



SOPWELL

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

making Sopwell a better place



Rural Walk in SOPWELL



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District Councillor Janet Smith: 763907:

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County Councillor Sandy Walkington: 07802 177317

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Litter fly-tipping, graffiti: 0845 1258000 or

a.cleanerdistrict@stalbans.gov.uk

Faulty road or pavement surface: 01438 737320 or

www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults

Sopwell Residents Association:

info@sopwell.org.uk & www.sopwell.org.uk

On a fine May Sunday afternoon with temperatures in the high teens Maggy Douglas led 13 Sopwell Residents (and some from Park Street) on a delightful circular 'rural' walk along the footpaths and fields of Sopwell, giving us some background to the areas that we were passing through. Our walk started at Mandeville School and took us along the footpath from Holyrood Crescent by the revamped children's play area, past Mitchell Close prefabs, emerging into the far end of Butterfield Lane and through Hedges Farm. We crossed the Ver via the footbridge and came face to face with cattle, including a bull and a calf, who came almost too close for comfort. We emerged safely from the field by New Barnes Mill (no, we didn't stop for tea at Sopwell House Hotel) and managed to negotiate safely the bridge and bend into Cottonmill Lane and then over to the mill end of Butterfield Lane, from where we wended our way back to Mandeville School via Gorham Drive and Abbots Avenue. It was a delightful walk - thank you Maggy."

Jennifer Taylor

Sopwell and Cottonmill Toy Library

We're looking for more volunteers to come and help at the local Toy Library, held term-time Tuesdays, 10am until 12 noon in St Julian's Church Hall, Abbots Avenue West. You can come as little or as often as you have time for.

We always work in at least pairs with duties including helping to set up / clear away, making teas and coffees, and issuing toys (the system is simple). You are welcome to bring your own children along.

Any support is appreciated. Find more information on the Sopwell and Cottonmill Facebook pages or contact Janet on 07884 185925

Sopwell Residents Association Charity Stall

There was good attendance at the SRA Charity Stall, held at the start of June. Lots of interest was shown in the photographic display of Sopwell history, provided by Steve Peters, with several passers-by recognising local landmarks. We also gave away over 100 copies of Sandy Norman's wonderful and informative book, 'Sopwell: a history and collection of memories' in less than six hours.

More information on the history of Sopwell, including interviews with current and former residents, can be found at www.sopwellmemories.org.uk.



Jennifer, Steve and Maggy manning the stall

Cottonmill Railway Crossing

The recent incident of teenagers 'playing chicken' on the Cottonmill Crossing over the Abbey Line brought emergency closure of the crossing within a hair's breadth. The driver was so stressed that he had to be relieved of duties. Fortunately, the county's Rights of Way unit was robust in defending it but it was very close. Network Rail are reviewing options in terms of the gates, CCTV, and warning signals. Another option might be gates which automatically lock.

We are desperately keen to avoid having a bridge replace the level crossing. It would have to be huge ('the size of a multi-storey car park') to get above the overhead power cables and the money would be far better spent on a new passing loop.

If you see someone trespassing on the railway or behaving stupidly at the crossing, please call British Transport Police on 0800 40 50 40, text 61016 or dial 999

(the above article was taken from Sopwell Enews by Cllr Sandy Walkington and Shakir Rahman) Editor



Cottonmill Community Improvement Group

Back in April this year I set up a new Facebook group called the Cottonmill Community Improvement Group. At that time, my neighbours and I had been discussing the state of the King Offa and Betty Entwhistle sites within another more general St. Albans group. Our conversation was ongoing and only really relevant to residents of Cottonmill and so, for want of a better name, the Cottonmill Community Improvement Group was born. The main intention of the group was to enable my neighbours and I to chat together about Cottonmill issues, just as you might do when you bump into each other in the street, but this way we can all engage together. From that initial conversation, a few of my neighbours and I met with Cllr. Brian Ellis to discuss the issues we had with, at that time, the lack of progress with the King Offa and Betty Entwhistle sites. We also arranged a community meeting with our local police officers where we had a very informative chat together in the Bunnings Cafe. And in May a few of us attended an interesting meeting led by the council's Communities Team that brought together lots of other community groups interested in improving services and facilities in the Cottonmill area. We chatted about the needs of the community and the possibility of a dedicated community hub of some sort and what that would involve. There were lots of offers of support from the various groups and some funding ideas, but to be able to take this idea any further would require a lot of hard work and a good bunch of dedicated, committed (and also some experienced) volunteers. I also feel that it's a bit beyond the remit of this little neighbourhood Facebook group too, but it would be great if perhaps the community, as a whole could come together in some way to make this happen. We have nearly 100 members now and if you would like to join us just search for the Cottonmill Community Improvement Group on Facebook.

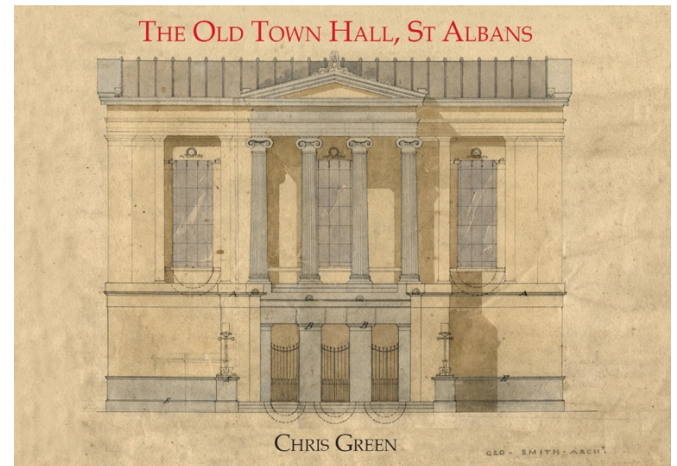
Michelle Mackenzie

SRA FACEBOOK PAGE – don't forget to follow us for daily information about Sopwell.



New book about St Albans Old Town Hall

A new book charting the history of St Albans iconic Old Town Hall is being published by the St Albans & Hertfordshire Architectural & Archaeological Society this September.



Its author is Chris Green, former director of St Albans Museums.

The 'Old Town Hall' has dominated the centre of St Albans since 1832, yet most inhabitants of the city know little about it. This authoritative short book provides the first published account of the building and its history, and reveals hitherto unknown details about its design, construction and fabric. It also gives an account of how the justices, local government and society used the building, how this changed over the years, and the day-to-day discomforts experienced by those who used the building.

CARETAKER VACANCY at ST ADRIAN'S R.C SCHOOL

Are you the person we're looking for to maintain our safe, clean and well cared for school environment?

Do you have the knowledge and experience of basic DIY and maintenance?

And are you flexible, hard-working, self-motivated and reliable?

For further details please contact St Adrian's Catholic Primary School.

Email: admin@stadrians.herts.sch.uk

Telephone: 01727 852687

Sopwell wins Quality Award

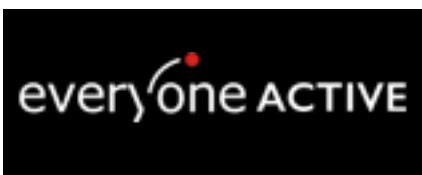
I jumped out of bed extra early one bright morning this May. I knew that the Green Flag assessors were coming to check our local patch of loveliness, Sopwell Nunnery and I wanted to make sure it was looking its best.

Did you know that Sopwell Nunnery Green Space is part of the Green Flag Award scheme? The Scheme recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces and is organised by Keep Britain Tidy. That day in May judges were making a site visit to assess how well St Albans and District Council manages the site, and how well the Green Flag Award expectations have been met - whether the space is safe and welcoming, clean and tidy, the trees and plants attractive but safely managed, the notice boards informative and inviting.

That morning, I was too late! The Council's contractors, John O'Conner were already on site making a final tidy-up. A small scrap of litter here, a strange disposable barbeque tray there, all were cleared up and then Sopwell Nunnery Space was looking all green and lovely with the blossom and white cow parsley, the sun glinting off the river and the newly repaired ruins. Ready for the assessment.

Of course, it passed. Along with Verulamium Park and other local beauty spots. Let's keep it looking beautiful.

Maggy Douglas



Because of our keeping well initiative, the membership team at Everyone Active (Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre) will give all Sopwellians a month's free membership, if you bring your copy of this newsletter with you when you go to register.

Keeping well

As the season of sniffs and sneezes approaches, how about taking steps to stay well?

On our doorstep, Westminster Lodge Leisure Centre offers classes for all ages and levels of fitness. Getting active makes us feel better says Barry Bateman, a regular member of the Everyone Active gym. The variety of classes, excellent gym staff and first rate gym equipment, all goes to make exercise fun.

Stepping out from Westminster Lodge are Hertfordshire Health Walks, led by experienced friendly volunteers. These free 60-minute walks start from outside the Leisure Centre at 7pm every Wednesday evening until 22 November. Walks also start from Greenwood Park Community Centre, Chiswell Green, at 2pm every Friday afternoon, all year round. There's no commitment; first-time walkers just need to register beforehand.

For a strong, flexible, balanced body, residents who are over 50 might like to try Hatha Yoga. The classes led by Maureen are at St Bartholomew's Parish Centre, Vesta Avenue at 1.30pm on Tuesdays. You can pay by the class or by the term.

Have you considered Tai Chi? With slow and gentle movements, Tai Chi is ideal for people of all ages and combines breathing, movement, meditation and gentle mental focus. Local resident, Enoch says Tai Chi is great for his health and well-being. There is a class led by Sally at St Julian's Church Hall, Abbots Avenue at 11.30am on Mondays

Last but not least, to strengthen and tone muscles whilst improving flexibility, why not try Pilates? There are classes at various venues around the area including St Peter's School, Cottonmill Lane at 7.30pm on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Their website shows the charges and recommends booking early as class sizes are kept small.

This is but some of the activities that will get your heart pumping around Sopwell. Get up out of that chair and have a go