

# Annual report 2017/18

## Activities and events

### Walks

Maggy Douglas started off the new term by leading 13 Sopwell residents (and a few from Park Street) on a walk around the fields and footpaths of Sopwell on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2017. The circular route started at Mandeville School, went through Hedges Farm and back via Goreham Drive and Abbots Avenue.

She also then finished the year with a “Sopwell Secrets” walk as part of the Sustainable St Albans week, leading a group of 27 from the Nunnery Green Space, taking in local sights such as Sir Richard Lee’s ruins, the willow tunnel, the mighty cedar tree and the pre-fabs. The weather held and it was a wonderful way to spend the afternoon.

### Willow tunnel

Maggy and Barry have done a super job on maintaining the willow tunnel at the back of the Nunnery Green Space keeping it looking spruce. Maggy’s walk went through the tunnel on the last Sunday in April.

### Sopwell Project

Sandy Norman has continued to do a marvellous job of chronicling the local history, which can be found on the site [www.sopwellmemories.org.uk](http://www.sopwellmemories.org.uk). The latest post is on Betty Entwhistle house, from its opening in the 1970s to its demolition last year.

The SRA held a Charity Market stall in the city centre on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017. There were displays of local history, and the committee gave away over 100 of ex-officio committee member Sandy’s wonderful and informative book *Sopwell: a history and collection of memories*. Copies of the book can be purchased from Waterstones or via the website.

The SRA also supports the proposed St Albans Market Project, aiming to record the oral history of the city centre market.

## Communications

### Web communications

Sopwell Residents Association’s Facebook page has been going strong for over a year now, thanks to Janet Charles. The page now has over 300 members and has been a useful way to publicise events. Thank you also to Peter Segers who manages the SRA’s web page [www.sopwell.org.uk](http://www.sopwell.org.uk).

### Newsletter

Two newsletters are produced each year, keeping residents abreast of local events and sent out to all 3,000 residents of Sopwell. Thanks to Barry Bateman (editor), Maggy Douglas (distribution co-ordinator) and the team of local volunteers who deliver the newsletters, who all did a great job as usual. If you are interested in writing an article for the next newsletter or hiring advertising space, then please contact Barry Bateman. Anyone able to help deliver the newsletters, please contact the SRA Secretary on [info@sopwell.org.uk](mailto:info@sopwell.org.uk).

### Consultations and meetings

There’s been much proposed change in the last year, and the SRA committee (both individually and collectively) have contributed to, amongst others, consultations including The Local Plan 2018; St Albans District Council Parking Workshop; the Sopwell Nunnery Greenspace Action Plan; and the River Ver Improvement Project. In addition:

- We have held six committee meetings during the year.
- Rick Taylor attended meetings of the Combined Group of Residents Associations.
- Rick Taylor attended meetings of the City and Neighbourhoods Committee of St Albans City and District Council.
- Rick Taylor and Janet Charles attended Ward Co-ordinators meetings of St Albans and District Neighbourhood Ward Co-ordinators.
- Willem Hofland has attended meetings of the Bus Users Forum.
- Willem Hofland has attended meetings of the Housing Consultative Forum.

### **Other local organisations**

**Sopwell Litter Pickers:** We thank Holly Morris for taking over the annual litter pick and expanding it into a fantastically run monthly event, advertised on the group's Facebook page. The local area looks much cleaner as a result.

**Cottonmill and Sopwell Hub (C.A.S.H.):** We acknowledge the hard work of Janet Charles and Michelle Mackenzie in raising the local need for a community hub and fully support them in their efforts.

## **Committee Structure and Changes**

### **Stepping down**

Thanks to all the work and effort put in by the committee over the past year. The following are standing down:

- Rick Taylor is standing down as Chairperson.
- Mark James is standing down as Treasurer.
- Jennifer Taylor is standing down as Minutes Secretary and from the Committee.
- Maggy Douglas is standing down as newsletter distributor and walk leader and from the Committee.

### **Standing for Committee**

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

Barry Bateman, Janet Charles, Jo Cooney, Jack Hill, Willem Hofland, Gail Jackson, Mark James, Karen Lilly, Steve Peters, Rick Taylor.

The following are prepared to be elected as officers:

Chairperson: Janet Charles

Vice Chairperson: Barry Bateman

Treasurer: Jo Cooney

Secretary: Karen Lilly

Sandy Norman, Peter Wares and Peter Segers are filling ex-officio support roles to the committee.

Any Sopwell resident is entitled to stand at the AGM for any office mentioned above. Please let us know if you are interested in joining the committee and/or standing for a role.

Jo Cooney     May 2018