



# Community News

Working to make Sopwell a better place to live

## Cottonmill Centre Opens!



If you venture down to the Marlborough Green Space - behind Old Oak, off Cottonmill Lane - you will see that our brand-new **Cottonmill Community and Cycling Centre** is very near completion – with cycling already open, and residents able to start using the community centre early in June!

The name was chosen by Sopwell residents in an online poll, and they also voted for the olive-green colour for the 'feature wall' spanning the length of the centre, through the new halls for hire and café.



In November, the Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub (CaSH) group together with Sopwell Community Trust, and Verulam Cycling Campaign, launched a Crowdfunder to raise funds for increased building costs. Through the amazing generosity of our supporters, we raised a phenomenal £30,881! A large part of this came from the sale of 'Engraved Bricks'. Supporters bought a brick which they could personalise with their own engraved wording.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April CaSH took delivery of 288 bricks and, a week later we spent the day on site - in hard hats - supervising the installation of the bricks by the site contractor, Motacus Constructions. *The engraved brick display adorns a wall in the main hall and looks fantastic.*

## Cycling Facilities

Outside, in the park, work is finishing on the cycling facilities with the creation of a brand-new leisure track to circle the existing football pitch. This will be available for use by cyclists of all abilities including for use by adaptive bikes for people with disabilities. **Come and take a look!**  
*Ed: See more about the Cycle Hub on back page)*

Michelle Mackenzie  
chair of CaSH



## Larks in the Parks

Cottonmill Community Festival Sun 10 July 12-5pm See you there!



## Community Garden Open Day


Grow Community - Sopwell #SustFest22 event at Berners Drive Sun 15 May -10.3-12.30



## Sopwell Residents Association Lottery

Lottery Tickets cost just £1 a week  
[stalbandsdistrictlottery.co.uk/](http://stalbandsdistrictlottery.co.uk/) Search Sopwell Residents Association

  
**SRA FACEBOOK**  
Search FB Groups for Sopwell Residents Association

  
**TOTE BAGS ONLY AT Larks in the Parks**

  
**CaSH is merging into Sopwell Residents Association**

## Welcome

Janet Charles, chair of Sopwell Residents Association writes..

“ We hope you are enjoying the return to ‘normality’ with opportunities to meet each other ‘face-to-face’ once more.

We are always looking for new ways to stay in touch. Our Facebook group has nearly 900 followers, but with over 3000 homes in Sopwell we want to spread the word about events and local goings on to more people. If you could be a street rep to help pass on info to residents on your road via WhatsApp or flyers please email me at [sra@sopwell.org](mailto:sra@sopwell.org). See you at the AGM!”

## SRA AGM Tues 24<sup>th</sup> May

7.30pm St Julians Church -all welcome!  
Sopwell Residents Association 2022 AGM is on 24<sup>th</sup> May and you are invited! We will have local speakers, e.g. about the new Cottonmill Centre, a Community Police report, presentation of our Financial Accounts and election of the committee-if you are interested in joining the committee please email us at [info@sra.org.uk](mailto:info@sra.org.uk)

## Larks in the Parks is back!

Sunday 10th July from 12pm off Old Oak.

Come along! Cottonmill’s community event of the year returns, celebrating everything local. *The music stage has everything from Rock Choirs to Sinead Quinn!* Enjoy donkey rides, funfair, cycling activities and inflatables too! Local stalls + gifts.

Food includes afternoon tea, ice creams, waffles & crepes, Sri Lankan & Lebanese. *Family fun - connect with your community!*

## Sopwell Community Trust

On 10th March 2022 Sopwell Community Trust (SCT) were honoured to receive the Herts High Sheriff Award for youth activities organised by



their St Albans Youth Project team since 2018.

Project lead, Aliyah Cassidy, and Lead Football Coach, Akik Rahman have delivered holiday sports and educational activities for 50+ children.

All activities are free to families under the pupil premium scheme/in receipt of universal credit/FSM. Email [tngyouthclub@gmail.com](mailto:tngyouthclub@gmail.com)

SCT provide fresh fruit, vegetables, milk and bread boxes to 400+ people across St Albans. We also run a Bread Buddy scheme redistributing bread locally. If your street/school community can benefit from free bread and pastries email us [sopwellct@gmail.com](mailto:sopwellct@gmail.com)

**Clean/new toiletries wanted** (toilet rolls, shampoo, toothbrushes/paste, etc) to include with food boxes) Drop off at 15 Holyrood Crescent AL1

A generous donor helped us provide 100+ local children with Easter treats. Huge thanks to all who donated to Eid gifts drive for the 20+ children in foster care across Herts.



Weekly Friday prayers and Eid-ul Fitr prayers are held at Greenwood Park Hall until we can move to the new Cottonmill Centre in the summer. See our Facebook page @SopwellCommunityTrust



Community Gardening Day  
KIDS ACTIVITIES  
PLANTING  
SEEDS & SEEDLINGS - SWAP & SHARE  
REFRESHMENTS  
Sun May 15th | 10.30am-12.30pm

#SustFest22 Sopwell  
See [sustfest.org](http://sustfest.org) for more

Sun May 15th  
Grow Community -Sopwell  
Garden Open Day

May 15-31st  
Sopwell Wildlife Trail

Sun 22nd May 4-6pm  
Stall 46 Prospect Road with  
Wilderhood Watch & Grow  
Community [growsopwell.org](http://growsopwell.org)

## St Julian's News

St Julian's Sunday services 9.30am every Sunday 3 Abbots Ave, St Albans AL1 2HY

**The Community Café returns!** (tea, coffee, cakes) Thursdays 10.30-12 noon- with Jazz every 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month. Every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, enjoy some crafting. Grow Sopwell join us on 9<sup>th</sup> June & 7<sup>th</sup> July for seed sowing & gardening tips.

**Mondays** 10-11am Chair Exercise for older people. Followed by Tai Chi 11.30-12.30pm. **Wed evenings** is Sopwell Choir.

## Jazz @ St Julian's

You can now enjoy a little jazz with your coffee and cake at St Julian's Thursday morning Community Café on Abbots Avenue. On the first Thursday of the month at 11 o'clock, a half-hour programme of some of the best recorded foot-tapping jazz can be enjoyed. Also listen to other members' CDs – and maybe yours! So, if you enjoy jazz, traditional, Big Band, Swing or Modern Jazz, why not join us, and bring along your favourite CD to share! **Peter Wares**



## Sopwell Singers Community Choir

The Sopwell Singers provides a welcoming space to make new friends, boost your wellbeing, have fun, find your voice and enjoy singing great songs. Everyone is welcome, *whether you think you can sing or not*. Email [thesopwellsingers@gmail.com](mailto:thesopwellsingers@gmail.com)

## St Julian's History Corner

The present-day St Julians area was built in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century on farmland, part of the vast St Julian's estate owned then by the Misses Wilshere, with its farmhouse on the far side of Watling Street. The farm stretched from St Stephens church to Park Street and Chiswell Green. It was once a monastic foundation looking after lepers in a hospital there. Once St Albans Abbey was dissolved in 1539, the estate came to Sir Richard Lee as Sopwell did. The estate was damaged during the English Civil War, when St Julian's housed troops for the Parliamentarians, but the farm was rebuilt to include a splendid mansion and walled garden.

A group of local researchers are working on this Sopwell history and are happy to talk about it to local groups – contact Kate Morris at [kate@englishinfo.biz](mailto:kate@englishinfo.biz) To read more on our local history, visit [sopwellmemories.org.uk](http://sopwellmemories.org.uk).

## Saturday Club 2 edition "It takes a village to raise a child"

This Sopwell-based youth club was a Mayor's Pride Awards 2022 Finalist for the Cultural Innovation Award.



It is a safe, inclusive space for young people 11 years+ and younger siblings 8 years + from all cultures and backgrounds. Young people are encouraged to embrace their unique selves, make new friends, try new activities. Includes art/animation, board/card games, football, basketball, rounders, and sustainability. The history project works with St Albans' Museums & Galleries and includes recording audio histories. Prayer area available, if required. *A recent fundraiser involved delicious authentic curries and accompaniments made by Sahida Malik and Alimah Maniza.*

For more information, see [Leannaswish.org](http://Leannaswish.org) or email: [leeannaswish@gmail.com](mailto:leeannaswish@gmail.com) Shelly Hayes

## Sopwell Wellbeing

Mind in Mid Herts are looking for volunteers to help support people from Sopwell with their mental health and wellbeing. FREE training sessions are great opportunity to develop your confidence and skills. Book online: <https://www.mindinmidherts.org.uk/product/building-stronger-communities-in-herts/>

## Help for older people

St Albans Old People's Trust [staopt.org](http://staopt.org) Tel: 07541 659 442 Email [grants.admin@staopt.org](mailto:grants.admin@staopt.org) People need to be 60+ and in need of items/services they can't easily afford themselves. *Can own their own home, still work and not be on benefits.*

## Police Contacts

Community Police Support Officers email [matthew.Bennett@herts.pnn.police.uk](mailto:matthew.Bennett@herts.pnn.police.uk) OR contact St Albans Safer Neighbourhood Team Tel: 01707 806311 or Mobile 07710143786 OR Non-emergency Tel: 101 or Emergency Tel: 999

## Cottonmill Crossing

Our *Save Our Crossing* campaign team have been advised that warning lights are being installed at the crossing this summer - dates to be confirmed. We told Network Rail that we are concerned about the alarm system to be used with the lights for sight impaired residents. We want to ensure minimal sound pollution. We are advised it will be adjustable and they will work with us to make sure it's suitable. Regarding the gates, we have complained about the noise on closing and have been advised they are going to check and add padding if needed, to make the closing quieter for residents near Grindcobbe.

We continue to keep this vital crossing working for everyone: contact us at [saveourcrossing@gmail.com](mailto:saveourcrossing@gmail.com)  
**Chantal Burns**

## Community Garden Open Day

**Sunday 15 May - all welcome!**

For this year's #SustFest22 you are invited to your Community Garden Open day at Berners Drive 10.30am-12.30pm on Sunday 15 May - with cake!

Meet the Grow Community-Sopwell volunteers and get involved if you want – help plant our green beans, courgettes, pumpkins and sweetcorn. Let the kids help plant up the Sunflower Tunnel in the children's area! Check in to the Bug Hotel – see how we attract bugs and insects into the garden. Join in our 'Seeds & Seedlings - Swap & Share' - bring along anything you have spare.

See NEW website [growsopwell.org](http://growsopwell.org)

## Janet's Theatre Trips

Theatre trips to London! Return coaches from Westminster Lodge. Search Facebook: **Janet's Theatre trips** or email [jactheatretrips@gmail.com](mailto:jactheatretrips@gmail.com)

## NEW! St Albans Cycle Hub Opens



**Mat Daniels has been appointed as the Cycle hub manager, an avid rider looking forward to meeting you all and sharing the passion for all things cycling.**

The new Cycle Hub build and fit-out is progressing well and we're hopeful for a mid-June opening - in good time for the summer holidays and the good cycling weather that brings! You may have seen the Pump Track is now finished and the Cyclocross loop has been set out. Marlborough Club Trails volunteers have also been busy cleaning up and reshaping the jumps. We're all looking forward to some great Verulam Cycling Club events in the near future – we'll keep you posted!

**If you want to be a part of the Cycle Hub team, there are some job opportunities for both Cycle Mechanics and Customer Experience staff available now – or -**



for those who want to be a part of the Cycle Hub family and just have some time to spare – some rewarding volunteer posts are available. Please visit [stalbandscyclehub.org.uk](http://stalbandscyclehub.org.uk) and fill out the contact form. We look forward to seeing you soon!" **Mat Daniels**

## Sopwell Residents Association Lottery

St Albans District Community Lottery is a new weekly lottery raising money for good causes in the district - including SRA! Tickets cost just £1 weekly draw with a **1 in 50** chance to win a prize. See [stalbandsdistrictlottery.co.uk/](http://stalbandsdistrictlottery.co.uk/) and search for Sopwell Residents Association.

## COMMUNITY - SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE GROUP

Would you like to get involved in a community response to the climate crisis? **Sopwell Residents Association** are setting up a **Sustainability and Resilience sub-committee**. We are looking for interested residents or local groups to get involved and help us get started, here in Sopwell.

We want to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve community resilience to the effects of Climate change and related issues. Ideas include: events to encourage active transport (walking & cycling), Repair & Share Cafes and tree planting; climate change info meetings, eco-anxiety support and help on how to get house insulation, heat pumps and solar companies. **Email [info@sra.org.uk](mailto:info@sra.org.uk)**

