



St Stephen's Residents' Association Newsletter: Spring 2018

www.ststephensra.org Facebook: St Stephen's Residents' Association

Thanks to everyone who attended the SSRA **AGM in November** where they were able to listen to inspiring accounts of the local Community Support Service run by Tessa Ivory, and the Westgate Parks and Our Stour projects co-ordinated by Lauren Baker. With days now getting longer and welcome signs of spring all around us after the extreme weather conditions that we experienced at the beginning of March, the St Stephen's Residents' Association committee is looking forward to another eventful year. There are several planned dates for your diaries. Following the successful '**Get started with the Veg!**' event held on **Saturday 24th March** many members will be growing potatoes, courgettes, dwarf beans and sunflowers in their gardens. The next meeting of the **Gardening Interest Group** will be a '**Plant Meet Up**' being held from 10.30-12.00 mid-day on **Saturday 19th May** in Jenny Robson's garden at 118 St Stephens Road when families will be asked to bring along surplus plants and swap them. Alternatively, people can source plants for a small donation. The extremely successful **Open Gardens Day** last year will be repeated on **Sunday 24th June** when gardens in St Stephen's Road, Hill, Close, Court and Green, Tyler Close and Hales Drive will be open for visitors. Finally, Pauline has offered to repeat the excellent **Show and Sale of Arts and Crafts** on **Saturday 27th November** in St Stephen's Church Hall and I expect will be looking for stall holders for this very enjoyable event.

Annual subscriptions are due:

Annual subs of **three pounds** are due in April and we would ask you to deliver them to your street rep. in the next few weeks. These are used to fund hall hire for meetings, printing costs for the newsletter, subscription costs for the Association of Canterbury Residents' Associations and the Canterbury Society; refreshments for the AGM and social events and a contribution towards maintenance of our website.

Other news:

- A new Community Support Officer (students) has been appointed to lead on communication with residents in student rich areas. Sarah Osborne is based in the

Community Safety department of Canterbury City Council with a remit to deal with issues between residents and students. However, any problems should be reported initially through the University website and should not go straight to Sarah. It is interesting to learn from the University of Kent that the highest number of University related complaints from the local community in 2016-17 (56 in total) were from the wider St Stephen's area that includes Hales Place and the St Michael's Road area. These were dealt with via the help of schemes such as the Street Marshall Scheme, Student Community Champions and Student House Ambassadors that are targeted at areas with high student numbers.

- Thanks go to our County Councillor Graham Gibbens, again, for using his Members' Grant to fund the cost of a second replacement tree at the entrance to St Stephen's Court. We hope that the new tree will be another flowering hawthorn, Frosted Thorn, the same as the first which displayed a profuse crop of red berries last autumn.
- Some residents who attended the SSRA AGM in November expressed concern about vehicles parked inconsiderately in the roads around St Stephen's School. They wanted to know how many penalty charge notices had been issued recently in Hales Drive and The Terrace. Having asked the 'Parking Enforcement' department at Canterbury City Council we have been informed that three PCNs were issued at Hales Drive between the 1st November 2017 and 31st January 2018 and none at The Terrace. Perhaps it's time to ask Parking Enforcement again if they can keep an eye on the area outside St Stephen's School.
- Residents may be interested to know when KCC's grass verge cutting programme is planned for the coming year:

Urban Grass Cuts, 6 per annum will take place between the following dates

Cut No	Earliest allowable date	Date to be completed by
UG1	03 April	04 May
UG2	08 May	08 June
UG3	13 June	13 July
UG4	18 July	17 Aug
UG5	28 Aug	27 Sept
UG6	02 Oct	01 Nov

With all good wishes - **Jennifer Holland**

Visit to Bus Company Island (Autumn 2017)

Our visit to Bus Company Island last year was attended by sixteen eager members and friends but it was a little disappointing, as the promised strimming of the footpaths did not happen, therefore some parts of the island were inaccessible.

What is Bus Company Island? For those of you who don't know, it is a piece of land situated between The Causeway and Kingsmead School Field, and the two rivers. The only permanent access is via the bridge behind Dennes Mill retirement flats. The reason for the unusual name is that it was once owned by the local East Kent Bus Company and was purchased from them by the City Council some years ago, to be kept as a nature reserve. There is a pond containing great-crested newts, but it also provides a habitat for reptiles such as grass snakes and slow worms.

When the council first acquired the site, there was a great deal of interest, both by the council's environmental department and the Residents' Association. The council was responsible for maintenance, while the RA planted wild flowers etc. Unfortunately, council cuts have meant that they no longer provide maintenance which is now carried out by a group of volunteers from Friends of the River Stour who cut back the vegetation twice a year. The RA is still involved as we have two members who are key holders and who carry out regular checks for vandalism and damage. This year we hope to have our members' visit after the first cut, and when the trees are in blossom, which should be in late April or early May. Members will be informed of the exact date, after the Friends of the Riverside have completed the spring maintenance work.

Ron Waters

SSRA Gardening Interest Group

Our St Stephen's Gardening Interest Group is looking forward to the year ahead in the garden. We are a very informal group open to all residents in St Stephen's whether you are a new or experienced gardener. The idea is that we come together to share ideas and frustrations about gardening. We are all learning together and sharing skills. Most of us learn about gardening by talking to other gardeners. Children and families are very welcome and all our events aim to encourage children to take up gardening.

Do you have spare plants in your garden? If you are splitting plants in your garden why not think about potting up the spare plants? If they can be saved, why not bring them to the 'Plant Meet Up' (see below) so that they can go into the plant sharing scheme.

Are you interested in small wildlife ponds? This year the RSPB is encouraging gardeners to create wildlife friendly gardens. They have a suggestion for a **mini** wildlife pond, made from a washing up bowl, which can be a haven for frogs, toads and insect life. Even a mini-pond can be a hazard for small children so safe positioning of the bowl is essential. There are step by step instructions together with a video and advice on care of the mini pond on the RSPB website. <https://ww2.rspb.org.uk/> Search for 'Create a mini pond'.

Are you interested in attracting insects and encouraging biodiversity in the garden? The RSPB have some great ideas. Search for the bug hotel (made from waste or recycled materials) on the RSPB website. This is suitable for small or large gardens and a great activity for children.

Our Events:

Events are hosted in gardens and in 2017, they were well supported. Details of the venue are e-mailed to SSRA members. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Saturday 19th May 2018 10.30 to 12.00: 'Plant Meet Up'

This is an opportunity to swap plants, bring along spare plants or make a donation for a plant. Remember to save your spare plants. Keep a look out for announcements of our events throughout the year. **Jenny Robson and Sue Herivel.**

River Dipping activity

After her presentation at our AGM in November, Lauren Baker offered to provide a **River Dipping and Arts and Craft Session** for the children from the St Stephen's district. If you have ever been to one of these sessions, or any events held at the Westgate Parks, you will know these are always educational, interesting and **fun**. River Dipping involves fishing out river life and wildlife from the River Stour and finding out just what wriggly creatures lurk right under our noses. Children and young people really enjoy this and it will be another opportunity to explore an area and its wildlife right on our doorstep. Lauren is DBS checked but there will also be DBS checked Canterbury Kids Youth Club Leaders to assist (parents and grandparents would be welcome to come along too!).

This will be a unique and fantastic activity for children and young people from the St Stephen's area, so please get in touch if you are interested in taking part. We plan to organise an event to take place in the Kingsmead Field on **Saturday 16th June**. Anyone who would like to be involved please let us know as soon as possible. Contact us via the St Stephens Residents Association website contact form (www.ststephensra.org) or e-mail Pauline, paulinewalters25@gmail.com.

Felicity Tasker

Open Gardens on June 24th 2018

We are planning another Open Gardens Day, after our success in 2017, in **St Stephen's Road, Green, Close, Hill and Court, Tyler Close and Hales Drive**. Several people last year said that they regretted not opening their garden as they realised that they did not have to be perfect showplaces, just family gardens, and what visitors enjoyed most was the opportunity to see the huge variety of layout and planting that usually is hidden from view.

All those who participate will have the chance to see the open gardens separately on a private Garden Safari. One ticket will cover all the gardens and they will be open between eleven and five pm. If you are willing to open your garden, please complete the form below and return it to 25, The Crescent, or contact me via email, by April 30th.

With best wishes

Pauline Walters paulinewalters25@gmail.com

Yes, I will open my garden on June 24th 2018

Name

Address

Phone/email

ST STEPHEN'S RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

The subscription is £3. Please put it in an envelope with your name and address and return it to your street rep. See overleaf for data protection information. Thank-you

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NO. [optional] _____

EMAIL ADDRESS [optional] _____

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** comes into force at the end of May which will require SSRA members to give their consent to our keeping their personal data, which in our case simply means name, address and email. We will be required to appoint a Data Protection Officer (DPO), together with a policy for safeguarding all such data. Once this has been done, we will be in touch with all our members, explaining what will happen in our RA, advising them of the DPO and asking for completion of a form of consent.