



NEWSLETTER

For all residents of Sopwell

Sopwell Residents
Association

Issue 15
Autumn 09

Welcome and a big thank you!

Many, many thanks for your response to our request for help in the last newsletter. We have had several people come forward offering to deliver newsletters and to help on other activities. We are so pleased that you do care about the Association and what it does. We had a very nice letter from Linda Bateman who said: "I was very sorry to read that the SRA may have to disband due to lack of support. So much was done by the Committee and the benefits have surely been seen through the contacts you have made with local bodies and the Council and the pressure you have been able to put on such when necessary, to improve the quality of life here. In many cases this has reaped benefits for all of us. There is substantial knowledge now of the community groups and those responsible in them. This should not be lost! You have achieved lots together and I sincerely hope there will be others to take things forward. I sincerely wish you all well, and hope that some smiling faces come forward."

Well you did and I do thank you very much. So we can continue for a bit longer. However, we could still do with one or two more fresh faces on our committee Fresh faces bring fresh ideas and we are in danger of becoming stale. We are in desperate need of a Secretary, so if you are willing please do get in touch.

Because of the problems with our distribution system, some of you may not have received the last newsletter. If you still want to read it, it is available to read online on our web site www.sopwell.org.uk. Hopefully this one will get to all of you without a hitch.

Sandy Norman

Shaping our Community Public Consultation meeting 9th September in Marlborough Pavilion

We are holding a public meeting on Wednesday 9th September to discuss the Council document Shaping Our Community - Planning Consultation Emerging Core Strategy Local Development Framework proposals as they affect St Albans: "It sets out the Council's suggestions and options for the future location of development within the District, including where new housing and employment could be built, based on clear evidence and justification. It also sets out a vision and objectives for the District". If you care about what could happen to St Albans (and Sopwell especially) please come along and have your say. It will be held in the Marlborough Pavilion starting at 7.30pm. The consultation runs until 28th September. To read and comment the document go to the Council website on

<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/policy/ShapingOurCommunityConsultation.aspx>.

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If you live in Sopwell, you are automatically a member of Sopwell Residents Association. There is no charge to join and events are free.

Contact details
23 Tavistock Avenue
St Albans AL1 2NQ

Autumn event: celebrating Green Sopwell II

Following on from the success of our walk around Sopwell in July last year we have planned another one for this September. The date is Saturday 19th September starting at 2.30pm. We will meet in Cottonmill Lane at the Sopwell Nunnery site by the seats. The plan is to cover the Nunnery green space, the river, Alban Way, Watercross Wildlife site and more. It should not be too strenuous and the weather should not be that hot. Details will be given on our website www.sopwell.org.uk when the route is finalised. The walk will be combined with a talk about the history of the area from Councillor Eileen Harris. Enquiries to Chris Pudsey on 864981.

Our new PCSO: John Massey

At 17 years of age I applied to become a Police Cadet within the Metropolitan Police Force but was unsuccessful so embarked on a career in banking. I have lived in St Albans for the past 30 years so when the present financial crisis brought my career in finance to a premature end I applied some 36 years later to become a Police Community Support Officer within the Hertfordshire Constabulary. I joined the Neighbourhood Team in St Albans in March after completing my initial training.

I divide my time as PCSO between Sopwell Ward and the City Centre. We work as a team dealing with issues which affect the local community to make the area even safer places for residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time. If you need to contact me please either call **01727- 796042** or you can e mail me at: john.massey@herts.pnn.police.uk

May I take this opportunity to remind you that should you need to contact the Police regarding a crime or nuisance behaviour you should call the non emergency number 0845 33 00 222 or if considered appropriate 999. Alternatively if you have any information relating to criminal activity you would like to report anonymously please either contact me personally or **Crimestoppers** on **0800 555 111** or view **Crimestoppers** website at www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

I welcome the opportunity to serve you. Please do say hello when you see me in your Street.

John Massey

Cyclists air their views on route 6/61



On a bright, warm and sunny June afternoon, 25 cyclists, ranging in age from seven to seventy, took a short ride from the Cottonmill Lane / Albans Way railway bridge to Greenwood Park in Chiswell Green. As well as enjoying fresh air, exercise and the company of other Sopwell residents, we wanted to explore the new '6/61' cycle route which runs through the ward, and see how cycle-friendly it really is.

The first part of the route is on roads, with short marked sections intended to help cyclists at junctions etc., eventually joining the cycle lane on the Watford Road. Just before the Midway Surgery, we turned off-road and round behind the allotments to go up the valley side and along the edge of St Julian's Wood to emerge near the tennis courts and play area in Greenwood

Park. Although the entrance to this section is not especially bike-friendly, and the combination of gravel surface and steep hill not ideal, the unexpected views back across to the M10 Sopwell with St Bart's spire above the trees are well worth the effort.

Once in the park, the grown-ups settled in the shade of a clump of trees, whilst the younger members of the group headed for the adventure playground – which is, it has to be said, rather more 'adventurous' than anything we have in Sopwell. Squash and biscuits provided refuelling for the return trip – it is surprising what you can get on the back of a bike!

As well as being worth a visit for its own sake, Greenwood Park is one of the 'gateway sites' for Watling Chase Community Forest. St Julian's Wood is 'ancient semi-natural woodland' and contains some interesting humps and bumps which hint at archaeological as well as wildlife interest; the surrounding grassland is being managed as wildflower meadow.

During the course of the ride, the pros and cons of various new facilities introduced as part of the signed route were discussed. These included the controversial pavement crossing of Abbots Avenue from Berners Drive, and the Watling Street crossing at the end of Vesta Avenue, where concerns were raised regarding the lack of signs warning drivers of cyclists crossing this busy road. It's probably true to say that we demonstrated that it is not really a suitable route for large 'accompanied' rides!

A map promoting route 6/61 and other signed and cycle-friendly routes in and around St Albans district will, we hope, be published over the next year to eighteen months – details on the website as soon as it is available. In the meantime, it is worth popping into the Tourist Information office where there are already a number of cycle route leaflets available.

Peter Wares and Chris Pudsey

Annual General Meeting report

There was a good turnout at this year's AGM on 12th May which gave the committee some encouragement. After the usual business, we had four speakers: PC Drew Pavitt who spoke briefly on policing in Sopwell; Amanda Godfrey, the Head Teacher at Mandeville School, introduced the exciting new plans to expand Mandeville School; Jane Ratford of St Albans District Council gave an interesting talk about the results of the Place Survey; and Sandy Norman briefly outlined the ideas behind the Sopwell Project. The meeting ended with refreshments and time to socialise.

Larks in the Parks 28th June

Another successful event! A full report will appear on our website. We are grateful to Aylett's for their donation of a gazebo.



Guess the date and location

At Larks in the Parks we asked people if they could recognise where this picture was taken and in which year. The photographer was Peter Wares of Ramsbury Road. There were several guesses ranging from 1942 to 1978. However the winner with the correct date and location was Councillor Eileen Harris who identified the photo as Cottonmill Lane by Sopwell Mill.

If anyone else has old photos they would like to share with us as part of the Sopwell Project, please phone Sandy on 865061. We would be grateful to receive them

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Bushido Fighting System

Monday:

16 yrs + 8pm - 9pm

Shotokan Karate

Monday:

11 years + 7pm - 8pm

Thursday:

6 - 12 yrs 6pm - 7pm

12 yrs + 7pm - 9pm

Venue

Sandridge School, Woodcock Hill, Sandridge, St Albans, AL4 9EB

What do we offer?

The **Bushido Fighting System** is a concept that will provide you with the confidence, skills and ability to successfully control a self defence situation. We are also specialists at honing current Martial Arts' skills to improve and coach for forthcoming gradings/displays/tournaments. There is no fixed style within Bushido which enables us to use a variety of techniques and training methods from different martial arts and exercise systems.

The **Shotokan Karate** class provides a solid base for a martial arts career. With the traditional Katas, Kumite and Kihon you can develop the true artistic side of the art, and/or pull the benefits of the training methods through to the more varied training of the Bushido Fighting System.

Instructor - Kevin Archibald Email: archibaldkevin@hotmail.com
Mobile: 07789934553

Did you know?

- As a Residents Association we are entitled to apply for a **Locality Budget grant** of up to £10,000! We would like suggestions from residents on worthwhile ideas for local projects. Check the website for details www.hertsdirect.org/localitybudgt.
 - The **Royal Agricultural Society** Annual show of 1894 could have been in Sopwell. It was a toss up between St Albans and Cambridge but Cambridge won! See the full report on our website. Follow the links for the Sopwell Project.
 - The **Sopwell Nunnery** green space has been awarded a Green Flag for the second year running.
 - The platform at the **Abbey Station** has been raised a few centimetres in one place so instead of a pole vault to get on the train it is now a high jump!
 - The area outside the **Abbots Avenue shops** is to be smartened up – at last.
 - We collected about 20 bags of litter and recyclables at this year's **litter pick** in March. The date for next year's litter pick week will be 20 -28th March. We haven't decided yet on which day we will pick but when we do it will be on the website so please put it in your diaries for next year and come and join us.
 - The date for the annual **bulb planting** is 25th October 2009. Please come along. Contact us for details.
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St Albans National Childbirth Trust event 27th September Reg. Charity No. 801395

Bag a bargain and beat the credit crunch! Come to our Autumn / Winter Children's Nearly New Sale at Nicholas Breakspear school, Colney Heath Lane, AL4 0TT, on Sunday 27th September from 10-11.30am where you can get good quality items at reasonable prices for you and your family. This is a very popular sale, so arrive early. You can kit out a nursery, get new seasonal wardrobes for your children or refresh the toys in the playroom for much less than you can on the high street. Sorry, but we're no longer able to let buggies into the sale, due to health and safety concerns. Items for sale include: Baby Equipment (large & small); Autumn and winter Clothing (Birth to 7 years); School Uniform (4 to 7 years); Maternity Wear; Cloth Nappies; Toys, Books & DVDs. There is a large hall and LOADS OF PARKING. Come early to avoid disappointment!

If you would like to sell or volunteer at the sale, more information can be found at www.stalbans-nct.co.uk or email general@stalbands-nct.co.uk.

Useful Contacts for Sopwell Residents

Councillor Eileen Harris: 831611 or eileenharris555@btinternet.com

Councillor David Poor: 833670 or David.Poor@btinternet.com

Councillor Roger Axworthy: 812681 rla@notmhs.fsnet.co.uk

Litter fly-tipping, graffiti: 0845 1258000 or a.cleanerdistrict@stalbands.gov.uk

Faulty road or pavement surface: 01438 737320 or www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults

Next issue

The next newsletter should be out next Spring. If you want to submit an item or advertisement please contact us via our website by **January 31st 2010**. The cost of a quarter page advert is £25 and £50 pr half page.