

Sopwell Residents Association

Annual report 2014/15

Committee structure and changes

Rob Sharman and Ros Poor have left the committee. We thank them for their input over the years. We now have four vacancies. Please come forward if you would like to help.

The following people are putting themselves forward for election/re-election:

Barry Bateman,
Jack Hill,
Willem Hofland,
Mark James,
Sandy Norman,
Martin Reed,
Adelle Stapleton,
Dom Tang,
Jennifer Taylor,
Rick Taylor
Peter Wares.

The following are prepared to be re-elected as officers:

Chairperson: Rick Taylor
Vice Chairperson: *vacant*
Treasurer: Dom Tang
Minutes Secretary: Jennifer Taylor
Admin Secretary: *vacant*

We still need a Vice Chairperson and an Admin Secretary. Sandy Norman is still in the Acting role and would like to shed this job to concentrate wholly on the More Memories Project and other matters.

Activities and events

Sopwell Memories Project

The project finished officially at the end of August. The museum of St Albans (MOSTA) allowed us to use their community room for the whole month of August to display our material and the website. This was a great success. We also held a celebration party in the museum on the

10th August to thank all those who took part in the project and the mayor, Councillor Geoff Harrison officially opened the display and launched the website: www.sopwellmemories.org.uk.

The website has been well used. To date 28,000 people have viewed the site. Information is still being added although not as frequently as when the project was in full swing. Sandy Norman has written several blog posts about web updates.

We produced a set of five history walk leaflets (5 x 200) as part of the project. These are free and are available from the tourist information centre and from us. They have been very successful and we have had to reprint.

Since last year, Sandy Norman has given three presentations to local groups about the project.

This year we have sold 87 copies of *Sopwell: a history and collection of memories*, 20 of which went to Waterstones and 24 to MOSTA. We have set up a PayPal account so they can be ordered online but we have only had a few orders so far. We still have many more to shift. All monies received goes towards community projects and activities.

Walks

A bat walk was held on 28th August starting in the Nunnery Open Space.

Eileen Harris led a history walk with the focus on World War 1 on 7th September. This was repeated on 12th April this year.

Litter pick

The annual litter pick was held on 23rd March. Several bags were picked which shows that people are still dropping tons of litter each year.

Disabled ramp to the river

To improve access to the Nunnery Open space for people with buggies, wheelchairs or mobility vehicles, contractors built a ramp off Cottonmill Lane by the bridge and 200 metres of the River Ver Trail path was surfaced. This now joins up the new ramp from Cottonmill Lane with the existing hard surfaced path which exists by the boardwalk. The path was finished in August. The SRA was instrumental in securing a community grant of £5,000 towards the cost.

Willow tunnel

Due to the lack of volunteers, we are having to pay for Hazel Godfrey, the willow designer, to maintain the willow tunnel. It is looking good despite a poor start to the maintenance last year because of flooding, and

vandals who hacked at it this March. Countryside Management Services sent a team of volunteers to cut back some of the overhanging willow trees which is making the tunnel list to the right looking for the light. Regular work needs to be done on this.

Bulb planting

Our team of planters planted two bags of bulbs in the autumn in the same place as the previous year. The result was another magnificent display of daffodils in Cottonmill Lane on the bridge over the Alban Way.

Conferences and meetings

- We have held five committee meetings during the year.
- Sandy Norman attended two and Rick Taylor attended one of the meetings of the Combined Group of Residents Associations.
- Rick Taylor attended four meetings of the City and Neighbourhoods Committee of St Albans City and District Council.
- Sandy Norman attended the Smallford Station Project celebration at the University of Herts on 22nd October
- Sandy Norman and Barry Bateman attended the St Albans Local History Conference on 25th October.
- Sandy Norman and Jack Hill attended two meetings of the Friends of Sopwell Nunnery Open Space Management Group
- Liz Klir and Rick Taylor attended a thank you party for volunteer groups last December at the House of Commons hosted by Anne Main MP.

Communications We have produced two newsletters in the past year. Thank you to our happy band of newsletter deliverers. Our website www.sopwell.org.uk is managed and updated regularly thanks to Peter Segers.

Sandy Norman
April 2015