

Sopwell Residents Association celebrates 10 successful years!

What have we achieved since our formation in 2003? The following lists our campaigns, events and news, extracted from all our newsletters

<p>July 2003 (No 1)</p>	<p>We take up the cudgels with the council and local shops relating to the amount of litter and fly tipping around the Ward.</p> <p>We report on the council's new environmental scheme for recycling cardboard.</p> <p>We campaign for the council to update the bus shelters around in the Ward.</p> <p>We make a fervent plea for drivers not to park on the pavements.</p> <p>The committee proposes that the Sopwell Nunnery site will become a nature reserve and wildlife sanctuary and residents were invited to take a guided walk around the site.</p> <p>Comments on the quality of service were requested from users of the 'Abbey Flyer' so that SRA could support the Abbey Flyer User Group.</p>
<p>October 2003 (No 2)</p>	<p>We announce the November Residents General Meeting.</p> <p>We report that the Council had made some suggestions to improve parking problems around the ward.</p> <p>We report that 4 suggestion boxes had been placed around the ward – one at the King Offa and one each in 3 local shops.</p> <p>A residents' working party reported the sorry state of the Sopwell Nunnery site and lack of amenities there to the appropriate council members and the Verulamium Museum.</p> <p>On-going problems with rubbish, especially around the retail park.. Councillor Harris tackled the council's Environmental Health Department and they agreed to take action – as did the shops.</p> <p>A review of the Sopwell Youth Club in Leyland Avenue was carried out.</p> <p>We report on tree felling and clearing of vegetation along the Abbey Flyer track.</p> <p>We support the residents from Leyland Avenue in their issue with Sainsbury's noisy delivery lorries.</p>
<p>April 2004 (No 3)</p>	<p>We report on the success of the November 2003 General Meeting and announce the next general meeting for June 2004.</p> <p>We make a plea for council tenants to join the committee or to come forward with any issues and concerns they may have.</p> <p>We announce a Spring Clean Week.</p> <p>We report on the concerns expressed by residents of the possible plans for a new football stadium on land near the Park Street roundabout.</p> <p>We report on the planned pizza outlet and transfer of the post office in Vesta Avenue.</p> <p>We were able to report the successful erection of new bus shelters around the ward.</p> <p>We report on Network Rail's plan to move the Abbey Station further up the line to the pedestrian rail crossing to allow for some new housing.</p> <p>Litter always a hot topic in the ward – we are able to report a slight improvement in the amount of litter.</p>

	<p>We propose a 'Friends of Sopwell Priory' group which will be facilitated by Conservation Management Services.</p> <p>We provide information St Albans District Credit Union.</p>
September 2004 (No 4)	<p>We advise parents of the Kia "Walking Bus" campaign for school children.</p> <p>Our local community police officer introduces himself.</p> <p>We raise the issue of problems with the S4 bus route.</p> <p>"More housing in St Albans" – we draw attention to government proposals.</p> <p>We report on the SRA's first AGM held in June.</p> <p>We campaign for dog owners to clean up after their dogs.</p> <p>We report on the successful Larks in the Park held in July.</p>
March 2005 (No 5)	<p>We advise progress on on-going bus route problems.</p> <p>We report on the designation of St Albans "Alcohol Free Zones" as it affects the Sopwell area.</p> <p>We urge volunteers to come forward for the annual litter pick.</p> <p>We campaign for disability access to the Londis post office in Vesta Avenue</p> <p>We encourage the increase of Neighbourhood Watch schemes in Sopwell.</p> <p>We start to campaign with the Council for better use of and improvements to the Marlborough Club.</p> <p>We draw the Council's attention to the state of verges at the junction of Doggetts Way with Wilshere Avenue.</p>
September 2005 (No 6)	<p>We report on the AGM held in July 2005.</p> <p>Sadly, we report the passing of Anne Kaloczi, who was the founder of SRA.</p> <p>We discuss the Council's plans for the introduction of wheelie bins to the area.</p> <p>We publish a joint letter to the Sopwell community from religious leaders, Imam Fakruz Zaman and Priest at St Julian's, Rev'd Ruth Pike.</p> <p>We report on progress with the campaign for improvement to verges at the junction of Doggetts Way with Wilshere Avenue.</p> <p>Our new council tenant representative for SRA introduces herself.</p> <p>PC Sharon Foster takes over as the new Community PC.</p> <p>The Watercress Wildlife Association urgently needs help.</p>
March 2006 (No 7)	<p>We announce the next Residents Public Meeting to take place in April.</p> <p>The Local Strategic Partnership as representation from Sopwell following the ward being designated as one of more deprived areas in the County.</p> <p>We announce our success in obtaining a grant of £4,400 from the "Awards for All" programme to make improvements to the Sopwell Priory Green Space.</p> <p>We announce two summer fun days for Sopwell – Larks in the Park and the River Ver Duck Race.</p> <p>We plant 320 daffodil bulbs in various parts of the ward.</p> <p>Joining with Verulam Residents Association, we object most strongly to the Council's proposal to revive the idea of a "link road" behind St Stephens Church.</p>
Summer 2006 (No 8)	<p>We announce our AGM to take place in June and report on the results of the public meeting held in April 2006.</p> <p>Our Community Police Officer advises us of the progress being made in cleaning up crime in Sopwell.</p> <p>We report on the implementation of the Clean Neighbourhood & Environment Act and how this affects our area.</p>

	<p>We report further news on the Sopwell Priory site, including the removal of asbestos and the request to English Heritage to enable the planting of wild flowers. Councillor Harris gives Part 1 of her History of Sopwell.</p> <p>We make residents aware of planning issues arising around the ward, including the proposed rail freight terminal.</p> <p>We report on the outcome of the Sopwell Community Partnership public meeting.</p>
Autumn 2006 (No 9)	<p>We announce the October residents open meeting and remind all residents of Sopwell Ward that they are ALL members of the Association by right</p> <p>We give news from the tenant representative.</p> <p>Councillor Harris provides Part 2 of the History of Sopwell.</p> <p>We report on the AGM held in July 2006.</p> <p>We report on progress with the Sopwell Nunnery space, including the proposed installation of the two new benches.</p> <p>We report on our participation in the Local Development Framework in association with the council.</p> <p>The angry subject of litter in Sopwell is aired yet again.</p> <p>Bulb planting time and we ask for a planting party to come forward.</p> <p>We advertise the street dancing classes to be held at Sopwell Youth Centre.</p>
Spring 2007 (No 10)	<p>We announce the AGM to be held in May and Larks in the Park in July.</p> <p>We draw the residents' attention to the daffodils, the bulbs for some of which were bought from a legacy by the late Anne Kaloczi. Also – how about some more trees?</p> <p>We announce at last the installation of the two new benches at the Nunnery site and news of our Green Flag application for the site.</p> <p>We give information on Neighbourhood Watch and the OWL scheme.</p> <p>Sopwell schools are to provide extended out of hours services to local youngsters and announce the proposed plan for a new children's centre for the Sopwell and Verulam areas.</p> <p>We pass on to residents some news on the Abbey Line.</p> <p>Councillor Harris gives Part 3 of her History of Sopwell in which Henry VIII gets a good mention in relation to the Priory.</p>
Summer 2007 (No 11)	<p>We announce the September Residents Meeting at which Anne Main MP and Jeff Minty, Estates Manager for SADC, were guest speakers.</p> <p>We report on the outcome of the AGM held in May 2007.</p> <p>Ananda gives an insight into life as a new resident of Sopwell.</p> <p>We talk further about plans for tree planting in the area.</p> <p>We are able to announce that we have been awarded the Green Flag for the Nunnery and Allotment sites.</p> <p>We report the threat of closure of the St Albans Toy Library held at St Julian's Church due to lack of volunteers to run it.</p> <p>We report on Larks in the Park held in July and make residents aware of Sports in the Park to be held at the Marlborough Club, along with news of community football matches with coaches from Watford FC.</p>
Spring 2008 (No 12)	<p>Our 5th Anniversary AGM takes place in May.</p> <p>We announce Larks in the Parks, which included a "Sopwell has Talent" competition.</p> <p>We ask for volunteers to monitor the state of the Abbey Station and announce the festivities planned for the 150th anniversary of the Abbey Flyer.</p>

	<p>Age Concern hold a 10-3 Club for older residents in Sopwell to be held at Betty Entwistle House.</p> <p>Herts Constabulary are seeking Police Community Volunteers.</p> <p>Sopwell and Verulam Children’s Centre is all set to open.</p> <p>St Albans Toy Library is back having been threatened with closure in the previous newsletter.</p> <p>The annual litter pick is scheduled for the first weekend in April.</p> <p>The Trees & Woodland Department of SADC await to hear from us with a request to plant trees in the area.</p> <p>The state of pavements and potholes are a sore point in the ward and residents are advised to call Herts Highways to report problem roads.</p>
Autumn 2008 (No 13)	<p>We announce the residents’ get-together to be held in September and which will take the form of a quiz evening.</p> <p>We report on the success of Larks in the Parks held, as every in the grounds of the Marlborough Club in June.</p> <p>A fascinating tree-hugging history walk, led by Chris Pudsey and Cllr Harris, was held in July and was well reviewed.</p> <p>Sopwell Priory is successful, once again, in being awarded its Green Flag.</p> <p>Jack Hill and Sandy Norman become tree wardens for Sopwell and invite other interested residents to join them.</p> <p>We campaign to the Post Office’s Consultation Team against the proposed closure of the sub-post office in Prospect Road.</p> <p>We report on the outcome of the 2007 AGM and welcome 5 new members to the committee, 4 having stepped down.</p> <p>Age Concern make a plea for more volunteer drivers.</p> <p>We announce the Sopwell Project with a request for residents to come forward with any information they may have in relation to the history of Sopwell.</p>
Spring 2009 (No 14)	<p>The committee makes an urgent appeal for residents to come forward to help run SRA. Without more help the association may be forced to disband.</p> <p>We announce the AGM to take place in May and Larks in the Park in June.</p> <p>We organise a family cycle ride to celebrate Sopwell becoming part of the National Cycle Network. We are route 6/61.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the SRA Quiz, held in September 2008, was poorly attended.</p> <p>The Sopwell History Project has been launched. Anne Wares sets the scene and asks for any snippets of past memories.</p> <p>We continue our campaign to keep Sopwell in bloom.</p> <p>We tell residents about the on-going changes to the SRA website.</p> <p>The Sopwell Brownie and Rainbow group are in search of leaders.</p> <p>We notify residents of Sainsbury’s plans to increase the size of the store and car park and advise on ways to view the plans.</p> <p>Leyland Avenue residents hold a ‘street’ party at the Sub-Aqua Club in January.</p>
Autumn 2009 (No 15)	<p>Following our urgent appeal in the last newsletter, we were delighted to thank those residents who came forward with offers of assistance – but we would still like to see some more fresh faces on the committee.</p> <p>We announce a public meeting to be held to discuss the Council’s “Shaping our Community – Planning Consultation Emerging Core Strategy Local Development Framework Proposals”.</p> <p>We announce plans for a walk around Sopwell Green Spaces led by Chris Pudsey</p>

	<p>with information en route by Cllr Eileen Harris.</p> <p>Our new Police Community Support Officer, John Massey, introduces himself.</p> <p>Peter Wares and Chris Pudsey report on the family cycle ride along route 6/61.</p> <p>We report on the AGM held in May and Larks in the Park in June.</p> <p>St Albans Natural Childbirth Trust promotes its fundraising efforts through our columns.</p>
Spring 2010 (No 16)	<p>The editor gives a résumé of the committee's success since the previous newsletter, including the erection of two new benches near the Abbey Line level crossing and, in particular, the provisional acceptances of an application for a grant to erect a boardwalk along the river near the Nunnery.</p> <p>We announce the AGM to be held in June 2010 and Larks in the Park also in June.</p> <p>The St Albans Day cycle ride is announced</p> <p>The £79k floodlit sports/play area in the grounds of Marlborough Pavilion is complete, paid for by a grant from the Big Lottery Fund.</p> <p>Chris Pudsey and Cllr Harris lead the annual Green Sopwell walk in September 2009 and is mouth-wateringly described by Sandy.</p> <p>We announce the Council's plans to improve the visual aspect of the area around the Abbots Avenue West shopping parade.</p> <p>The 4th St Albans Scout Group in Riverside Road seeks a new leader.</p> <p>We draw residents' attention to their obligations to cut back overhanging foliage from their gardens.</p> <p>St Albans District Woodcraft Folk plant six hazel saplings at the Nunnery site.</p>
Autumn 2010 (No 17)	<p>Sandy Norman announces progress of the Sopwell Project and some of the memories so far received.</p> <p>A Green Sopwell walk is scheduled to take place in September, led by Chris Pudsey and Cllr Harris.</p> <p>We report on the Sopwell Wheelers' Alban Day ride and announce a ride to Smallford along the old railway line to coincide with the Museum's "Lost Rails" Exhibition.</p> <p>We report on the AGM held in June 2010.</p> <p>Murder in the Nunnery Green Space – 1948! Sandy reports from her research for the Sopwell Project.</p> <p>We report on the Herts Policing Plan for 2010-13.</p> <p>We draw residents' attention to the problems of illegal fly-tipping in the area.</p>
Spring 2011 (No 18)	<p>We announce the AGM to be held in May at which Sandy Norman will be standing down as Chairman.</p> <p>Residents are invited to the annual Larks in the Park to be held in June, to be organised by Mandeville School.</p> <p>Residents of Ramsbury Road announce their "Big Lunch and Open Garden Day" to be held in June, the entry charge for which will go to the Odyssey Cinema.</p> <p>Fenny's Board Walk is complete, commissioned by CMS and the Ver Valley Society with funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund.</p> <p>We draw residents' attention to the two new notice boards in Vesta Avenue and Abbots Avenue West, paid for by a Grassroots grant.</p> <p>Mandeville School raises funds towards completion of their extension project, which had to stop following HCC budget cuts.</p> <p>Sandy announces her plans for the history and memories from the Sopwell Project to be turned in a book.</p>

	<p>Sainsbury's plans for an extension to the store and a "double-decker" car park are reigned in following the objections of the local residents, in particular those living in Leyland Avenue.</p> <p>We draw residents' attention to the state of the grass verges and ask them to be considerate and STOP parking on them.</p> <p>The local Guide Dogs group seeks volunteers.</p>
Autumn 2011 (No 19)	<p>The editor announces the apparent change in the demographic profile of Sopwell in that it would appear more young professional are moving into the area. She also welcomed Rick Taylor as the new chairman and Rob Sharman as new treasurer of SRA following the 2011 AGM.</p> <p>Our autumn history walk is organised for September, led by Cllr Harris and Simon West, the City Archaeologist.</p> <p>The new chairman of SRA, Rick Taylor, gave a report on the AGM held in May.</p> <p>Anne Wares reported on the success of the Ramsbury Road Big Lunch & Open Garden Day held in June.</p> <p>The official ribbon-cutting ceremony by the Mayor for the opening of Fenny's boardwalk was reported.</p> <p>Oxford St Albans drew our attention to their Annual Herts Hike with proceeds of sponsorship going towards their work in Thailand.</p> <p>A very successful and well attended Larks in the Park took place in June and Ananda Armstrong-King gave a "View from a Stallholder".</p> <p>Sandy announces the rapid progress of the history project and in particular her book "Sopwell: a history and collection of memories" and that she is currently seeking a publisher.</p> <p>St Albans Good Neighbours scheme is seeking volunteers.</p>
Spring 2012 (No 20)	<p>The editor announces the publication in May of her book Sopwell: a history and collection of memories and also the fact that SRA has been shortlisted for the Mayor's Pride Award in relation to the Fenny Boardwalk, and that Christoph Lutz has been shortlisted for the Inclusive Communities Award.</p> <p>We announce the AGM to take place in May, the Jubilee Celebration and Larks in the Park in June.</p> <p>We advice residents about the work and services offered by Mediation Hertfordshire.</p> <p>Friends of Sopwell Nunnery has now become Friends of Sopwell Green.</p> <p>St Albans Good Neighbours thank the members of SRA for coming forward with offers of volunteering help.</p> <p>The book goes on sale – at a discount for residents buying directly via the SRA.</p> <p>We combine our litter pick day with willow weaving and create a stunning willow tunnel near the river and the boardwalk.</p>
Autumn 2012 (No 21)	<p>Barry Bateman takes over the role of editor of the newsletter from Sandy Norman.</p> <p>There was a write-up on the successful Jubilee Celebrations around the ward, including one in Boleyn Drive and the multi-street party held in St Julian's Road.</p> <p>We report on the successful Larks in the Park at the Marlborough Pavilion, attended by over 300.</p> <p>Rebecca gives a glowing report on the Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre.</p> <p>We announce forthcoming events, including an evening bat walk, a Mediation Hertfordshire Conflict Resolution Workshop, the annual history walk and the Oxfam Annual Herts Hike.</p> <p>The book was successfully launched in May at Sopwell House Hotel where 60</p>

	<p>people attended, including our MP, Anne Main.</p> <p>In June, children from St Peter's School visit the willow tunnel and learn the art of willow weaving, supported by volunteers from SRA and officers from SADC.</p> <p>Sandy reports on the privilege of attending the Mayor-making ceremony when Sopwell's very own Councillor Eileen Harris was elevated to the mayoralty.</p>
<p>Christmas 2012 (No 22)</p>	<p>We report on the fascinating and well attended bat walk held in September organised and led by Countryside Management.</p> <p>Chris Pudsey led us on our annual history walk, taking us across the ward's abundant farmland footpaths. The walk was based on Sandy's book.</p> <p>Abbots Avenue benefits from the planting of more daffodil bulbs.</p> <p>We announce the official opening of St Julian's Church Community Café to take place in November.</p> <p>St Stephen's Church along with St Julian's Church announce their respective Christmas fairs, whilst Sandy has a book signing at Waterstones in November.</p> <p>Chris Pudsey gives the book and the history project a great plug and announces breaking news that we have been awarded a grant to widen the scope of the project – but more on this in the next newsletter!</p>
<p>Spring 2013 (No 23)</p>	<p>Our super celebratory glorious colour issue! We are thrilled to announce that Sandy's tremendous initiative has won SRA an Heritage Lottery Grant of £10,000 to continue work on the Sopwell Project. We announce our project launch party to be combined with SRA's 10th birthday – to be held on 18th May.</p> <p>We reported on the work to the willow tunnel which took place on a cold February day.</p> <p>Catherine Ross introduces Sopwell residents to Transition St Albans.</p> <p>We advertise the cookery workshop being held by St Albans Adult & Community Learning Team and the St Albans Arc & Arc's search for information about St Albans during World War I.</p> <p>The annual litter pick took place in April.</p> <p>We have our own Sits Vac column seeking new volunteers to help run SRA.</p>