

SOPWELL RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Community News



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www.sopwell.org.uk

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sandy.walkington

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Police Community Support Officer

Nicole Levi

01707806311

Nicole.levi@herts.pnn.police.uk

Herts Domestic Abuse hotline

Call **08 088 088 088**

9am-9pm Monday to Friday

and 9am-4pm weekends

Confidential email

Kim@mailpurple.org

Report off road Fly Tipping

01727 809019

St Albans Good

Neighbours Scheme

01727 830 713



WELCOME

Dear Residents - We hope you are keeping well in these difficult times. Do you like the new newsletter format we are trialling- let us know what you think - and also send us your news for the Spring Edition 2021!

Sopwell and Cottonmill is a great place to live with a lot of community activity. There is a lot of support out there, and lots of ways to get involved. You can help with the local foodbank, or with the new community garden. Help to organise meals for vulnerable local people, join your local Neighbourhood Watch, or come along to our Sopwell Residents Association meetings!

Janet Charles - SRA Chair. **Email:** info@sopwell.org.uk

Join the SRA team!

Treasurer Wanted!

Sopwell Residents Association (SRA) are looking for a treasurer, and other committee members.

We are a friendly bunch, meeting 6 times a year to share news, plan events and represent Sopwell at local meetings. Please email us to find out more.

Sopwell Residents Association AGM

7pm for 7.30pm start

Tues 24 November 2020

This year's AGM will be a short meeting online using zoom, with reports, updates and possibly a speaker. ***It would be lovely if you joined us for this meeting.*** For more information and zoom details see **www.sopwell.org.uk** and follow us on Facebook.

20's Plenty! 20

I receive a great many complaints about speeding cars and vans - and also about cyclists using pavements.

The two are connected and making our local streets safe and secure is something of a passion of mine.

We've managed to achieve 20 mph speed limits in the Belmont Hill and Riverside Road areas but I get so many complaints and concerns about Cottonmill Lane, Holyrood Crescent, Maynard Drive and Holywell Hill to name but a few.

The most crazy thing of all is that motorists can travel at 60 mph

between Sopwell House and the Mile House railway bridge - totally mad. I and my fellow county councillors in St Albans think it is time to stop messing around with a street here and a street there, it's time to go the whole hog and make St Albans a 20 mph city.

Places as far afield as Oxford, Portsmouth and the London Boroughs of Islington and Lewisham have done this and the sky hasn't fallen in.

The trouble is that the county council officers will only countenance 20 mph limits if they

are accompanied by expensive engineering solutions - chicanes, build-outs, speed tables etc. The new 'Speed Management Strategy' for Hertfordshire feels like business as usual. Indeed the councillor in charge of highways actually wrote to me saying it might be more difficult to deliver 20 mph speed limits after it has been agreed.

I'm really pleased that a '20's Plenty' campaign has been set up in St Albans. This is an idea whose time has come.

Sandy Walkington
County Councillor

www.20splentyforstalbens.moonfruit.com

Sopwell litter pickers

Help keep your area clear of litter and of course go for a little stroll. Equipment is sprayed before being issued. Please use your own gardening gloves. Depending on COVID - dates for litter picks (meet 10am front of the Abbots Avenue shops) are: **8th November 2020** 10am -12 noon • **10th January 2021** 10am - 12 noon

Please check Facebook [@CleanUpSopwell](#) or email cleanup Sopwell@outlook.com

#Lockdown - Can we do it all again, Mum?

A local author and pre school parent wrote a poem about her experience in lockdown with her toddler.

It was turned into a song and a video was made for YouTube -where it became a fundraiser for the Old London Road pre school.

So far the video has 3100 views.. and raised over £1,000 which helped cover the loss of fundraising opportunities for the pre school over lockdown. See video at <http://bit.ly/canwedoitagain>

Pictured, the author Lizzie Binks, Janet Charles (pre school leader/Chair of SRA), Toby Charles,

who sang the song with Laurence Charles on the guitar. Performed at the Priory Walk /Berners Drive Thursday evening NHS clap during lockdown.



Sopwell Community Trust

... building a stronger community



Sopwell Community Trust is a local charity established in 2013 to represent, share and celebrate the BAME population of St Albans with the wider community.

Throughout lockdown we have been providing cooked meals and food parcels to people in crisis - including families facing financial difficulties; people who are vulnerable and/or socially isolated.

We cooked 200+ meals for Open Door, Kent House and Martin House and 100 meals for NHS keyworkers. Working with Emma, Stuart and the fantastic team at the St Albans District Food Bank we have delivered food parcels for over 3 months.

Donations have poured in and we are truly thankful to all - we could not do this without you!

By working together and harnessing the goodwill of our peers including The Adda Club, Ansar Scouts and Al Bayyinah School, we have built a stronger community where no one suffers alone in silence. We are also



mentoring and training families to empower them to learn new skills and improve their wellbeing, help them find work and become financially stable. We have made online free tutoring for school children struggling to keep up with online learning. In celebration of VE Day we baked and delivered 200 cream tea scone boxes to the elderly in St Albans and for Eid we again baked and delivered 500 cakes to local heroes nominated by the public.

To find out more including additional services please see our Facebook page **@SopwellCommunityTrust** or follow us on Instagram **@SopwellCommunity** or email us at **sopwellct@gmail.com**

Raihaanah Ahmed
SCT

St Stephen and St Julian

St Stephen's and St Julian's churches are open Sundays for public worship or see YouTube (St Stephen with St Julian).

Sunday: 8am Book of Common Prayer Communion at St Stephen's; 9.30am Parish Communion at St Julian's; 11am Parish Communion at St Stephen's

Thursday: 9.15am Morning Prayer at St Julian's

Tuesday: 9.15am Morning Prayer at St Stephen's

See times for private prayer

www.ststephenandstjulian.org

St Albans Family Centre Service

St Albans Family Centre Service zoom sessions: meet/chat with other families at Baby Sing and Play; Rhyme Time. Autumn courses: Virtual Parenting; Family Toolkit; Early Talk. Appointment-only Self Weigh stations for parents to weigh their babies.

For details see Facebook **@StAlbansFCS** or Tel **0300 123 7572** choose option 4 then Option 2.

Claire Norris
Family Support Team Leader - Sopwell Family Centre
www.hertsfamilycentres.org

Police Community Support Officer (PCSO)

Nicole Levi is the local PCSO for the area: if you wish to speak to her about any ongoing issues in the area please email **Nicole.levi@herts.pnn.police.uk** or visit her surgery at Sainsbury's on 17th October 11am - 4pm. Or call the SNT Tel: **01707 806 311** - speak to Nicole or colleagues directly if they are in the office.

To report a Non-emergency crime -please phone 101 as you need to get a crime reference number. To become a part of OWL Neighbourhood Watch then email your name, address and phone number to Nicole.

OWL Neighbourhood Watch Scheme

Have you joined? See www.owl.co.uk for details. OWL keeps communities safe, helps reduce crime and keeps people informed of what's going on locally.



Happy List

KATE SWINDELLS



Early on in Lockdown, like many, I was swept up by the need to do something useful with my time and found myself inspired to grow vegetables in my erstwhile shrub- and flower-filled garden.

I was inspired after reading the Grow Community - Sopwell FaceBook pages and seeing all the encouragement that was being given by a certain Kate Swindells, who seemed to have a seed/seedling delivery and collection point operating from her front garden!

Sopwell residents were posting about their successes and failures and help and tips were duly given by Kate and a 'team' of expert volunteers! How amazing is this, I thought!

Cut to a few months (and many seed-germinating and potting-on experiences later!), when I read about the Independent's 'Happy List'.

This List was established some years back as a counterpoint to the Sunday Times 'Rich List', which only rates wealth. With the Happy List its people's actions and efforts to help others that gets them included.

Who better or more deserving to nominate, I thought, than Kate?

So I did! And a few weeks later we had the fabulous news that she was accepted onto the List by the Judging Panel and her name published alongside such greats as the amazing Captain Tom Moore.

Well done Kate!

Linda Bateman

CYCLO-CROSS AT MARLBOROUGH CLUB

The Youth Development Programme at Verulam Cycling Club (VCC) is starting its 8th year coaching cyclo-cross at the Marlborough Club, Old Oak, just off Cottonmill Lane.

Every Saturday morning at 9am, come rain or shine, VCC coaches deliver exciting and challenging coaching for any kids 5-18 years old who have a bike and enjoy the off-road.

Marlborough Club has a long history of cycling with the BMX pump track created over 25 years ago and a number of BMX clubs using the dirt jumps, berms, corners and jump.

VCC often uses the BMX pump track in coaching sessions with kids having great fun. VCC

focuses on improving cycling and cyclo-cross skills whilst having fun and enjoying cycling. We also have different races which kids absolutely love, especially the prizes ;-). Cyclo-cross coaching runs from September to March and culminates in a Muddy Monsters race with kids coming from Herts/Bucks and Beds for the final series decider.

See the Facebook page **@VCCYouth** for updates.

Davinder Bhatia
Verulam Cycling Club.

Solar Streets St Albans

Discounted solar panels for homeowners and businesses in this new scheme backed by the council. Get 12 solar panels for £4K. Reduce carbon emissions from your home - and across the district!

See more and get FREE no obligation survey at:
<https://solarstreets.co.uk/stalbans>

Energy Saving for Residents on Low Incomes

Residents on benefits/low incomes may get help with loft, underfloor, external/cavity wall insulation, A-rated boiler. See **www.yesenergysolutions.co.uk/schemes/st-albans-warmer-homes**



NEW CROSSING.. PLEASE CONTINUE TO USE SAFELY

If you have concerns about the times/volume of the horn being heard please contact network rail on www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk/contact-us or Tel 0333 311 0006. Investigations continue about difficulties users with mobility issues have when using the crossing.

Please email **saveourcrossing@gmail.com** to share your concerns or attend a meeting. Facebook: **Save Our Cottonmill Crossing Action Group.**

ST ALBANS AND DISTRICT FOODBANK SOPWELL



Get Help

First you need to get a foodbank voucher. Call freephone national Citizens Advice **0808 208 2138** or email **info@stalbandsdistrict.foodbank.org.uk** to talk/connect with a relevant local agency.

Give Help

The Foodbank needs your help to make sure nobody goes hungry. Financial support, time, business partnership and food makes a real difference. See

www.stalbansdistrict.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/

Drop food off at Tesco Metro St Peter's Street or Waitrose.

Most needed items: we prefer long-life and tins!

- Fruit Juice (long life)
- Rice Pudding - tinned
- Instant Mash/Tinned Potatoes
- Jam & Spreads
- Desserts (jellies, steamed puddings, Angel Delight etc)
- Laundry Tabs/Liquid/Gels

Residents Together

To keep in touch with local issues, representatives of Sopwell Residents Association and similar bodies meet in a Combined Residents Association (CRA) which is independent of the council. Some of us, including SRA, also attend the City Neighbourhoods Committee ("CNC") of St Albans Council.

At the CRA's most recent August online meeting we discussed the closure of the High Street, management of the Charter Market, safe cycling and pedestrian routes to schools, and management of traffic in roads being used as "rat-runs".

Also discussed were general matters e.g. government proposals regarding planning and also abolition of district councils in favour of larger unitary authorities.

The ongoing burning issue of the Rail Freight Terminal was also mentioned, with reference to the Local Plan and to the House of Commons debate due shortly afterwards.

Rick Taylor

Trees for Sopwell

St Albans City and District Council has secured a £1,700 grant from the Forestry Commission's Urban Tree Challenge Fund to plant 1,500 trees - which will be sited in open spaces at Holyrood Crescent, St Albans, and Tallents Crescent, Harpenden.

Life as the Mayor a challenging year!



This 2nd year as Mayor of St Albans has been totally different from the last. This time round, when chairing meetings of Full Council, instead of sitting in the Council chamber with the other councillors plus officers, I am still sitting in the chamber, but all the other councillors are at home as the meetings are by Zoom.

Mayors choose a charity to support and last year I had fundraisers including a Murder Mystery Evening at Verulamium Museum to raise money for Citizens Advice.

This year, with restrictions on gatherings it is more challenging: so far I have raised money for my charity, St Albans and Hertsmere Women's Refuge, with the 13.1 Challenge being sponsored to do a fitness routine in my garden including sack jumps up and down the lawn.

Another role is promoting relations between the District Council and local groups...Instead of visiting care homes in person I have visited by Zoom, instead of attending AGMs in person I have sent recorded messages or joined a virtual event.

I will be joining the Scouts AGM by Zoom in September, having attended in person with my son last year. ... and will be joining the virtual Folk Festival via my laptop.

Last September, I was the first Mayor to take part in the Oxfam Walk for Water, raising money for them with a sponsored walk along the 8-mile route with my son.

This year I was sponsored to go up Helm Crag in the Lake District with my son and daughter-in-law, taking photographs along the way to prove that I had made it to the summit.

Last year I followed a pattern of events which had been developed over time as things that the Mayor does. This year a re-think has been needed to carry out the role of mayor in a different way. It's particularly challenging in a constantly changing situation.

Janet Smith

Mayor of the City and District of St Albans

Let's #GrowTogether



Grow Community – Sopwell aims to encourage and enable local residents to grow their own food at home and in community spaces, to reduce food waste, share surplus food, to promote wildlife conservation and bring the community together.

Sopwell's Community Garden coming soon!

Thanks to everyone who responded to the council consultation about the location of the new garden; to be announced soon. The Community Garden will need lots of lovely volunteers to make it a success. Get in touch on our Facebook group [@GrowSopwell](#)

Plants/Seeds/Produce for you

We have plant/seed/produce stations dotted around the area for you to collect/drop off edible or wildlife-friendly items. A lot of surplus harvest is being donated to Sopwell's Trussell Trust Foodbank. The rest is on offer to the community so please donate what you can and help yourself to anything left. We hate waste! Don't be shy!

The Abbotts Avenue planters

Our volunteers have renovated these; the top one has mainly herbs for cooking/herbal teas. Please help yourself by snipping off what you need, and why not volunteer to help maintain them?

To see what we're up to, please look out for posters in local shop windows/community notice boards. Visit our website, receive our newsletter, engage with us on social media, and contact us by email. It's a lovely community to be part of, and you will be very warmly welcomed.

Visit <https://cottonmillandsopwellhub.org/grow/>

Kate Swindells

Leyland Avenue Development

Hoarding has been installed to secure the site. Site work starts November 2020 with demolition and clearance. Anticipated completion Sept 2021.

(Thanks to Cllr Emma Matanle for updates on this and other local issues).

NEW COMMUNITY HUB IS ON ITS WAY!

For the last few years, the local community, most recently through the Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub (CASH) campaign group, joined by community groups, including Sopwell Community Trust (SCT), Verulam Cycling Club and the Scouts, have put their heart and soul into fighting for a new, fit for purpose, community hub.

In late 2019, SADC announced plans for funding to be made available to move the development of a new facility forward. COVID19 hit, reinforcing the importance of community in a crisis.

St Albans District Council (SADC) recently reaffirmed its commitment to delivering the Marlborough Pavilion scheme; have brought in firm Pick Everard (PE) as project manager, Kyle Smart Associates (KSA) as the architect and have conducted positive consultations with CASH and SCT regarding building specifications.

With input from Verulam Cycling Hub and partners, SADC submitted the Stage 1 'Places to Ride' application to British Cycling (BC), with the assistance of Herts Sports Partnership, for additional funding to provide onsite cycling facilities.

SADC affirmed that cost, sustainability and a robust, at pace project delivery will be at the heart of the project, with officers working towards a higher energy efficiency rating during the course of design and construction and, further, ensuring minimum waste production on site, taking into account relevant regulations. The architects have been instructed to begin work on the next set of iterative designs and the procurement of the additional multidisciplinary team is being progressed.

It's been a long time coming, but there is traction behind the scenes. SADC officers are committed to supporting the community, while balancing macroeconomic impact, budget, the unique needs of the individual stakeholders, and the wider needs of the community to create a facility everyone can enjoy.

Cllr Mandy McNeil

Crime

Sopwell has had the highest crime rate in the district during Lockdown, with the most burglaries (11) but overall crime is down 22% during lockdown. Domestic abuse is up, and so is criminal damage of vehicles and theft from inside unlocked vehicles is up. The retail park is the worst hotspot in Sopwell for the theft of catalytic converters.

So, lets keep an eye on our neighbours and offer support where we can.

Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub CaSH campaign update

The Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub (CaSH) campaign group have been continuing meetings with the council to progress action on a new community hub – and news is positive. On 22nd July CaSH had its first Marlborough Pavilion Project meeting online with SADC since we went into lockdown in March. SADC confirmed they are still committed to delivering the scheme, to consist of a new community building and new onsite cycling facilities.

The purpose of the meeting was mainly to further discuss the accommodation schedule - which currently is a large hall and kitchen, a smaller hall, a cafe and cafe kitchen, a quiet room, ablution facilities, office, toilets and baby change.

Whilst we are mostly happy with the current plans, we are pushing hard to ensure that the new building is beautiful and complements the parkland, is environmentally sustainable, and is fully inclusive and accessible to all.

Michelle Mackenzie
Chair- CaSH



Sopwell Memories

www.sopwellmemories.org.uk continues to go from strength to strength. Proving very popular with people far and wide, as well as locals, it has had 140,000 views since it was launched six years ago.

Every so often a snippet of interesting history comes our way which is added to the website. Just today an old half-pint milk bottle belonging to Sopwell Home Farm with the

farmer's name - W.G. Brown -etched on it was found. It had been unearthed by a fox or a badger on Bernards Heath!

The latest happenings can be read on the blog at www.blog.sopwellmemories.org.uk/.

There are also a few copies left to buy of the fascinating Sopwell Memories book - see www.sopwellmemories.org.uk

Sandy Norman



**HART
HYPNOTHERAPY**

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TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT TIMES WHEN THEY ARISE.**

My name is Michelle and I am a hypnotherapist who can help you if you feel anxious, have difficulty sleeping, want to give up smoking and more. To find out more book in for a **free** initial consultation by contacting me: hypnotherapyhart@gmail.com

WWW.HARTHYPNOTHERAPIST.CO.UK

Walk and bike to school

There are reports of parking problems around Mandeville School, as parents drop off children. Why not leave the car at home and take your children on foot, or by bike! See Facebook [@walkbiketoschoolday](#)

"When walking or biking, parents and children get to appreciate things they don't notice while driving—listening to the sounds of the neighbourhood, seeing friends and neighbours and feeling connected with their community"

Hertfordshire Age UK

Advice and help for older people on benefits, grants, housing, emotional support, scams, and more..
Tel: **0300 345 3446** Open: Monday - Friday 9am - 4.00pm.
Email: info@ageukherts.org.uk

Theatre Trips

The shows must go on.. well they will eventually. If you are a theatre goer and would like to join the Janets theatre trips group please email jactheatretrips@gmail.com.

We leave from Westminster lodge car park and take the coach to the theatre and back.!

Lots of shows on the list for next year including 'Back to the Future' and 'Frozen'.

www.facebook.com/groups/618098191971878

Facebook & Websites

Sopwell Residents Association
www.sopwell.org.uk

Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub Campaign
[@CottonmillandSopwellHub](#) or
www.cottonmillandsopwellhub.org

Grow Community Sopwell
Facebook group [@GrowSopwell](#)

Sopwell and Cottonmill Toy library
[@Sopwell-and-Cottonmill-Toy-Library](#)

Sopwell Community Trust
[@SopwellCommunityTrust](#)

Sopwell families
[@SopwellFamilies](#)

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www.sustainablestalbans.org

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