

SOPWELL

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

making Sopwell a better place



Great British Spring Clean

Thank you to everyone who turned up to the annual litter pick at the beginning of March, which we undertook as part of the Great British Spring Clean. The rain held off long enough for us to collect around 25 bags of rubbish and an old mattress!

You can help by reporting fly-tipping, dumped rubbish or dog fouling to St Albans District Council at a.cleanerdistrict@stalbans.gov.uk.

Sign up to our Facebook page to be appraised of future Sopwell Residents Association events.



A Host of Golden Daffodils



Keep an eye out for the beautiful daffodils and crocuses that are starting to bloom in the area. The Residents Association replanted several areas in October (including the end of Berners Drive and Grindcobbe, Wilshere Avenue, and Tavistock Avenue), and you can also see the continuing results of previous years' efforts. The children of Old London Road nursery also planted a line of plants between the trees on Riverside Road, with help of a friendly local policeman. We used a mixture of daffodil bulb types this time, so see how many colour variations you can spot as you walk

around the area.

Please don't pick any of the planted daffodils but if you do buy yourself a bouquet to bring a bit of spring colour into your home, be aware that daffodils are poisonous to both pets and other plants. If you don't want your arrangement to wilt, the daffodils need to be kept separate or soaked for as long as possible before combining with other flowers.

(above articles by Jo Barnsley SRA Secretary)

Contents

G.B Spring Clean	P1
Golden Daffodils	P1
Useful Contacts	P1
Sustainable St Albans	P2
Growing up in St Albans	P3
New Youth Club	P3
New Youth Association	P3
Editorial	P3
SRA Stall	P3
Good Neighbours Advert	P4
SRA AGM	P4
Next Edition	P4
Sopwell Walk	P4
Willow Tunnel	P4
Community Cafe	P4
Volunteers Needed	P4

Useful Contacts

District Councillor Eileen Harris:
831611:
eileenharris555@btinternet.com
District Councillor Iain Grant:
811286:
cllr.i.grant@stalbans.gov.uk
District Councillor Janet Smith:
763907:
cllr.j.smith@stalbans.gov.uk
County Councillor Sandy Walkington:
07802 177317
sandywalkington@btinternet.com
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

Sustainable St Albans

REMEMBER TONKA TOYS? . . . Well, they've got some super, super-sized ones at the Agrivert Ltd site at South Mimms, where they deal with all of Sopwell's green waste.

A visit to the site during Sustainable St Albans Week 2016 was absolutely

fascinating. Just six men, with their big yellow scoopers and a straddle turner, plus the all-important grading machine, make tonnes of lovely compost out of the grass, leaves, and prunings from our green bins. In summer, they take in over 300 tonnes of green waste from 5 District Councils,



including St Albans, and turn it into compost of a standard suitable for agricultural purposes - supplying nutrient and structure to local farmers' fields. Winter input to the process is reduced but 150 tonnes of green waste a day still keeps the plant busy and although the composting process is a bit slower because of the cold weather, the end product is just as good.

Believe it or not, the Agrivert team knows exactly what we, in Sopwell, have been putting into our green wheelie bins! Every lorry-load of green waste is checked in, tipped out into a huge bay, then piled neatly into one of the 15 large, long, insulated composting tunnels to meet optimum width and height requirements for good composting. Air is pulsed through each long heap to speed composting and the temperature is monitored to ensure that bugs and weed seeds are killed and as a means of ascertaining when the composting bacteria have slowed in their work. This process is repeated in a second set of tunnels which remixes the material, enlivening the bacterial activity involved in composting process, and further refining the product. It is very cosy in the composting tunnels, and not at all smelly.

However, after the warm-up comes the cool down! The almost finished compost is stacked in long piles outside where a wonderful machine called a 'straddle-turner' does what it says it will. Its wheels go each side of the long heaps and the working part of the machine straddles the compost, giving it a good turn over and mix about, as the driver takes the machine along the piles. At this stage large sticks and roots, and far too many alien items remain in the compost.

The sifter and grader is the last machine employed in

Agrivert's fleet. Foreign bodies, which should not have been in the green bins to start with, and large odds bits of uncomposted material are separated out of the finished product, which is lovely stuff, all ready for the farmers' fields. Whilst the old shirts and shoes, etc.

removed from the compost are sent for landfill the 'oversize' woody material which has been sifted out is sent back to the beginning of the process where it is useful in producing air pockets amongst the more compacted green waste, such as grass clippings, to help speed the next batch of composting. They don't waste much at Agrivert! With their 'green waste in and great compost out' process the Agrivert site at South Mimms is a local asset we should all be proud of.

It would be even better if we were all A* students when it comes to what we put in our bins. It was sad to see so many plastic bags, and other strange foreign bodies such as old shirts, scarves, shoes and DIY bits and bobs all mixed in with the lovely dark brown, peaty-smelling, compost.

Food waste, too, causes problems at the plant because special monitoring is necessary to ensure no e-coli or salmonella gets from the bins back to us and our vulnerable loved ones. There's better use for food waste than green bin compost, anyway. The new anaerobic digester plant at South Mimms deals effectively with the health risk and turns our mouldy leftovers, peel, fat, chicken bones and fish skin into a significant amount of electricity plus what they call 'rocket-fuel' (especially nutrient-rich compost) for farmland.

With only kitchen waste in the caddy and only garden waste in the big green wheelie bin, we can do our bit to satisfy the anaerobic digester's appetite and ensure the Agrivert men and their Tonka Toys are even happier in their work.

Liz Sefton

**SRA AGM
9th May
at 7.30pm
Mandeville
School**

I came to St Albans just before the war, as a baby, when my father's work brought him here, and my first memory is sitting in a pushchair outside the newsagents opposite what is now the Jubilee Centre in Catherine Street.

I grew up believing war, as it appeared to a small child in England, was natural. There was the recurring fear engendered by air raid warning sirens, and relief by the following "all clear". I don't recall any bombs dropping.

Other memories particularly stand out:

A huge machine gun on public display outside the Town Hall.

Riding on a bus with window netting. I remember the actual place as Sandridge High Street, by Hopkins Crescent.

Practising with gas masks at school. We children happily did this, and without fear, as a diversion from lessons.

Most poignantly, visiting with my mother and other neighbours, a couple whose airman son had been reported missing. I remember the parents sitting silently, and none of the visitors speaking. Sadly, it turned out that the son had died.

I went to Garden Fields School, then housed at what is now the Jubilee Centre in Catherine Street. Conditions may have been primitive by today's standards, but the children were kept warm, and as reasonably happy as possible. My main grouch, to this day, is being expected to learn to knit(!!) at the age of 5. I very firmly rejected all attempts at this tuition!

I also, remember probably post-war, German prisoners of war clearing snow. On my way to school, I silently exchanged searching, but not unfriendly, looks with one young soldier. We wanted to speak, but couldn't.

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Rick Taylor (chair of the SRA)

New Youth Club in Sopwell

We know that young people in the area have been asking for more things to do – so we are pleased to announce that a new youth club is starting up in the Cottonmill area of Sopwell. The club will be run by Hertfordshire Youth Connexions Service. It opens on Tuesday 18 April and will run from 5pm – 8pm at the Marlborough Pavilion, (Old Oak Lane) off Cottonmill Lane AL1 2.

All young people aged 13-19 years (to 24 years for young people with learning disabilities) are welcome. Please encourage young people that you know to go along and join in. The Marlborough Pavilion is set in a lovely park with a Multi-use Games Area alongside. If you want more information please call Youth Connexions on Tel: 01442 454060

Gail Jackson

Welcome to our 31st edition of your newsletter. As you can see, a lot has been happening in Sopwell in the past six months or so as more and more people get involved in their local area and that is what I would like to draw your attention to if I may.

We survive as an association because there are people willing to make the effort to contribute in what ever way they can for the sake of their local area but we need more volunteers to help keep our SRA going. Our newsletter distribution coordinator is desperate for new deliverers and as we only publish twice a year, it is not an arduous task. So if you would be willing to help deliver our newsletter, please, please get in touch with us at:

info@sopwell.org.uk

it will be very much appreciated. Thank you.

Barry Bateman (Editor)

St Albans Community Youth Association

Michael, a Sopwell resident, has formed a group that aims to get more young people's activities happening in St Albans. Michael formed the group because young people in his neighbourhood were saying that there is nothing for them to do. There have been four community meetings, with up to 30 people attending including young people who say they 'just want somewhere to go'. A steering group has now formed to create a constituted group that will push to get more youth provision in Sopwell and across St Albans.

For more information or if you want to get involved, please contact the group secretary by email:

stalbansyouthgroupcommittee@gmail.com

June Residents Association Stall

We look forward to seeing you at the Sopwell Residents Association charity stall on Saturday 3rd June 2017. The Residents Association will be giving away copies of the book "Sopwell: a history and collection of memories" written by former resident Sandy Norman. This is a fascinating read for anyone from the area, combining local photographs, research and interviews to give a comprehensive history of where we live. Sandy will also be present for some of the day to sign copies of her book.



ST ALBANS GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

— St Albans 830713 —

Could you join local volunteers in the **St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme** who have been making a difference to the lives of hundreds of local people for over **35 years**?

We are currently seeking new drivers to escort people to medical appointments, the shops, visits to friends/family and mileage allowance is paid. The volunteers tell us which days they are available and how often they wish to help. We also need volunteers to receive telephone calls (between 9am and 1pm) in their own homes just one day a month to match the client's needs with the services our volunteers offer and telephone expenses will be paid. A friendly telephone manner, clear handwriting and a desire to help others is all that is required and training will be given.

We hope to continue our service to the local community and would welcome your help in a scheme which is much appreciated by so many. Please telephone the Scheme on **St Albans 830713** to find out more or visit our website: **www.sagns.org**

Company No: 367149
Registered Charity No: 1074638

Enjoy a walk in Sopwell

Sunday, 14 May, 2.30pm

Come and join us for a free walk through the fields, by the river and along the streets of Sopwell. It's an easy guided stroll of 2.5 miles. Meet outside Mandeville School, Mandeville Drive AL1 2LE.

Willow Tunnel



Our willow tunnel got its annual spring pruning recently and although Maggy and I would have welcomed some help we managed to trim the willow back and look forward to seeing the tunnel spring into life again. Do come down

and take a look.

Community Cafe

The Community Cafe at St. Julian's has now been running for some time now. It opens every Thursday from 10:30 to 2:30, and offers tea, coffee, cake (usually home made) and hot snacks like toasties, bacon baps and filled jacket potatoes.

The cafe is run by volunteers, and all profits go to charities selected by customers. If you want to go on the rota to help, please ask! It has been inspected by the District Council, and awarded five stars - the highest possible rating.

Computers are available for use by anyone: Wi-Fi and internet access is free. One-to-one computer tuition, to meet individual needs, can be booked: phone 862598 to book or for more information.

SRA Annual General Meeting

On the 9th May at 7.30pm, the SRA will hold its annual general meeting at Mandeville school. Our guest speaker will be Dave Horton from the Abbey Flyer group, so please put the date in your diary and come along. Refreshments will be available

(Editor)

Next Edition

The next edition will be out next Autumn. If you have any items for inclusion or you wish to advertise, please go to the website and leave a message. Advertisement charges: £50 for half a page and £25 for a quarter page.

Volunteers Needed

As always volunteers are always welcome and if you feel you could help maybe keeping our willow tunnel trimmed or delivering our newsletter or planting bulbs, please let us know either via our new Facebook page or our email address :

info@sopwell.org.uk