

ABOUT St James

A Joint publication by Exeter St James Forum & Exeter St James Community Trust Distributed to all households in St James Issue 1 Spring 2015



EXETER ST JAMES
COMMUNITY TRUST LTD
a shared interest

DELIVERING THE NEWS AND STORIES AROUND & ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

THE WAY FORWARD

Here it is- the first newsletter to everyone in our vibrant and diverse community.

St James is a distinct area in Exeter, with a Neighbourhood Plan that gives us a voice on plans for future development and a record of making our community matter.

The newsletter will give you a flavour of what Exeter St James Forum (ESJF) and its spin off, Exeter St James Community Trust Ltd (ESJCT), have been doing. We hope you enjoy this first issue, that it will inspire you to get involved in your community and to attend our AGM in June. Read on for further details of this. Hope to see you there!

FIND OUT MORE AT www.exeterstjamesforum.org

AGM

The Forum's AGM will be on **Saturday June 13th in St. Sidwell's Primary School hall at 4.00pm** and will last about an hour. Come along to find out about progress made on the various Forum Projects and to learn about the work of the Forum Panels. **Why not whet your appetite by joining us for tea, cake and a friendly gathering?**

the Rusty Bike
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This was the scene at a community consultation event last year developing plans for Queen's Crescent Garden.

Exeter St James Forum Makes a Difference

ESJF was initially set up to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, to ensure the views of our community would be taken into account in planning decisions, to strengthen its identity and to enhance its balanced and diverse character.

Following a referendum in May 2013 in which 91.4% of those who voted gave their approval, the Plan was adopted by Exeter City Council as a part of its planning policy.

The Forum is much more than a talking shop. It takes action! Within the Steering Group, members are involved in areas of specific interest including allotments, heritage, Queen's Crescent Garden, transport, housing as well as planning. At our meetings we have direct contact with our local city and county councillors, the police, and representatives from the university and the ward's residents' associations. Problems are shared, issues discussed and where appropriate, action is taken.

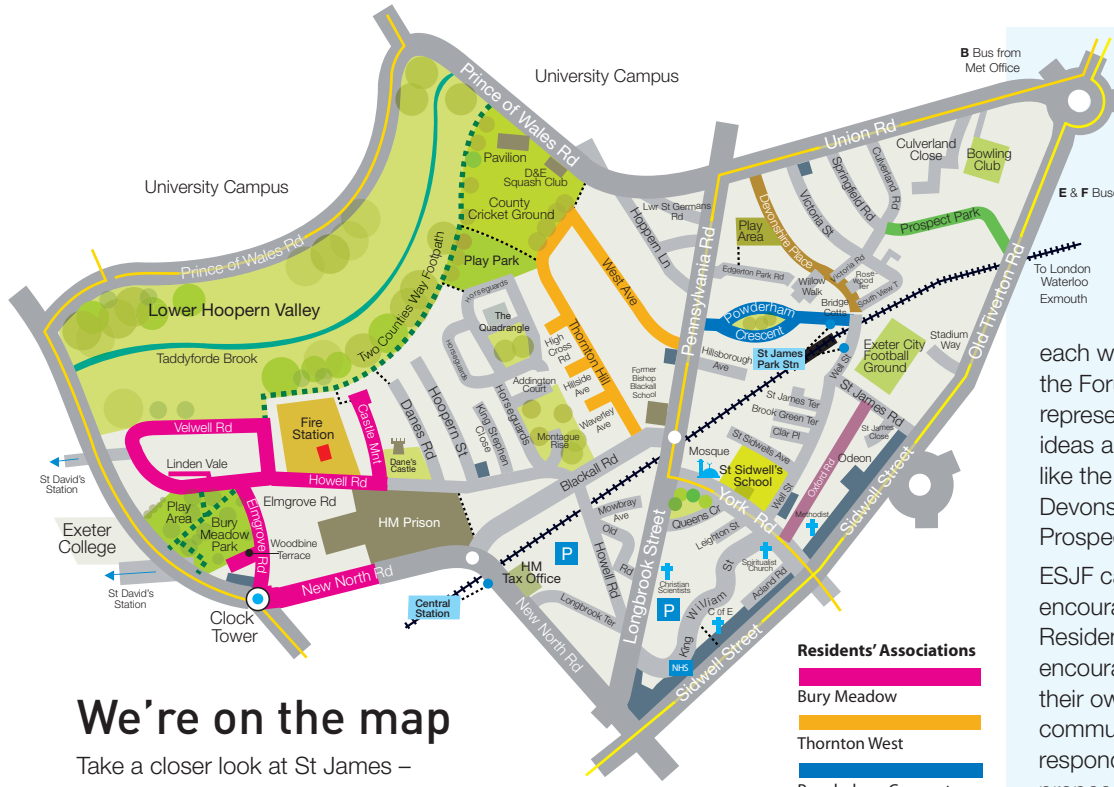
The Forum gets things done! If you would like to be involved (and membership is free), contact us at

www.exeterstjamesforum.org



To see a copy of the Neighbourhood Plan visit www.exeterstjamesforum.org

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Residents' Associations

Our Residents' Associations are Bury Meadow, Devonshire Place, Oxford Road, Powderham Crescent, Prospect Park and Thornton West, each with its own character and a seat on the Forum's Steering Group where the representatives have the opportunity to share ideas and occasionally to arrange activities like the carol singing last Christmas in which Devonshire Place, Powderham Crescent and Prospect Park all joined together.

ESJF came into being thanks to the encouragement and support of our Residents' Associations. The Forum encourages other parts of the ward to set up their own association as a way of improving communication between neighbours and responding to planning and highways proposals.

If you would like help with setting up a new one please contact us at – info@exeterstjamesforum.org

- Residents' Associations**
- Bury Meadow
 - Thornton West
 - Powderham Crescent
 - Prospect Park
 - Oxford Road
 - Devonshire Place

We're on the map

Take a closer look at St James – there's always more to discover... about its people, places, history and plans for the future. As pioneers setting up the first urban neighbourhood plan in the UK, we get 100s of visitors to our website from other communities across the country following our example and many seeking our advice.

Queen's Crescent Garden – we're making progress!

With the community's exciting and ambitious Masterplan in place, and Exeter St James Trust Ltd set up ready to take legal responsibility for the land, the project to regenerate Queen's Crescent Garden has already come a long way since it was voted top priority project by the community in 2011. The next step, the submission of a planning application for change of use to a Public Open Space, is imminent and then we must wait for Exeter City Council to complete the compulsory acquisition of the land before bidding for funding for Phase One of the transformation work can commence.

In the meantime you may have noticed a small band of volunteers has been working hard to keep the area as attractive as possible, clearing rubbish, cutting the grass and trimming the bushes etc. We are delighted that police cadets and University of Exeter grounds staff have volunteered to help with this maintenance work on 28th May. Do come along during that afternoon to find out more about the project, ESJF and ESJCT Ltd; there will be an information stall, refreshments and a bring and buy plant stall with proceeds helping to swell the project's funds. If you are green-fingered and can spare a few plants, flowers or vegetables, please donate them for the event! We would love to meet you, whether you simply want to find out more, have a cup of tea, buy plants or wish to help in some way!



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Could you write an article of local interest for our next issue?....



ST JAMES FORUM



Planning and Design Panel

Planning and design goes to the heart of our Neighbourhood Plan. The Panel was set up after the formal adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan by Exeter City Council in mid-2013. Its role is both straightforward – to champion the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan – and challenging – to decide whether to question or object to a development.

We advise the Forum's Steering Group on planning and Neighbourhood Plan issues. And, following the controversial planning consents at Exeter Cricket Club, we have the Council's commitment to consult the Panel on major applications and matters relating to the Plan.

Members of the Panel include Forum members with planning expertise and experience and others with a keen and objective interest in the future shape of St James.

Are you interested? Join the Forum and contact us if you would like to find out more.

Housing

Our Neighbourhood Plan specifies the promotion of affordable, sustainable homes for local people. This was one of the top 5 most popular projects suggested for Exeter St James Forum.

Vital as this is, ESJF's Housing Group firmly believes that its activities should be even more wide-reaching than finding the funding for a housing project – The Neighbourhood Plan also mentions the establishment of a landlord accreditation scheme and ESJF supports both the University Students' Guild's and CVS' campaigns for landlord registration.

In addition, the Housing Group is successfully campaigning for letting agents to remove their illegal 'To Let' and 'Let By' signs which contravene Exeter City Council's new code of conduct for letting agents, which forbids them from erecting 'Let By' signs in St James and beyond. This came into force last year as result of pressure from St James' residents at Have Your Say meetings.

How well do you know your neighbourhood?

Harry Hems

Many of us are aware of Harry's Restaurant in the distinctive building in Longbrook Street. But who was Harry?

Harry Hems was a wood and stone carver working on the building of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum. After the opening in 1868, Harry set up a workshop in Paris Street. The business expanded with carving commissions from Exeter and further afield. He soon employed a workforce and the business flourished with work from abroad. He won awards in Paris and the USA.

In 1879 Harry built the workshops in Longbrook Street designed by architect R Medley Fulford. Harry became a member of many local institutions, a city councillor and church warden at St Sidwell's. He collected old carvings and displayed them in the workshop to inspire his workers and to use as patterns. Many items are now in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum. It is one of the largest and most important collections of medieval woodwork in Britain.

Harry died in 1916 and his sons took over the business which continued to flourish after the First World War carving war memorials. The firm closed in 1938 when the two partners retired.

Since then the building has seen footwear and wine businesses, and now the restaurant. But still over the door is a horseshoe which Harry had found on the road on the day he arrived in Exeter and had kept for luck.



TRUST IN ST JAMES EXETER ST JAMES COMMUNITY TRUST LTD

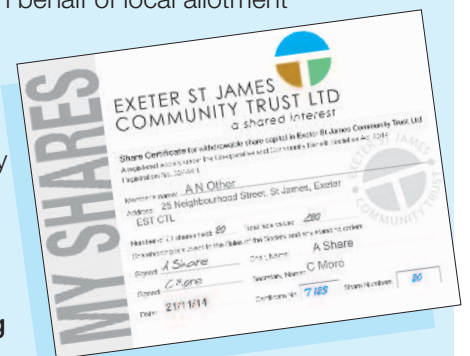
a shared interest

Since its launch last autumn, Directors of Exeter St James Community Trust Ltd have been truly heartened by the response of residents to the opening share offer. Set up by Exeter St James Forum as the legal body to take on and deliver improvements to our community the Trust is now well-established with 200 paid up members.

Regeneration of Queen's Crescent Garden remains the Trust's priority and, although progress towards this has been slower than hoped, we are ready and waiting to take on management of the project as soon as Exeter City Council gives us the green light. Currently we are also in negotiation with Network Rail to acquire the lease of St James allotments on behalf of local allotment holders.

There is so much more we can achieve - we are only just at the beginning. As a charitable organisation the Trust exists solely for the benefit of our local community so if you haven't yet joined us please consider doing so. For as little as £5 you can have a say and share in the future prosperity of St James.

Please visit www.exeterstjamesforum.org for further details and application forms.



Facts... Anecdotes... Stories... Please email us at info@exeterstjamesforum.org

RHS It's Your Neighbourhood and Britain in Bloom

Many St James community green spaces will be entered for the **RHS It's Your Neighbourhood** scheme again this year, namely Bury Meadow Park, Queen's Crescent Garden, Devonshire Place Orchard, Powderham Crescent Garden and St James Park station and allotments. Also St Sidwell's Community Centre will be entering for the first time and it is hoped that even more green spaces, for instance our sports' clubs, will consider joining the scheme in 2016.



New gates at Bury Meadow Park



A bank of volunteers at St James' Park station

St James' ward has also been entered in the Britain in Bloom scheme this year, so we hope all residents and businesses will support this entry. Please do encourage your neighbours to have their gardens, or windowboxes, looking their very best in July. We will all benefit from seeing them and that's the month when the judges will be visiting us.



allotments@exeterstjamesforum.org

The future looks bright at the community garden

There have been allotments on the Powderham Crescent side of St James Park station for many years – photos of steam trains going past well-tended plots in the 1950s are in existence – but more recently some of the plots have become neglected.

If you have passed the plots recently you may have noticed some improvement and more activity. Thanks to the allotmenters themselves, Network Rail, the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood scheme and Exeter St James Community Trust, things are changing. A new top path has been created, new fencing has been erected at the bottom of the site (and soon at the top, too, we hope), some trees have been felled and tons of rubbish cleared. The Trust has joined the National Allotment Society who are advising current plot holders on the setting up of a Gardening Society and helping with talks on a lease with Network Rail. The plots will probably be called The St James Community Gardens and it is hoped that the Gardening Society will be able to open a waiting list this autumn/winter.



St James Heritage History Walks

The current St James' Ward has a short history, but its constituent parts have a long history. The History Walks

Project is an attempt to link two pivotal areas with three walks designed to explore interesting areas and buildings that contribute

to this diverse ward. They all start and finish at either Queen's Crescent Garden or Bury Meadow Park. The current phase aims to provide coherent directions and information about each of them. Persons with interest in history, recording and archiving material, using either sound or photographic evidence, are welcome to contribute to this project.

On your bike

New signs have recently been put up on a route from Sidwell Street to the University. Mainly aimed at cyclists and walkers, the route follows relatively quiet streets such as Well Street and West Avenue. They are part of a scheme by City and County Councils to create and mark cycle and walking routes. The Forum was consulted on the route and suggested that the station be included on some of the signs.

Our links with the sea

Fancy a few hours at the seaside? Why not take the train from St James Park station in Well Street next to the football ground. Trains go to Exmouth via Topsham and in the other direction to Paignton via Dawlish, Teignmouth and Torquay. Off peak day return tickets to Exmouth, Dawlish & Teignmouth cost £4.20, the single journey taking around half an hour. Torquay and Paignton tickets cost £6.60, the journey taking around an hour. Reductions for children and railcard holders. Further details www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk or phone 03457 000125

Forthcoming Events

TEA IN THE GARDEN

Calling all gardeners to bring surplus plants both flowers and vegetables for table top sale... and our local bakers to help by bringing a cake!

Thursday MAY 28th from 2pm

This is our first Queen's Crescent Garden Event!

Come along for tea & cakes, catch up with the news, but some plants and imagine what this precious space will look and feel like when the Masterplan has materialised.

Local police cadets and university ground staff will be busy working on the garden.

Saturday JUNE 13th at 4pm
Exeter St James Forum AGM
See front page

The popular St James Have Your Say Meeting is back!

Wednesday 27th May 2015
7 pm at St Sidwell's School Hall

This is an opportunity for you to voice your concerns and ideas to the police, local councillors and university representatives about issues affecting you personally.