

## Another Victory for St James Neighbourhood Plan

The decision of the Local Planning Authority to refuse an application to increase the number of students to be accommodated at 13 Devonshire Place from 6 to 9, will be well-received by the supporters of our local Neighbourhood Plan (NP), of which the overarching aim is to create a balanced community, beneficial for all residents, including students. It is worth remembering that the Student

Guild was amongst those who wrote to congratulate Exeter St James Forum on the adoption of the NP in 2013, with the student body itself recognising the importance of this aim. It was good to see so many letters of objection, not only from those living close by, but from others across St James who recognise the ongoing need to demonstrate individual support for the aims of the NP whenever, and wherever, a planning application contravenes its policies. Keep up the good work! Thanks, too, to our local City Councillors for their support..... for the tenth year running!

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# ABOUT St James

A joint publication by Exeter St James Forum & Exeter St James Community Trust Distributed to all households in St James Issue 14 December 2021



EXETER ST JAMES  
COMMUNITY TRUST LTD  
a shared interest

DELIVERING THE NEWS AND STORIES AROUND AND ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD



Find out more at [www.exeterstjamesforum.com](http://www.exeterstjamesforum.com).

## Thinking ahead to Fundraising Events 2022

Can you help by potting up surplus divisions of garden plants or nurturing extra seedlings ready to donate for 2022 plant sales? Or maybe you could let us re-use your used plastic pots instead of recycling them?

Are there other local food producers who would be willing to join the example of Penguin Pizza and come along to tempt the community with their delights, donating profit to the Trust? We'd love to hear from you! Or perhaps you would

like to discuss a particular side show or stall that you would organise to help raise much-needed funds for the Trust?

Maybe between now and next spring/summer (dates to be confirmed) you will accumulate saleable items you no longer need and would welcome the chance to set up your own table for a £10 charge and then keep the proceeds, or donate the items to be sold on the Trust's table. Do get in touch with the QCG Project Group [trust@exeterstjamesforum.org](mailto:trust@exeterstjamesforum.org) with your ideas or offers, and help make the 2022 events bigger and better than ever before.

## Book, Plant and Pizza Bonanza!

Two very successful fundraising events were held over the summer in Queen's Crescent Garden raising a very welcome total of £850. The first event combined the now well-established plant sale with a book sale. There were interesting plants aplenty, from perennial Asters originating from a leading specialist nursery, to the houseplant Zebrina and representing virtually every letter in between. Some keen gardeners have made a point of returning each time a QCG Plant Sale is advertised, eager to find well known or unusual plants and take advantage of the bargains available.

Thanks go to the many local residents who donated a superb variety of good quality books. These proved a great attraction for booklovers young and old who enjoyed poring over the fascinating and tempting selection. There were so many that a second event was arranged to give a further opportunity to find some great titles.

A fantastic offer was made by local pizza business, Penguin Pizza, to come along to bake a delicious choice of pizzas, donating the profit. These proved too good to miss and drew in many passers-by as well as feeding those who'd come on purpose to the event.



## Taking Pride in our Local Green Space

Queen's Crescent Garden has come a long way over the last decade as the community implemented an ambitious regeneration Masterplan and formed the Trust to own the 125 year lease. Recalling the time when its use had become almost exclusively antisocial, it is now very pleasing to see diverse community members enjoying what this precious space has to offer.

However, we are all aware that there are still occasions when activity is not acceptable. Use of the Garden for all antisocial behaviour, ASB, needs to become a thing of the past, and the Police are keen to support us. Very occasionally reports reach the Trust Directors of instances of particularly distressing ASB. Please do report such incidents directly to the Police so they can assist as appropriate. The Trust has received very positive comments to the news that Safer Central Exeter funding includes installation of 24hr monitored CCTV cover of the Garden and vicinity. This is expected to act as a deterrent as well as providing evidence of ASB when required.

## Safer Central Exeter

In May 2021, the Home Office awarded Exeter £432,000 to make our city safer. As a result of this a project, named Safer Central Exeter, has been set up and is led by a partnership which includes the City Council, police, businesses, neighbourhood watch and other community groups.

Exeter is a vibrant, lively place enjoyed by a mix of residents, visitors, students and businesses. The city centre welcomes about 67,000 people every day and, though it is made up mainly of shops and businesses, lots of people also call it home. The key areas of focus of the project are the very central streets of Exeter including Sidwell Street and Queen's Crescent Gardens, but everyone in St James can benefit.

There are several activities where residents can get involved in Safer Central Exeter – see other articles in this newsletter. More information

can be found at [exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/community-safety/safer-central-exeter/](http://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/community-safety/safer-central-exeter/) and if you have any questions there is a dedicated email address [SCE@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:SCE@exeter.gov.uk). The project will also be promoted and linked events announced on Twitter @SaferCentralExe, Facebook @SaferCentralExeter and LinkedIn @safer-central-exeter

Do get involved!



## Bang! Flash! Wheeeeeeee!

Powderham Crescent Residents' Association held their annual bonfire party on November 5th having missed it last year due to the lockdown. It was a wonderfully still and not chilly evening with a roaring bonfire, music, floodlighting and colourful crackling fireworks. Over a hundred residents and friends brought fireworks

for the display and generous amounts of food to share. Members of the Residents' Association spent the day producing many litres of mulled wine whilst others set up the lighting and sound equipment, finished the fire and dug holes to safely set off the fireworks. The bonfire party has become a tradition over many years. It's a great way of getting to know neighbours and having a very enjoyable evening.

Right: Powderham Crescent Bonfire Party 5th November 2021



## Union Road Cycle Route - Consultation Update

The eagerly awaited Consultation Report about the proposed final, most problematic and controversial section of the E4 Cycle Route along Union Road, has still not been published as we go to press, but our County Councillors were each invited to provide an update. Cllr. Percy Prowse, responded following a briefing he attended on 30 November and confirmed the publication of the Report is imminent.

Cllr. Prowse has asked for further analysis of the responses according to their origin, as of the 753 submitted, 50 came from beyond

Exeter, and a further 212 from beyond the acutely affected EX4 area. He confirmed the critical element for many living in the vicinity is the removal of 89 parking spaces along the entire length of Union Road. If it is decided to proceed, the process would involve an advertisement by the County Council of the proposal 'to revoke the 89 spaces, most of which are paid for Resident Parking spaces'. Cllr. Prowse stated that 'the public response to this will be critical'.

It is not only the loss of parking spaces that concern local residents however. One has told us, 'As a cyclist, and Union Road resident, the questions I ask about schemes proposed are centred around Government Local Transport

Note 1/20. It lays out 5 essential pre-requisites for cycle paths. The current suggested provision fails on all criteria but "directness".

Look further at the Government paper 'Gear change - a bold vision for cycling and walking' and of the 22 suggested planning essentials the Union Road scheme might adhere to 4 of them. Importantly it states in section 20 that; 'All designers of cycle schemes must experience the roads as a cyclist' and 'Ideally, all schemes would be designed by people who cycle regularly'.

Cycling safety is important, but equally important is pedestrian care and the realistic wishes of local residents. It's an enigma the present plans don't even start to address.'

## Do you live in a Neighbourhood Watch area?

This is a question you may be familiar with when applying for house insurance, which is hardly surprising when the Police advise that even the display of Neighbourhood Watch (NW) stickers in windows and signage in streets, act as an effective deterrent to crime. Of course, a more active NW group is likely to be even more effective by encouraging vigilance and a community spirit where residents show a caring concern for each other and communication between police and the community is nurtured.

Part of Safer Central Exeter's funding is earmarked for Devon & Cornwall Community Watch Association (D&CCWA) to encourage, establish and support more widespread NW coverage of residential communities adjacent to the City Centre. The Trust has been approached by D&CCWA to look with them at the map of St James, note the streets already covered by the scheme, and look beyond these, to help identify additional potential mini-

neighbourhoods where residents might, if approached, be interested in forming a group. The aim is to offer all the chance to benefit from living in a NW area. A designated Group may be as small as a few houses, large enough to cover a number of streets, or anything in between - whatever each group feels suits them best.

Currently NW stickers are available free of charge to new groups as well as those already established, and the City Council will erect street signage to confirm the NW status. If you and your neighbours would like to get in straight away, get in touch via [trust@exeterstjamesforum.org](mailto:trust@exeterstjamesforum.org) either identifying your established NW area or suggesting the properties to form your new NW group. In each case provide the name of a contact with whom D&CCWA might liaise in order to supply the free materials or, if invited by you, to come along to explain more and offer further support.



## Crime Prevention

As part of the Safer Central Exeter scheme residents in St James can attend a free Home Safety/Crime Prevention course. This will cover personal safety and how to deter crime at home, and alarms, torches and credit card protectors will be distributed. Another initiative is to supply residents with Property Marking Kits - these will also be free and will mark up to 50 items in your home. If you are interested in the training or the kits then please email [Trust@exeterstjamesforum.org](mailto:Trust@exeterstjamesforum.org) and the Trust will liaise with the Devon and Cornwall Community Watch Association team to organise them.



## Queen's Crescent Garden Volunteering

Student Wardens, Zeb O'Regan and Frank Allen busy at work in Queen's Crescent Garden last July. They were involved in the University of Exeter Student's 'Visual Amenities Project', offering their time to put to good use the training in vegetation management techniques they had received from UoE Grounds Staff.

Since then Louis Brown, of the local Regal Tree Company, has once again generously donated his time and expertise, this time clearing and levelling the mound of soil and long-buried rubble at the lower corner of the Garden with a mini-digger. Offers of help are always greatly appreciated.

A working party is due to be convened in the New Year - do get in touch if you would be willing to join us for a couple of hours one weekend!



[Trust@exeterstjamesforum.org](mailto:Trust@exeterstjamesforum.org)

## Autumn Mulching in the Devonshire Place Orchard

Devonshire Place residents came together to bed down the fruit trees in the Orchard for the winter, weeding the young trees, mulching them and as a 'bonus' moving the huge pile of mulch from one side of the Orchard to the other (don't ask) - a sterling community effort!

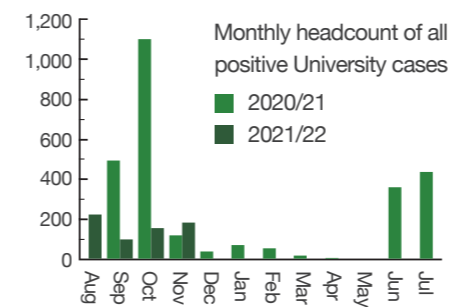
The trees that the City Council has to take down are recycled to nurture valuable green spaces for the community and our wonderful Orchard continues to be the focus for bringing people together.

Our efforts continue to be recognised as we were awarded 'Outstanding' in this year's RHS's 'Britain in Bloom- It's your Neighbourhood' competition..... for the seventh year running!



## Coronavirus cases at the University and in St James 2020-2021

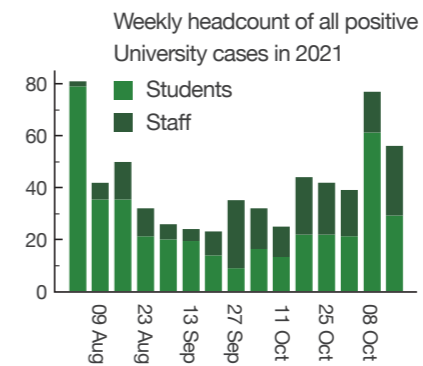
In the summer of 2020 many residents of St James were greatly concerned about the imminent return of students to Exeter University and the effect that that would have on the number of Coronavirus cases in St James. It turns out that such concerns were well justified:



Examination of the bar charts produced by Exeter University of University Coronavirus cases reveals that the number of Coronavirus cases amongst students did indeed soar to extremely high levels in October 2020.

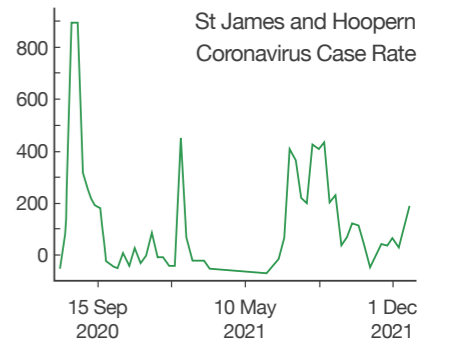
After many months, and much lobbying by University staff, the University did eventually start to publish online the number of Coronavirus cases it had recorded previously and was continuing to

record among both staff and students. The University continues to publish daily, weekly and monthly Coronavirus case numbers at <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/coronavirus/statistics/> The daily and weekly figures give those for staff and students separately. It is most notable that the number of staff Coronavirus cases are a much greater proportion of all University Coronavirus cases in the academic year 2021/2022 than they were in 2020/2021, corresponding to a return to in-person rather than remote/online teaching. To put the numbers in context, Exeter University has around 6,000 members of staff and approximately 25,000 students.



How have the number of Coronavirus cases in St James overall fared over roughly the same time period? The Government publishes the Coronavirus case rate per 100,000 people in each Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) in

England (and at a local authority level for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) at <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/interactive-map/cases>. St James Park and Hoopern MSOA is almost identical to the area of Exeter covered by Exeter St James' Neighbourhood Plan. In the 2011 census St James Park and Hoopern MSOA had a population of about 8254, living in 2926 households. Between 21 September 2020 and 22 November 2021 there have been 1,220 Coronavirus cases in all in St James Park and Hoopern MSOA.



As well as the Government website mentioned above, Devon County Council also publishes an online dashboard of Coronavirus data for Exeter, Devon, Torbay, Plymouth and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/coronavirus-data/>.