



Walking Buses in St. Albans

The Are you a parent who might be interested in setting up or being involved in such a scheme for Man-deville and St Peters, to ease congestion in the area? The car company, Kia, is committed to working with schools and local councils to help get walking bus routes 'on the road'.

A 'Walking Bus' lets a group, or 'bus', of children walk from home to school each morning quickly and safely, under the guidance of trained adult supervisors and is described as 'the perfect alternative to the school run in the car'. The idea has been developed by the experts from the Pedestrians Association and is compatible with

the government's aim to reduce road traffic congestion and provide safe walking routes.



There are 154 schools already listed as having a Walking Bus; 3 schools are represented locally in Harpenden, Hemel Hempstead and Hatfield. Perhaps someone could contact them to explore how they were set up; were

there any obstacles? How long did it take?

Setting one up involves just 5 easy steps:

- Have a chat with your own children
- Talk to other parents
- Speak to the school
- Speak to the local council
- And, of course, make sure your children 'get on' the bus when it launches

Please contact them direct for an information pack on **0870 420 3236**. More information may also be found on: www.walking-bus.org.

By Sandy Norman

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MEET YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY OFFICER

I am the community officer for the Sopwell Ward and have been since February 2004.

The boundaries of the area are from Old London Road, across country to the North Orbital Road, along to the Park Street roundabout, up Watling Street, down St. Stephens Hill, up Holywell Hill, as far as Belmont Hill, back to Old London Road.

I am attempting to generate more Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the area. This is proven to be

a very effective way to help reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

If you are interested in assisting, to set up a scheme in your road, please contact Derek Sweeney on 01727 796087, or write to him at;

Community Safety Office, St.Albans Police Station, St.Albans, Herts, AL1 3JL.

Is Graffiti Messing up Your Environment?

There has been an increase in the amount of graffiti in the area. Do you

know who is responsible? Do you recognize this TAG?



If so, let me know on 01727 796042

By P.C. Paul Beecher

SUGGESTION BOXES

Suggestion boxes are placed in the following places:

- Vesta Avenue Butchers
- King Offa pub, Abbots Avenue
- Archers, Cottonmill Lane

S4 Bus Alert! [Peak time travel only]

A number of people have commented that the S4 bus now only goes to the station during rush hours. This means that any bus users who wish to travel at other times of day and/or take advantage of off-peak train travel, now have a problem.

We have raised this issue with the council, and the portfolio holder for transport has promised to discuss it with the bus company for us.

In the meantime, if you have any views on the change to this bus route and timetable, please let us

know so that we can give the council an idea of how many people are affected by it. You can do this by contacting us directly, or using the 'quick poll' form on the website.

By Chris Pudsey.

More Housing in St. Albans?

Many residents will be aware of the controversy over the Government's 'housing allocation' for this area and the implications it might have for building in the Green Belt.

As a follow-up to a meeting held last year, the Environment Forum is planning a second meeting some time in November which will address the potential environmental impact if all the houses allocated to the district are built. It is hoped that there will be brief

presentations on topics such as water supply, sewage and flooding, waste disposal, traffic, etc., and plenty of opportunity for questions and comments from the audience.

There is no date fixed yet, but it will be publicised in due course. If this is an issue which you feel strongly about, then do look out for details of the meeting nearer the time.

AGM Report

The Sopwell Residents Association held its first AGM on the 15th June 2004 in St Julian's Church Hall. It was good to see and meet so many of you.

After the formal part, the highlight of the evening was a presentation by the Sopwell community policeman, Paul Beecher (See above, page 1.) He talked about crime and antisocial behaviour in the area. Apart from the odd burglary, car crime, vandalism and graffiti, youth problems mainly in Mercers Row and Wilshere Avenue, and parking problems in Old London Road..... there was very little to complain about. He said that Sopwell was the safest area to live in St Albans, although hinting that many of the regular criminal activities in other parts of the city were perpetrated by people living in

Sopwell! Regarding the problem of graffiti, there is likely to be a special wall for youths to write on, which will probably be on the wall of the youth club building behind Leyland Avenue. He then took questions from the floor. Concern was expressed about: speeding in Abbots Avenue; parking in Creighton Avenue which blocks access by service vehicles e.g. ambulances to Martyr Close; and parking on the pavement which was also causing problems all over the area.

Other specific environmental issues raised at the AGM were:

Parking in Riverside Road by rail commuters,

Portaloos at the bottom of Doggetts Way (which has since been removed)

Lack of disabled access to the post office now that it had been moved into Londis (the Post office says this should be sorted out by October)

Using roads and pavements is also difficult - more dropped curbs needed for pushchairs and wheelchair users

Pot holes in Cottonmill Lane (this is on the Council agenda awaiting approval from the budget)

Pot hole in pavement at top end of Tavistock Avenue (since dealt with)

Sewage leak in Old Sopwell Gardens (ongoing).

All these issues are being or have been dealt with as far as is possible.

By Sandy Norman

What a foul-up!!

A number of residents have written to the SRA to express their concerns regarding the problem of dog fouling in Sopwell.

Dogs are for many people, essential companions who bring enjoyment, company and security. Naturally, dog owners are as entitled as anyone to enjoy and exercise their dogs in public places. What up-

sets other users of public spaces is the reluctance of some dog owners to clean up after their pets!

It is an offence not to clean up after your dog. Be 'prepared' when out with your dog, as it is not a defence to claim that you did not have the means with which to clean up.

The SRA has asked Janet Smith to help Sopwell get some more dog litter bins, but while we are waiting, if you see an incident taking place, and you know the owner or where they live, you can ring the council's Animal Warden (01727 819371) who will visit and give a written warning, which can lead to prosecution.

If you find your pavement, playground, verge or other public space has a dog-fouling problem, why not give Client Services a call (01727 853644). They will then come and clean the area for you.

By Helly Sawyer



Fouling Facts!!

- Not cleaning up after your dog could cost you a £50 on the spot fine leading to a maximum of £1000. Dog faeces can carry Toxocariasis. Children are particularly at risk – it can lead to serious illness or even blindness.
- No dog litterbin when you need one? It's ok to use a litterbin or even your own bin. Just make sure you've wrapped the package twice and tied it securely.
- Experts estimate our dogs in the UK produce a staggering 1000 tonnes of faeces a day.
- 80% of British public are concerned by the amount of dog fouling in public places.
- Your local authority has a legal duty to keep most types of public space including verges, footpaths and pavements, free from dog faeces.
- Most dog owners allowing their dogs to foul are men!

So come on Sopwell! Lets work together to keep our community highways and byways free from dog-fouling!

Calling for a New Committee Member!

If you are a Council tenant, have a little spare time and would like to join the committee (we are a very nice bunch), we would like to hear from you. Please phone our contact number, leave a message on our website or alternatively, put your contact details in one of the suggestion boxes and we will contact you.

LARKS IN THE PARKS

18th July

Well firstly what a successful day! It was a big achievement for the Sopwell Residents Association to be able to hold an event like this.

Luckily the rain held off long enough for all the activities. The t-shirt painting went down very well and the football playing pink flamingos where a comical addition to the day! It was lovely to see all the children learning to do the circus tricks - and the adults seemed to enjoy it as much as the kids. A special thank you to the Irish dancers who were wonderful to watch.

Also thank you to Anne Kaloczi, one of our Committee members, who ran a stall, offering information about the Countryside Awareness Project for the Sopwell ruins.

Despite the Carnival taking place on the same day, we were not discouraged and thank you to all who came down and supported us.

We hope to be able to organise a similar event next year so we will keep you posted. If there is anything you would like to see next year or have any ideas for activities, please write to us or email us with your contributions.

I would also like to say a big thank you to Jo and Carolyn from the Festival who helped organise and fund the event this year.

See you all next year!

Jo Witt

Useful Contacts for Sopwell Residents

1. Problems - if you want to report:

an abandoned vehicle	819391
fly tipping*	819285
litter on paths/highways	819465
problems with parks & open spaces inc. litter	819366
problems with refuse collection	819285
mice, wasp nests, etc.	819440
faulty street lighting	01438 737320
abandoned Sainsbury's trolleys	847707
abandoned Homebase trolleys	857113
noisy neighbours	819406/out of hours 811155
litter to be cleared by McDonalds	864676
a damaged bus shelter	0800 590889
potholes, broken pavements*, etc.	01438 737320
a water or sewerage leak	08459 200800
problem with trains	08457 114141

To report faults online (anything from fly tipping to potholes) go to www.hertsdirect.org/ and click on **highway fault reporting*

2. Contacts

Herts County Council	01992 555555 or www.hertsdirect.org/
St Albans and District Council	866100 or www.hertsdirect.org
(24-hour hotline for the above)	01438 737320 or 01923 471320

Sopwell councillors:

Janet Smith	763907 janet.smith1@ntlworld.com
Eileen Harris	831611 harris@stalbans555.fsnet.co.uk
Dawn Pratley	840031 dawn.pratley@ntlworld.com
Abbey Flyer Users Group	872736

The Community Police Officer:

PC Paul Beecher	796042 paulbeecher@herts.pnn.police.uk
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3. Recreation - if you want:

to rent an allotment	819329
to join the Youth Club	753116
to join St Albans Sub-Aqua Club	07905 104697
to contact Tots and Teddies	730746

Contact us

Sopwell Residents Association
23 Tavistock Avenue
St. Albans, Herts
AL1 2NQ
Email: info@sopwell.org.uk
Internet: www.sopwell.org.uk