



SEPTEMBER 2014

It seems no time at all since our last newsletter when we were looking forward to Easter and the summer. Now, the children have gone back to school after the long summer break, and we are beginning to think of autumn activities. We have not been idle over the summer.

Communication has been occupying the minds of your committee, and we hope that although there have been a few hiccoughs, you are finding Pauline Walters' news updates by email useful. We are also happy to announce that we now have our very own website, thanks to Ian Hancock, (www.semaphorecomputing.com) who has done everything from the design stage to actually going live. Do have a look at www.ststephensra.org and tell us what you think. It's still a 'work in progress' but we hope that it will be a useful means of keeping us all in contact with each other, and introducing our community to newcomers. Gradually we see it replacing our 'Welcome to St Stephens' booklet as keeping that up to date will always be a continual challenge.

Boundary Commission Review. By now you will have heard that from the election in May 2015, Canterbury City Council will have 39 councillors, reduced from our present 50 following the Boundary Commission review. At the same time, the Commission reviewed our electoral boundaries to accommodate the reduced number of councillors. St Stephen's has retained its name, and the revised boundary may be seen at:

https://www.lgbce.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/23060/Canterbury_F_Sh1_SO.pdf

The greatest change is to our boundaries with Northgate and Westgate. Here the boundary follows the southern branch of the River Stour from the Broad Oak crossing to Kingsmead Rd. It then follows the middle of Kingsmead Rd, through St Stephen's Rd to the level crossing, and then follows the railway line to St Dunstan's.

The Local Plan Consultation has now finished, and the draft local plan has been sent to the Inspector for approval. There has been a great deal of opposition to certain aspects of the plan from across the district. We expect to hear early next year whether it has been approved, or whether certain parts have been sent back to the council for modification.

Chaucer Fields and Kingsmead Field. The future of both these areas of open space is still uncertain, and both are to some extent dependent upon the local plan being approved. In the plan, it is proposed to make Chaucer Fields a 'Green Gap' which will separate the town from existing University buildings, and Kingsmead field a 'Protected Open Space'

In the meantime the campaign to save the entire area of Kingsmead field continues with support from an increasing number of councillors from across the district. Unfortunately within our present 'Strong Leader/Executive' system of governance we face strong opposition, save for Terry Westgate, our local councillor and Cabinet member, who has consistently supported the campaign, but is the lone voice on the Executive.

Parking and transport issues are continuing to worry local residents. We have achieved some success in increasing the number of visits by Enforcement Officers to Hales Drive, The Terrace and Manwood Ave. at times when school traffic is greatest. Members of your committee have met with school staff, in company with representatives from Stagecoach (in relation to St Stephen's Hill) and our local KCC Councillor, Graham Gibbens. Various problems are acknowledged, but the sad fact is that neither the space within school grounds, nor the money to undertake road improvements is

available to complete the kind of work needed. In the meantime, we are grateful to Graham Gibbens for his unfailing support for our continuing efforts to bring problems to the right agencies.

Bulb planting Last autumn, committee members, several residents and members of Hackington Horticultural Society met to plant bulbs on the Green outside the Manwood Almshouses. Even in their first year, the daffodils made a wonderful display. This autumn we plan to plant more bulbs. Already two sites have been identified on Hales Drive and The Terrace, but we are also looking for other suggestions, so please let us have your thoughts.

We shall meet at the corner of Manwood Avenue and Hales Drive at 10.30 on Saturday November 1st (If wet, we will delay until the 8th) Please let your street rep know if you will be available to help, or email Pauline at ststephensra@googlemail.com The incentive? Coffee and biscuits on the day, plus a lovely show of bulbs in the Spring.

Cllr Graham Gibbens' annual meeting will take place at the Northgate Community Centre on Monday September 22nd at 19.00. Notices will have been sent to all those for whom we have an email address. If you do not use the internet, but wish to receive notices of meetings etc, please let your street reps know.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - TUESDAY OCTOBER 28TH 2014 @ 19.00 IN ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH HALL, HALES DRIVE.

We look forward to welcoming you to the AGM of our Association. The formalities do not take long, but it is important that you know what your committee has been doing during the year, and how your money has been spent.

For many years we have invited a local speaker, but this year we would really like to know from you, our members, what form you think the meeting should take, after the formalities. There will be refreshments, and perhaps you would just like to socialise? Please do let us have some ideas, so contact us in the usual way on ststephensra@googlemail.com, direct to Pauline, or via your street reps.

Newsletters are being delivered to 450 households and all these homes have been receiving them for over five years but only just over half have ever paid the subscription. The committee has decided that, after this mailing, street reps will deliver solely to members. This will save paper and costs of printing and we hope that you will agree that this is a more efficient use of our resources. Those who give us email addresses will also receive regular mailings from Pauline on matters of local interest or about security matters.

Tradesmen List-if you would like a list of local tradesmen-and ladies-who have been recommended by members, let Pauline know via the website and she will send one to you.

Your committee 2014/15 At the AGM there will be an election for committee members. We would really like to see more residents volunteer to join us. It is not an onerous task, just four meetings a year. Our meetings take place in committee members' homes, and are attended by Graham Gibbens our KCC councillor, as well as one of our councillors from Canterbury City Council, so an excellent opportunity to get our views across to policy makers and to learn firsthand what is happening at council level. Please don't be shy about nominating yourself. If you would like to discuss this with a committee member, just let me know on ststephensra@googlemail.com. One of us would be happy to meet with you.

With all good wishes
Sue Langdown