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 1st 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
stalbansdistrictlottery.co.uk/ Search 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. See you at the AGM!”

SRA AGM Tues 24th May
7.30pm St Julians Church - all welcome!
Sopwell Residents Association 2022 AGM is on 24th 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.

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

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

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

#SustFest22 Sopwell
See 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
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 1st Thursday of the month. Every 4th Thursday, enjoy some crafting. Grow Sopwell join us on 9th June & 7th 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

St Julian’s History Corner
The present-day St Julians area was built in the early 20th 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
To read more on our local history, visit 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.

St Albans Old People’s Trust staopt.org Tel: 07541 659 442 Email 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.

Help for older people
St Albans Old People’s Trust staopt.org Tel: 07541 659 442 Email 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 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

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

Janet’s Theatre Trips

Theatre trips to London! Return coaches from Westminster Lodge. Search Facebook: Janet’s Theatre trips or email 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 stalbanscyclehub.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 stalbansdistrictlottery.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