Some readers may be aware that a recent planning application for houses on the King Harry playing fields included a proposal to revive the idea of a 'link road' across the field behind St Stephen's Church. We wrote to the council objecting strongly to the potential loss of this important open space, and joined with Verulam Residents Association and other local people in opposing the development. When the planning committee met last month, the plans were unanimously rejected. However, we are aware that, whatever happens in King Harry Lane, the link road has not 'gone away', and we'll be keeping an eye out for future proposals.

### **Celebrate with St Julian's Church - 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

This year the people of St Julian's are planning special celebrations to mark this anniversary. On **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> September** there will be an afternoon of fun and music, with a balloon race and a barbeque lunch- followed by a service at 5.30pm at which the Bishop of Hertford will preside. If you would like to come you will be very welcome- though space is limited! Many homes in this area will have already received a leaflet explaining our fund raising project and asking for donations. If you would like to donate some money to this local church and community building please call 01727 730746

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## **Making St.Albans Tidier! - Litter Hot Line**

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As part of the Tidier District Campaign St Albans District Council, have, for the past few weeks, been operating a "Litter Hotline", **0845 125 8000**. You may have noticed it advertised on the sides of litter bins and on the back of local buses. Environmental Services are keen for it to be a success. Calls at the moment are running at about 60 per week. They are trying to deal with calls within 24 hours, so if you see heavy litter, fly tipping or graffiti, ring 0845 125 8000 and help them make St Albans a tidier place to live.

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## **Useful Contacts for Sopwell Residents**

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### **1. Problems - if you want to report:**

an abandoned vehicle	819391
flytipping*	819285
litter on paths/highways	819465
problems with parks & open spaces including litter	819366
problems with refuse collection	819285
mice, wasp nests, etc.	819440
non-working street lighting	01438 737320
abandoned Sainsburys trolleys	847707
abandoned Homebase trolleys	857113
noisy neighbours	819406/out of hours 811155
litter to be cleared by McDonalds	864676
a damaged bus shelter	0800 590889
potholes, broken pavements*, etc.	01438 737320
a water or sewerage leak	08459 200800
problem with the trains	08457 114141

### **2. Sopwell councillors:**

Janet Smith	763907 janet.smith1@ntlworld.com
Eileen Harris	831611 harris@stalbans555.fsnet.co.uk
Dawn Pratley	840031 dawn.pratley@ntlworld.com

### **3. Recreation - if you want:**

to rent an allotment	819329
to join the Youth Club	753116
to join St Albans Sub-Aqua Club	07905 104697
to contact Tots and Teddies	730746

### **Contact the Sopwell Residents Association**

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