



## St Stephen's Residents' Association Newsletter: Autumn 2016

It has been a very busy six months since the last edition of the newsletter during which time several of St Stephen's Residents' Association Committee's plans have come to fruition. I hope that you have noticed or even sat on one (or both) of the two **new benches** now installed next to the footpath across Manwood Green leading to the Church Hall and opposite the children's park in St Stephen's Church field on the St Stephen's Road side. Canterbury City Council has agreed to fund the cost of one of these seats and we were lucky enough to be successful in an application to County Councillor Graham Gibbens for some funding from his Member Grant towards the cost of the benches which was then topped up from St Stephen's Residents' Association funds.

We were fortunate to have a fine, if rather breezy day for our first '**Jumble Trail**' which involved an incredible thirty-three stalls being set up in residents' garages and drives to sell all sorts of items including hand-made quilts, quilled cards and art work, toys, books, toiletries, bric-a-brac, clothes, plants, tombola, cakes and more. Feedback about the trail was very positive, especially with regard to its success as a social event, enabling residents to get to know each other. This is the first of a series of community events, with an open garden trail planned to take place next year. The proceeds from the events will be used to extend our programme of improvements to the local environment. Many more Spring bulbs were planted this year, as well as a new flowering cherry tree outside the Manwood Alms-houses. We have plans to plant more bulbs and shrubs and would like to hear from residents about any neglected areas which could benefit from a little care and attention.

### **Annual General Meeting**

I would like to remind you about the St Stephen's Residents' Association **AGM** which will take place at **7.30pm** on **Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November** in **St Stephen's Church Hall**. This will be an opportunity to hear about everything that has been happening over the last year and receive brief updates from County Councillor Graham Gibbens about his Member Grant Fund and Councillor Terry Westgate on his new Litter Liaison role. We do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend this event as it offers an opportunity to meet neighbours, ask questions and put forward your ideas for new initiatives that could be undertaken by the Association. We received some really good suggestions at the last AGM, as a result of which the following ideas have been implemented or are currently under way:

- Manwood Green and Tyler Close (independently) were both entered into the Royal Horticultural Society's '**It's Your Neighbourhood**' scheme, the non-competitive part of the South and South East in Bloom competition that offers advice about suitable planting for flowerbeds. A judge who visited in June was impressed by both areas and thought Tyler Close to be 'Advancing' and Manwood Green to be 'Thriving' with regard to improvements to their environments.
- Residents of **Tyler Close** have been helped by the 'Men of Kent' to plant an apple tree beside the picnic tables in their central green area. Wild flower seeds, daffodil bulbs and shrubs have also been planted to make a very attractive open area.
- A small group of volunteers collected eleven bags of rubbish on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March as part of the '**Clean for the Queen**' campaign. Odd finds included several socks, gloves, an umbrella and a metal tape measure. As a result of our litter picking efforts in St Stephen's Church Field and Green, around the St Stephen's level crossing and along a network of local roads that included St Stephen's Road from the Kingsmead roundabout up to Stephen's Hill, Manwood Avenue and the Terrace, the district looked noticeably more attractive for a while.
- The proposed **grass verge and footway parking ban** for St Stephen's Green and Hales Drive, suggested by a resident at the last AGM was agreed at the Joint Transportation Board meeting at the end of June where representatives from SSRA put forward the case for restricting parking on grass verges in these areas.
- As a result of concern expressed by a resident at last year's AGM about **noise disturbances on Sunday afternoons** it has been suggested that residents should try a voluntary curb on the use of lawn mowers and other noisy equipment at this time, if they feel able to do this.
- The **University of Kent Masterplan** consultation is available to view on the University's website at [www.kent.ac.uk/masterplan](http://www.kent.ac.uk/masterplan) . The masterplan provides a blueprint for the university's development over the next 50 years which aims to provide improved physical, economic and cultural connections with the city of Canterbury. The University would like feedback from the local community during the three stages of consultation about the plan.
- A '**No Smoking**' sign has been installed in the play area of St Stephen's Church Field funded by County Councillor Graham Gibbens' Member Grant money which is used to support local community and highway activities.
- Graham Gibbens' **Annual Residents' Meeting** for members of the public living in the area that he represents as a County Councillor will be taking place on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October at 7.00pm in All Saints Church in Military Road.

- Kerry Sheffield from Community Safety keeps a record of all new graffiti 'tags' as part of a graffiti audit that takes place every month. 'Tags' are logged on a map and shared with Police for intelligence to action prosecutions. If you see any new 'tags' in your neighbourhood please let Kerry know at [Kerry.sheffield@canterbury.gov.uk](mailto:Kerry.sheffield@canterbury.gov.uk). Previous audits confirm that some graffiti has now been removed.
- For latest news and to contact us please see our website [www.ststephensra.org](http://www.ststephensra.org) or check our Facebook page at St Stephen's Residents' Association.

With all good wishes, **Jennifer Holland**

### **Neighbourhood Watch**

In the St. Stephen's area we are very fortunate to have a minimum of reports about burglaries, thefts and misdemeanours. Our biggest concern is people trying to obtain our bank and personal details mainly by phone purporting to be from a whole range of utilities and services from TV insurance, computer failure to claiming to be from the post code lottery. The simple message is, do not give your details over the phone, do not check their credentials by ringing the number they give you but check by calling the relevant organisation on a number you have for them or from directory enquiries.

### **Tony Whiting**

#### **Treasurer's Report**

The Association's funds remain at a healthy level with the present annual subscription per household costing £3.00. Over the last year we have paid for the cost of printing newsletters for circulation at regular intervals. Efforts continue to make St Stephen's an even more attractive environment - a widespread daffodil-planting exercise took place earlier in the year and assistance has been given to improvement of the communal area of Tyler Close with the support of KCC.

### **Terry Patten**

#### **Kingsmead field**

There was a very good turn-out at the AGM and we really valued the level of interest and engagement which everyone showed. The key outcome of the meeting was the approval of the committee's resolution to accept the Council's compromise proposal for the field.

In case you are not up to date with developments, the Council has indicated its intention to voluntarily designate Village Green status for the majority of the field (the 80%) in return for

our acceptance of limited residential development on the rear 20%. At the AGM, we outlined the advantages and disadvantages of accepting the Council's offer and, after a full and open discussion, agreed that it would be wise to accept it. This decision was difficult for many of us as we have campaigned long and hard to protect the entire field. Our reason for accepting it was the knowledge that Village Green status will provide the only certain guarantee of protecting the majority of the field for decades to come. The Council's package also includes the immediate release of funding for key improvements to the 80%, such as the installation of an all-weather footpath around the edge of the field.

Council officers will now draw up a report, containing the compromise proposal, and this will be presented as part of the September/October cycle of Council meetings. If the proposal is adopted by councillors, work will commence on the installation of a foot path and picnic tables in the autumn. Once this is complete, the 80% will be designated as a Village Green - hopefully in time for the daffodil season next spring!

One other thing to add is that we've been busy creating a wildflower meadow on the field over the last two months as the results of last autumn's consultation showed that the most popular suggestion for enhancing the field was the creation of a wildflower meadow. Over 120 local residents have taken part in the sowing, and visitors to the field have enjoyed a wonderful display of wildflowers during the summer.

## **Higher Education Impact Review**

In 2015, the city council established a student impact review, now known as a higher education impact review. The purpose was to investigate both the positive and negative impacts of Canterbury's three universities and to come up with proposals for how to deal with the negative, and increase the positive aspects.

The first stakeholder conference took place in the Westgate Hall in February, to which delegates were invited from local resident associations. Three theme groups were set up to gather evidence separately on the Social, Physical and Economic Impacts. The three groups collected data and presented their findings at a second stakeholder conference in June.

So far, the Theme Groups and the two Stakeholder Conferences have been good exercises in working together, involving a wide range of representatives. The big question now is: will they produce effective recommendations? A draft report will be produced in July, and there will then be consultation on it in August and early September. We shall notify you by email when the consultation period is announced, or you can check on the council's website.

## **Stakeholder meetings with Linkcity (Previously Bouygues)**

A Stakeholder group comprising representatives from a number of local resident and community groups, the Canterbury Heritage and Design Forum, and the Canterbury Society, have now met twice with the developers for the Serco/Old Coach Park site on Kingsmead Rd.

At our latest meeting the group was updated on the changes which have been made to the masterplan. We are encouraged that several recommendations made by us, and by residents who attended the exhibition/consultation in October 2015 have been acted upon, including such things as a reorientation of the student accommodation so that it now faces away from the river and Kingsbrook Park. Another concern was the potential for a funnel effect for noise from the public square; this potential has been mitigated by creating a curved ascending walkway leading to the square. Other changes of note are:

- The bowling alley has been excluded from the plan
- The corner near Sainsbury's roundabout will now be larger, with more scope for planting
- Office space will be created on the upper levels of the buildings on the Sturry Rd corner
- Frontages onto Sturry Rd would be shops, including a convenience store, and the frontages onto the public square will be for cafes and restaurants. It is also intended that the square could be used as a seasonal ice skating rink
- It is possible that a boathouse could be built on the riverbank to provide an opportunity for kayaking.

In general, landscaping will be used to create an overall green ambience, with a strong avenue of trees along Kingsmead Rd and round into Sturry Rd. Climbing plants will be used on some of the vertical facades, including the car park and student accommodation.

Concerns still exist about the impact of extra traffic, congestion and reduced air quality. These issues do need to be addressed more fully, and the stakeholder group is looking towards meeting with officers and councillors from both the city and county councils. Further information may be sought by going to the following website

<http://www.canterburyriverside.co.uk/>

**Sue Langdown**

## **Members' Report**

We have over 200 members and it has been a real pleasure to send out updates of news and events. Members have been so responsive when others have needed help such as equipment for post-operative patients, sitting with a partner who suffers from dementia and help with various other problems as they have arisen, so many thanks to you all. The tradesmen list has been popular and I hope anyone who has good or bad experiences will let me know so that I can keep it up to date.

My only concern has been deciding when to send you all details of scams and criminal activity. I worry that members will be fearful whereas what we need is to be careful and always remember that there are far more good people out there than bad ones.

## **Pauline Walters**

### **Friends of Riverside**

I have recently become the association's representative of a little known but important group called "Friends of the Riverside". It is a committee of about 12 members made up of representatives from residents' associations, the Canterbury society, CCC, the Environment Agency, and some professionals whose job it is to care for the river and associated areas.

As you know our local river, the Great Stour, divides into 2 at Thanington with one arm passing the Westgate Towers and the other under the Kingsbridge, creating a series of some strangely named islands.

The river is very important to the city and "The Friends of the Riverside" cover many aspects of the river and its surrounds.

## **Ron Waters**