

# Community News

Making Sopwell a better place to live, work and play



## Be a piece of Sopwell's *Jigsaw* Meadow



Set aside a piece of your outdoor space for wildlife and help create a larger "Jigsaw" Meadow in Sopwell

Seeds, support & advice available

Homes | Allotments | Schools  
Faith Groups | Businesses  
Other Organisations  
growsopwell.org



## Do You Want To Be Part of Something Big?

Small as a window box, large as a garden - do you have some land to spare? **Grow Community - Sopwell** launch the Jigsaw Meadow project in March 2024 when they will ask you to spare a piece of land; window box or patio planter, so together we create a Jigsaw or wildlife 'corridor' across Sopwell.

*Wildlife corridors are vital for the survival of our natural neighbours. They bridge the gap between habitats which otherwise would be small and isolated and join them together, allowing movement between important habitats to support wildlife populations.*

### Have you got a metre of land for the Jigsaw Meadow?

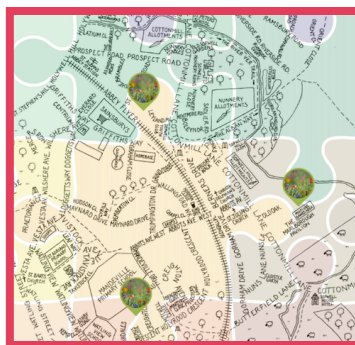
Think about what space you can spare for wildlife in your garden

and measure it (in cm). In February we will ask you to submit measurements so we can provide you with the right amount of seeds and knowledge to create a welcoming space for bees, butterflies, ladybirds and other amazing critters.

Last year Marshalswick Community Garden created a half-acre meadow with local residents. We have already had sponsorship from Aylett Nursery and other seed companies and Cottonmill Community & Cycling Centre have promised us a spot of land, but nature needs all the help it can get so we are aiming bigger!

**Ask groups you know for some land for the Jigsaw Meadow.** Can you ask any local businesses, schools, faith groups - anyone with any land - to see if they can join in by donating a spot of land, big or small. Over winter have a look outside and see if there is any space that might be spared.

For more info email us at [growsopwell@gmail.com](mailto:growsopwell@gmail.com) or see [growsopwell.org](http://growsopwell.org)



**Cottonmill Community & Cycling Centre**  
Hire our Halls! Party?  
Meeting? Price list at [stalbanscyclehub.org](http://stalbanscyclehub.org)



**Mandeville Primary School Winter Fair**  
Sunday 3rd December  
11am- 2pm  
Entry £1 for adults, free for children.



**Cycle Hub**  
Job Vacancy!  
Reconditioned Bikes for Sale, Bike Repair, Training, kids holiday courses, Pump track group hire.  
[stalbanscyclehub.co.uk](http://stalbanscyclehub.co.uk)



## Leeanna's Wish

We've had a very busy summer with our regular women's football, Tuesday 12-2 community café (**it's open on Boxing Day 2023!**) and youth activities keeping us and our community very active!

We began the autumn in style, attending the BBC3 Counties **Make a Difference Awards** with a number of our incredible volunteers. Now the autumn is in full swing we can look forward to our monthly *last Friday of the month* Community Evenings.

Come to our **Christmas Fair on Sat 19th November** 12-4pm at the Cottonmill Centre. Crafts, Raffles, Food, £1.50 entrance includes tea & biscuits. It promises to be

merry and full of cheer. Our **football project #Empower takes place twice a week for women over 30**, Saturdays in Cottonmill. Sign up at [leeannaswish.org](http://leeannaswish.org)

See @leeannaswish on Facebook + Instagram.

### SRA FACEBOOK

Join 1,100+ people  
Search FB Groups for  
**Sopwell Resident**

### SRA WEBSITE

Explore more news  
& events  
[sopwell.org.uk](http://sopwell.org.uk)

### SIGN UP

For SRA email  
news bulletin  
<https://bit.ly/SRAnews>



## Welcome

*Janet Charles, chair  
Sopwell Residents  
Association (SRA) writes...*

**A**s I'm writing this, there are very difficult times across the world and we need kindness to each other more than ever. There are many brilliant residents in Sopwell working - often in their own time - to help create friendly spaces for people to come together. I hope you've enjoyed some of these - local school fairs, church or mosque events, or activities at the Cottonmill Centre - were you one of the 900+ people at the very successful Cottonmill Gathering in July? See more: join Facebook Group [@atcccc](#)

**SRA News:** The SRA rep supported the City Centre Residents Associations response to the Local Plan consultation & SRA are applying to become a charity-to raise more funds for local activities/events.

### Help improve life in Sopwell - all welcome

1) Firstly we need people to join our **Playground group** to help get a playground built at the Community Centre.

2) Join Elaine who is kick-starting our new **Events committee** to organise events and raise money at the same time-meeting up in Nov/Dec.

### Contact us at [info@sopwell.org.uk](mailto:info@sopwell.org.uk)

*Special thanks to all volunteers who deliver this newsletter to each house in Sopwell! And remember I love to hear from you so do get in touch!*

*Janet*



## Keep our pavements clear

Sparrows chirp from leafy twigs. Bees and butterflies seek out flowers. Green shoots reach for the light. Sounds all good . . . but in Sopwell this is sometimes not good. I'm talking about pavements. Household, please help people on foot by keeping your hedge cut back from the pavement. *Trim it now and it'll stay neat till Spring.* **A Sopwell pedestrian.**

## Creating Community

Get to know your neighbours / Offer unwanted items / Find out Whats On locally / Share tools /

### Have you got a street WhatsApp group?

There are so many benefits being connected to your neighbours - being more sustainable is one! Contact Sopwell eco-stars if you need help to set one up. **Click QR code for more info & see events/newsletter from Sopwell eco-stars.**



## News From the District Councillors

Fiscal pressures on the District Council continue to increase, which has resulted in unpalatable decisions to be taken, such as increasing the cost of parking permits, which was agreed to, very reluctantly, by all three of us. Until central government starts to fund local authorities across the UK, then all, including SADC, will have to raise revenue where we can, knowing that this will put pressure on residents. It hasn't been a decision taken lightly.

The RAAC guidance (concrete issues) was updated recently resulting in the Abbey View Pavilion being closed. Currently, there are no other affected buildings we are aware of.

The vandalism of the fence on the River Ver bank, close to the Cottonmill Open Space has resulted in the footpath being closed due to erosion of the riverbank and the narrowing of the path.

Annoyingly this now comes under the Environment Agency's remit (council requires an Environment Agency permit before work proceeds); this will take time to achieve.

The contractor appointed to build the King Offa went into receivership earlier this year. Consequently, the project has had to go out to tender again, and this is currently underway.

There have been reports of the Police driving along Alban Way, which we have raised with the Chief Constable and we understand is being 'dealt with'. Please let us know if you witness any further incidents of this nature.

### Sopwell Ward Councillors

**Cllr Emma Matanle**

[cllr.e.matanle@councillor.stalbans.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.e.matanle@councillor.stalbans.gov.uk) Tel: 01727 855 523

**Cllr Sarwar Shamsher** [cldr.s.shamsher@councillor.stalbans.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.s.shamsher@councillor.stalbans.gov.uk)  
Tel: 07883 024251

**Cllr Harriet Sherlock** [sopwell@stalbandsibdems.org.uk](mailto:sopwell@stalbandsibdems.org.uk)

+ **Cllr Sandy Walkington** (County Councillor St Albans South)  
[sandy.walkington@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sandy.walkington@hertfordshire.gov.uk) Tel: 07802 177317



# Hire our halls!

We have spaces to suit all occasions; parties, corporate events, community clubs/classes. *Prices are per hour and based on size of hall you hire, time of day, and day of the week.* See full price list at [stalbanscyclehub.org.uk](http://stalbanscyclehub.org.uk) Local community groups and Sopwell ward residents are eligible for the community hire rate. Our centre is fully accessible to all, including a Changing Places toilet facility.

### Prices large hall per hour Weekdays

- Community Hire £15.50
- Private Hire £21.70

### CAFE - now serving hot food!



**Jobs - Mechanic** St Albans Cycle Hub is looking for an experienced and community focused bike mechanic. Send CV's [info@stalbanscyclehub.org.uk](mailto:info@stalbanscyclehub.org.uk)

## St Bart's Support for local Asylum Seekers

Since 2021 approx 140 Asylum Seekers have been living in the Noke Hotel, and a few people from local churches have been visiting them. Weekly English conversation sessions are held at St Bartholomew's on Vesta Ave.

### Call out for bikes, helmets, and locks

One form of "befriending" has been the provision of bicycles which enable our Asylum Seeker friends to get to and from college. However, in order to use the bikes they need to have helmets, and locks with keys. At present we also need some women's bikes, and a few for teenagers, and the necessary equipment. Please email **Mark James** [fpmjames25@gmail.com](mailto:fpmjames25@gmail.com)

## Allotment Summer Show

The **Cottonmill and Nunnery Allotment Association's** Summer Show on 4 Sept at the Cottonmill Centre had many fabulous entries - from onions and tomatoes to a huge red cabbage, flowers, and tray displays.

Along with 1st, 2nd, 3rd place prizes there were also the 'Newcomers' prize and 'CNAAs Choice' prizes. This year's show champion was CNAAs Chairman Keith Reynolds, who was presented with Aylett Nursery's 'St. Albans Horticultural Society Ryder Cup' and gardening vouchers.

**Michelle Mackenzie**



## Scouts Group Leader 60-year Award



Ian Woods, Group Scout Leader at the 4<sup>th</sup> St Albans Scout Group was presented with his **60-year Chief Scout's Length of Service Award**. Daisy Cooper MP, attended, along with David Williams Deputy Lieutenant of Hertfordshire who presented the award.

## Youth Talk

Youth Talk offers free, confidential counselling to 13-25 year olds living working or studying in the St Albans District. We offer young people a safe place to talk in confidence; whatever's on their mind.

Youth Talk is self-referral; it's important the young person gets in touch directly themselves. You can visit our website, [www.youthtalk.org.uk](http://www.youthtalk.org.uk) complete our online referral form, [email info@youthtalk.org.uk](mailto:email_info@youthtalk.org.uk) or call 01727 868 684.

## Safer Neighbourhood Team

PC Ben Kirby with PCSOs Brad Flanagan and Matthew Bennet are Sopwell area. **Contact them via 101**, non-emergency number for advice. **Emergency use 999**



## Cottonmill Crossing Warning Lights

Network Rail has been working on the crossing to prepare for the installation of new warning lights at the Cottonmill crossing. The footpath should have opened on the 3rd November. As well as a red/ green light system there will also be a warning sound.

The current installation date for the warning lights is 2nd December. Once are up and running, the whistle boards will be removed, and the drivers will no longer need to use the train horn. This will be much welcomed by the homes located next to the crossing. **Questions or concerns email [saveourcrossing@gmail.com](mailto:saveourcrossing@gmail.com)**

**Chantal Burns**

## NEWS on sale of St Albans Greenbelt Land for Warehouses

**On 30th June this year, HertsCC announced the sale of 300 acres of South Herts greenbelt land to SEGRO plc.**

**SaveStAlbans Fight the Freight campaign** lodged a Judicial Review on 29/9/2023 based on claims and evidence the land was bought under either Metropolitan Green Belt Act (1938) and /or Open Spaces Act (1906). HCC has not followed steps in the Acts to lawfully sell the land. If successful, the sale could be quashed, and development stopped. Success is emboldened by Supreme Court ruling March 23 (Day vs Shropshire): **"Local Government cannot just dispose of land acquired as open space, parkland or recreational land for residents.."**

**Help build the case!** Were you involved in meetings or have papers about, extraction of sand and gravel by Redland, from Radlett Airfield site (1980-2006), especially from a Park Street Village Hall meeting 21/2/1984? We already have Hertford archives and FoI requests, but do you have other records? Contact: [communications@savestalbans.com](mailto:communications@savestalbans.com)

**The campaign needs £50k to protect our land from greedy developers.**

**See more and DONATE at: [savestalbans.com](http://savestalbans.com)**



To book a place sign up to Grow Newsletter <https://bit.ly/GrowSNews>

## Wreath Making Workshop

Saturday Dec 9

10.30am Alban Way greenery collection walk  
2-4pm or 4-6pm Workshop | Cottonmill Centre



## St Stephen's and St Julian's Churches

Everybody is welcome to attend the services/activities we run on a weekly basis – something for all ages, both in churches and halls. See [ststephenandstjulian.org/](http://ststephenandstjulian.org/)

### Events coming up include:

**Plant a Hedge event – Saturday 18 November 9.00am to 1.00pm** in St Stephen's Churchyard. Helpers needed from the wider community to help us plant nearly 300 saplings to form a new boundary hedge. To book a place and come along please email [office@ststephenandstjulian.org](mailto:office@ststephenandstjulian.org)

**St Stephen's Church Christmas Fair – Saturday 25 November 2.00-4.00pm** – stalls, games, refreshments, and performances by dance and music groups from the community and local schools.

**Christingle Service at St Stephen's Church – Saturday 9 December 5.45pm** – Christmassy service for children and families.

**Carol Service at St Julian's Church – Sunday 10 December 5.00pm** – traditional service of readings, prayers and carols, by candlelight. Followed by refreshments with mince pies.

**Cakes and Carols Community Event – Saturday 16 December in St Julian's 3.00-7.00pm** – Relaxed event for all the community to sing carols with local folk musicians & members of the Chiltern West Gallery Quire, & cake!!

**Carol Service by Candlelight at St Stephen's Church – Sunday 17 December**

**Christmas Eve – Midnight Mass Service 11.00pm at St Stephen's**



We are searching for the right people to work at our beautiful family run hotel just down the road from you! If you have the right drive and a desire to deliver genuine hospitality in a friendly environment, you may well be just what we are looking for. We have a number of roles available currently, so get in touch and join our growing, successful and award-winning team.

You provide the drive and dedication, we'll provide the training, development, benefits and much more! We have many opportunities managers, supervisors & waiters, chefs, porters, housekeeping, marketing, spa & pool personnel and spa therapist positions Check out our website as positions are updated weekly.

## DETAILS | EMPATHY | COMFORT

### GET IN TOUCH

Visit [sopwellhouse.co.uk/careers](http://sopwellhouse.co.uk/careers) or email [talent@sopwell-house.co.uk](mailto:talent@sopwell-house.co.uk)  
[www.sopwellhouse.co.uk](http://www.sopwellhouse.co.uk)

### Dates for your Diary

<b>Mondays 12-2pm</b> Cottonmill Centre	<b>St Albans Community Pantry</b> hot lunch - free
<b>Tuesdays 10-12 noon</b> Cottonmill Centre	Leeanna's Wish Coffee Mornings + hot rolls + toddler activities
<b>Saturdays 8.50-11am</b> Cottonmill Centre	Kids Cycling under-16 yrs £5 pa <a href="http://verulamcc.org.uk/youth/activities">verulamcc.org.uk/youth/activities</a>
<b>Saturdays 1-2:15pm</b> Cottonmill Centre	Empower Womens Football (30+ yrs) Register first <a href="http://leeannaswish.org">leeannaswish.org</a>
<b>Sat 18 Nov 9am-1pm</b> St Stephens Church	Help Plant A Hedge St Stephens <a href="mailto:office@ststephenandstjulian.org">office@ststephenandstjulian.org</a>
<b>Sun 19 Nov 12-4pm</b> Cottonmill Centre	Christmas Fair Crafts, Raffles, Food, £1.50 entrance <a href="http://leeannaswish.org">leeannaswish.org</a>
<b>Sun 3 Dec 11am-2pm</b>	Mandeville School Winter Fair
<b>Sat 10 Dec &amp; 24 Feb</b> 8.15am Cottonmill Centre	Muddy Monsters under-16 yrs <a href="http://verulamcc.org.uk/youth/muddy-monsters">verulamcc.org.uk/youth/muddy-monsters</a>



It is entirely volunteer run and led. **Volunteers needed!** If you have a car - to help out, collect/pack/distribute rescued food contact [stalbanscommunitypantry@gmail.com](mailto:stalbanscommunitypantry@gmail.com) and see [stalbanscommunitypantry.org](http://stalbanscommunitypantry.org)

### Our local community choir sings to raise money for charity

The Sopwell Singers Community Choir is raising money with two Christmas performances to raise money for local charities on

- **Sat 2nd December at 11am** singing for St Albans Action for Homeless at the Clock Tower
- **Sat 16th December**, singing for Youth Talk at the Maltings.

If you would love to sing, make new friends, and be part of something special that will boost your wellbeing, email [thesopwellsingers@gmail.com](mailto:thesopwellsingers@gmail.com) to book your taster session. Winter term begins on 1st November and they will be singing some wonderful festive songs. All welcome! No singing experience required! Find them on Instagram @sopwellsingers

### Healthy Hub project

The Healthy Hub is a group of organisations which support and advise local residents on a range of topics.

Examples include The Living Room helping people break free from the cycle of addiction; St Albans Old People's Trust which has free items, grants and services to over 60s; BeeZee Bodies healthy lifestyles programme for families; Youth Talk counselling service to 13-25 year olds and many more.

Look out for **Andrea**, a project worker from Citizens Advice, who is visiting local community groups and events at the Cottonmill Centre and nearby locations to promote the Healthy Hub and can refer you directly to the Citizens Advice service. Keep a look out! All conversations treated confidentially. See [www.stalbans.gov.uk/healthy-hub](http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/healthy-hub)