



Sopwell Residents Stay in touch:

Our Facebook page is thriving with over 700 members! Can you help us get it to 1,000?

Stay informed about local events, support local businesses and groups and exchange ideas and information about e.g. security alerts and police notices.

Join us now! Search Facebook groups for Sopwell Residents Association

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

After the recent elections you will be interested to hear that we now have a new ward councillor; Sarwar Shamsher, who joins Mandy McNeil and Emma Matanle; Sopwell's existing local ward councillors.

Sandy Walkington was also re-elected as our Herts County Councillor for St Albans South, which includes Sopwell.

Sopwell Ward Councillors:

Cllr Emma Matanle (Sopwell)

Email: emma.matanle.stalbans@gmail.com

Tel: 07946 375211

Cllr Mandy McNeil (Sopwell)

Email: mandy.mcneil.stalbans@gmail.com

Tel: 01727 855 523

Cllr Sarwar Shamsher (Sopwell)

Tel: 07883 024251

Email: cllr.s.shamsher@councillor.stalbans.gov.uk

Herts County Council councillor

Cllr Sandy Walkington
(St Albans South)

Tel: 07802 177317

Email: sandy@sandy4stalbands.org

See more on local councillors on the council website <https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/>



Photo: Peter Wares

WELCOME

It's been a challenging year for all of us. Many of us have felt isolated and lonely; some of us have been able to volunteer our time to help others. They say that 'out of bad comes good' and there have been many caring community actions during this time. One positive take away is how residents have supported each other.

My WhatsApp group in Priory Walk /Berners drive continues to thrive with exchanges or requests, security alerts, lost cats and the occasional requests for bread and exchange of plants and seeds.

We have also seen the wonderful work being done by Sopwell Community Trust working with the Trussell Trust Foodbank to provide meals using food that would otherwise have been thrown away by local supermarkets. Here in Sopwell we have had some very sad losses of some long-standing much-loved residents. Personally, I would like to see a memorial garden and a bench installed, perhaps next to the crossing.

I'm looking into the ownership of the land on the Berners drive side of the crossing to see if we could have a bench, flower garden and noticeboard. Of course, we would have to consider who would be responsible for caring for the area, but you have to start somewhere so watch this space

The Sopwell Resident's Association (SRA) meets every two months, and always welcomes new members. See our website <https://sopwell.org.uk/> If you would like to become involved, please contact us on sra@sopwell.org.uk

Janet Charles – Chair of SRA

New Cottonmill Community Centre

The planning proposals for the exciting new community hub on the Marlborough Pavilion site, off Cottonmill Lane in Sopwell have now been submitted.



Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub campaign group (CaSH), Sopwell Community Trust (SCT) and Verulam Cycling Club (VCC) have worked closely with the council to create a design to include a divisible 100 square metre main hall, a cafe with patio area, a quiet room, a kitchen for event catering, wudu washing facilities and a 'Changing Places' toilet.

There will be a new Cycle Hub offering cycle repair services and cycle training. Outside there will be a new Pump Track for

bikes, skateboards and scooters. The existing BMX dirt track, multi-use games area and football pitch remains. If approved, the work may begin in the next few months, and could be completed by Spring 2022.

Majority of the funding comes from the council, via the sale of new housing off Leyland Avenue, and an application to British Cycling for a grant has been made.

There will be opportunities for local residents to help raise additional funds; one idea is to offer people the opportunity to purchase brick slips that can be engraved with the donator's name.

Get updates at <https://cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/>
See the Community Centre plans at the Marlborough Pavilion on Sunday 6th June 12-2pm. #Sustfest21 event.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Neighbourhood Watch UK is proud to describe itself as the biggest voluntary movement in the UK. Members work alongside their neighbours, to make the place where they live safer and friendlier and are able to receive information regarding crime prevention.

Our local Neighbourhood Watch area is Sopwell Ward with a co-ordinator for each street.

See the Neighbourhood Watch UK website www.ourwatch.org.uk, for more details. Also, you'll be able to access the full benefits of membership and find an application form. New members are always of course most welcome.

Rick Taylor – SRA Committee member and Sopwell Ward Area Co-ordinator for St Albans and District Neighbourhood Watch Association

SOPWELL LITTER PICKS - COORDINATOR WANTED!

We are looking for a new co coordinator to organise the occasional litter picks in and around our area. For more details please email janet.kjt@gmail.com and keep an eye on the Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/CleanUpSopwell>

TOY LIBRARY – VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We hope to re-open the toy library at St Julian's church as soon as restrictions are lifted. Additional volunteers are needed for Tuesday mornings. See our **Sopwell and Cottonmill Toy Library** Facebook page for news or please email us at

Sopwellandcottonmilltoylibrary@gmail.com

SOPWELL MEMORIES WEBSITE

Enjoy the history and memories of those who live or have lived in Sopwell, at the Sopwell Memories website <https://www.sopwellmemories.org.uk/> You can also buy the Sopwell History book on the website.

COTTONMILL CROSSING NEWS

Did you know there are over 800 crossings a day on our railway crossing?

Work is planned to happen overnight between 1st and 4th June on the crossing to reduce the puddle problem on the Berners drive side.

Information signs will be up to give advance warning, but disruption should be at a minimum as work is planned for night-time. The gate on the Grindcobbe side of the crossing has been repaired.

The Save Our Crossing Action group will continue to keep an eye on the foliage that creeps across the path on the Berners drive side.

If you have any concerns about the crossing, please find our Facebook Group **'Save Our Cottonmill Crossing'** or email saveourcrossing@gmail.com

Grow Community Sopwell

'Grow Community - Sopwell' is a local group of volunteers in Sopwell that aims to encourage and enable Sopwell residents to grow their own food at home and in community spaces, to share surplus food in the community, and to promote wildlife conservation.

Get involved! Regular working parties take place at the garden, and at the Abbots Avenue planters. Residents are warmly invited to get involved, meet new friends and old, and to help themselves to seeds and seedlings at the Grow Community stall.



Berners Drive Community Garden Launch Day with Daisy Cooper MP

Sunday 16th May 11-1pm.

Residents are invited to come along and plant a seed or seedling. Youngsters may like to plant a sunflower in our planned sunflower den! Refreshments will be available. Details on our website below.

Abbots Avenue Planters

We have replanted and repainted the Abbots Avenue planters outside the shops. We are pleased with the new look and hope you are too.

The Grow Community Sopwell 'Stall'

Our Leyland Avenue stall continues to offer seeds and seedlings. Residents are welcome to come along, help themselves to a variety of seeds and seedlings and 'have a grow'!

Find out more by joining our Grow Community on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, Website: cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/grow/ or email us at growsopwell@gmail.com

Active Local

Active Local is a new initiative by the Herts Sports Partnership, and we plan to deliver a range of activities in Sopwell over the coming month alongside supporting local groups to develop their own offers.



Football, Rugby and Cricket will be on offer for younger residents, starting with Cage Cricket at the Marlborough Pavilion MUGA in June. Plans are underway to establish new cycling, walking and group exercise sessions, some of which may be linked to Grow Community Garden on Berners Drive.

HSP's Fit, Fed and Read programme is for children aged 8-11 years old who are eligible for free school meals; it will be delivered over 4 weeks of the summer holidays providing sport/enrichment activities as well as a hot meal. As soon as activities are confirmed, details will be shared for everyone to be involved and sign up.

If you are interested in being involved in bringing new sport and physical activity to Sopwell or supporting current opportunities, please get in touch with Chris Samways to find out more.

Email: c.samways@herts.ac.uk **Phone** 01707281004



The show must go on!

Abbey Theatre for everyone – Sopwell's local venue

The Abbey Theatre next to Westminster Lodge is owned and managed by the Company of Ten, an amateur group which actively welcomes new members. You don't have to be experienced, or even interested in acting, to join.

There are plenty of things to do: helping backstage, stewarding, promoting our plays, among many other activities. And it's a great place to make new friends.

Our tickets are good value; there are 4 productions for you to enjoy between 18 May and 10 July, now the government restrictions on indoor entertainment have been lifted.

Visit our website www.abbeytheatre.org.uk to find out how you can get involved.

MEET YOUR POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Police Community Support Officers Matt Bennet and PCSO Bradley Flanagan are covering Sopwell ward while Nicole Levi is having a baby.

We would like to ask residents to be vigilant by making sure their vehicles are left locked and secure to help try and prevent any thefts from inside the vehicle, or vehicles being stolen. Pedal cycles, mopeds and motorbikes are also being targeted.

Online scams are really high at the moment with many different organisations being used as bait. An example scam: it looks like Royal Mail asking for a delivery charge to be paid before they are able to deliver your parcel.

Once bank details have been entered, money will start to be removed from your account. Remember this is a scam and the real Royal Mail will not ask for this.

Email: matthew.bennett@herts.pnn.police.uk

St Albans Safer Neighbourhood Team: 01707806311

Mobile: 07710143786 **Non-Emergency:** 101

Emergency: 999

St Albans Police Station, Civic Centre, St Albans, AL1 3JE

LOCAL BUSINESSES ADVERTISE HERE!

You could be advertising here. With a readership across 3,200 Sopwell homes, you could spread the word for your business or group. Contact us to advertise in the Autumn 2021 newsletter - £60 half page.

Email: sra@sopwell.org.uk

BIG LUNCH ANNUAL EVENT 5-6 JUNE

Your chance to celebrate community connections and get to know one another a little better. Watch out for local events on Facebook, noticeboards and local WhatsApp groups. Also see Big Lunch website

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/stuff-to-do/organise-big-lunch>

VOLUNTEER FOR GIRL GUIDES

Girlguides in Sopwell and St Stephens Areas face closure unless they get volunteers. Work with young people, develop skills from first aid to fundraising. Apply on the website: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk>

THEATRE TRIPS

Email jactheatretrips@gmail.com to join the theatre trip group. Coaches leave from Westminster Lodge.

Search **Janet's Theatre Trips** on Facebook.

ST ALBANS SUSTAINABILITY FESTIVAL #SUSTFEST21

100+ events! 23 May to 6 June
Get your programme NOW at sustfest.org Something for all ages, and all interests.



Enjoy the Sustainable Fashion showcase, join an online talk with Jonathon Porritt, take the kids on a scavenger hunt or help wild hedgehogs...there are loads of things to do and kids stuff during half term. Enjoy a mix of online and outdoor events; all Covid-safe activities.

LOCAL SUSTFEST 21 EVENTS

St Albans Sustainable Market

11am - 4pm Sun 23 May

The award-winning festival kicks off with St Albans Sustainable Market on St Peter's Street. With local eco-businesses as well as food, drink, and local community groups too! Come and meet Grow Community Sopwell at their special stall, with seedlings and seeds to take away.

Grow Sopwell Family Trail

23 May to 6 June

Use our map and take your family on a trail around Sopwell's green spaces, wildlife friendly havens and community gardens, collecting clues along the way. The trail is free and suitable for all ages. Head over to twitter [@GrowSopwell](https://twitter.com/GrowSopwell) for more information

See the new Sopwell Community Centre plans Sunday 6th June 12-2pm.

Come to the Marlborough Pavilion! Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub campaign, with St Albans Council, display the design/ plans for the new community hub with a focus on showcasing the eco-friendly aspects of the design and answering your questions. With kids' online scavenger hunt.

Magical Mayfly Walks

23rd, 26th, 30th May 6-8pm FREE

The Ver Valley Society invite you to see the magical mayflies on the river. Book: riverver.co.uk

Help us Grow "Our Big Enormous Turnip"

Wed 26 to Fri 28 May

Old London Road Pre-School need your help to create a new vegetable garden. Strong arms and growing expertise welcome. Time 10 - 11.30am

Email oldlondonroadps@gmail.com

Local To Global - Sustainable Living online

Sat 5 June 2-3pm

Travel with two local women from Herts Asian Women's Association to Pakistan and Bangladesh to explore the impact of climate and environmental issues.

Book: localtoglobalsustainable.eventbrite.co.uk