

Oxford Road to St Sidwell's School in one hundred tiny steps

One sunny October morning, our little girl took her first walk to school. With her school bag packed the night before and favourite teddy in tow, the walk should have taken us five minutes. However, there are many distractions along the route: pointing out the different door colours, listening to the birds, collecting leaves and stones, racing down York Terrace. So, about 20 minutes later we finally arrive and our brave little girl meets her new teachers and classmates. It's hard to leave her, but we know that she is in safe hands.

After a couple of weeks she has already settled in, and loves telling us about the day's activities on our walks home. She has also changed her career choice from princess to teacher.



Life at St Sidwell's School

Life at St Sidwell's Church of England Primary School is always very busy with many exciting activities happening daily. This half term, Year 6 have been learning about World War II. Dressed in costume, they visited Tiverton Museum to find out more, which culminated in the children writing Remembrance Day poems which we were very privileged to be able to read recently at the Royal British Legion Remembrance Concert in Exeter. Some of these poems are on our website.

We believe that it is vital to support the well-being of the whole child and that social and emotional wellbeing creates the foundations for healthy behaviours and educational attainment. In Early November the children took part in a cross-country run with other schools at Killerton and even came away with 3 medals! We also participated in the Multi Skills Festival, Sitting Volleyball tournaments, Boccia, New Age Curling, Tennis and swimming at Exeter School's new pool.

Every Friday lunchtime we have a 'Really Wild Club' where children go on outdoor adventures and following their involvement in the Wildlife Champions Conference 2017, the children had many ideas to bring back to school to support local wildlife. We love these 'Forest School' principles and are aiming to create a wild area in our school grounds.

We have enhanced our curriculum with events such as The Life Bus (Personal, Social & Health Curriculum), Just4Funk dance



workshops, E.on's Sir Kit Breaker science show, and have even picked apples from our own orchard and had them pressed into juice.

We have a very active Parents Association (FOSSS), who recently hosted an International Evening where we celebrated the many different cultures which make up our school community. There has also been a film night, school disco and we look forward to our next event, our Christmas Fayre.

We are very proud of our school community and especially our children. Please do have a look and see what an amazing place it is here at St Sidwell's filled with active, enjoyable days.

ABOUT St James

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EXETER ST JAMES
COMMUNITY TRUST LTD
a shared interest



DELIVERING THE NEWS AND STORIES AROUND AND ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

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IYN & the Greening of St James

Community involvement is an important focus of the Royal Horticultural Society - It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) scheme and each year a variety of projects in St James enter.

This year St James did exceptionally well with all 7 participants achieving the top 2 awards:

- Queen's Crescent Garden - OUTSTANDING
- St Sidwell's Community Centre Garden - OUTSTANDING
- Devonshire Place Orchard Regeneration Project - OUTSTANDING
- Bury Meadow Park - THRIVING
- St James' Vegetable Gardens -THRIVING
- Powderham Crescent -THRIVING
- St James' Park Station-THRIVING

Not only do these projects make a huge difference to our precious green spaces but they strengthen community relationships. The challenges are wide ranging from the more menial weeding tasks to negotiating with the City Council Planning or Parks Departments and other agencies including Devon Wildlife Trust and Network Rail.

In Devonshire Place increasing the bio-diversity has been the recent focus as well as continuing maintenance of the trees. At St James' Station the creation of a sensory experience including colourful displays, herbal scents and the sound of buzzing bees involved children from St Sidwell's Primary School and volunteers from the Senior Reds, Exeter City Football Club supporters.



Powderham Crescent's communal garden is host to many social gatherings including a recent bonfire and fireworks evening when an estimated 200 people attended. There have also been live concerts, a tea party for Macmillan Cancer Support and a charity hair shaving event for a children's cancer charity, all organised by the students. No wonder they have recently been voted 'best street' in the University's Good Neighbour Award!

St Sidwell's Community Centre Gardens started several years ago with a long disused graveyard (last burial 1856) and a separate vegetable garden. Both were in a state of neglect - overgrown with brambles and weeds and mostly used by rough sleepers, daytime drinkers and drug users. With some council funding and the help of over 30 volunteers (11 active volunteers at the moment), over the years they have planted thousands of shrubs and bulbs, created borders, resurfaced pathways and built benches and a pergola. The Centre was short listed for the RHS IYN Regional Award!

"Together we can achieve things and can make a difference in enhancing our environment - a huge difference - for ourselves, our neighbours and for those just passing by." A Volunteer.





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find out more at www.exeterstjamesforum.org

Previous copies of About St James can be seen on the website.
Produced by Exeter St James Forum and Exeter St James Community Trust.

Your new PCSO



Devon & Cornwall Police
Building safer communities together

I would like to introduce myself. I am PCSO 30737 Ben Turner and I am now your local officer covering St James, Duryard and the University.

It is a little over a year ago today that I graduated from the University of Exeter with a first in Politics and Geography and then began my career with Devon and Cornwall Police with responsibility for the Pinhoe and Polsloe wards. I have a solid understanding of the area and its issues and how to deal with them effectively.

As a PCSO I am responsible for all low level crime in the area as well as gathering intelligence, conducting targeted patrolling, visiting victims, protecting highly vulnerable people and working with the schools and

a large variety of partner agencies. I'll also be regularly called city wide to tackle major crime trends, incidents and support the work of my colleagues.

In my first few weeks on patch, I have already met many local residents and partners. A meeting with the University's new student wardens and a post freshers' week multi-agency meeting are already being planned. Hopefully, I will be able to meet many more of you soon.

If you need to contact me or the wider police force, please consider some of these options:

Devon and Cornwall Alert is a fantastic new service. It is quick to sign up for and tailored

to suit your needs. You'll receive alerts from me as well as other important ones from my colleagues. We have already had a lot of success with this service, including members of the public solving a series of distraction thefts and it's also one of the best ways to keep up to date with what may be happening in your area.

If you use Facebook or Twitter, then please 'like/follow' the 'Exeter Neighbourhood Police Team' as well as 'Devon and Cornwall Police'.

If you have information or a non-emergency request, then please email 101@dc.police.uk or call 101. Emails will be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as calling 101. In an emergency always call 999.

I look forward to working with the St James community.

Resident's Parking Permit Scheme (RPPS) Investigations Continue

The final results of the pilot survey reported in the last issue were, even by Devon County Council's (DCC) Traffic Management Team Manager, Chris Rook's, own admission, 'Certainly not as good as I had hoped'. From his position of denial of any problem, that those who attended last year's & 'Have Your Say' meeting will recall, this was significant! Of the total 67 displayed permits investigated 24, or 36%, ended up being cancelled for reasons of ineligibility. Driven on by these results set against the serious and growing problem of insufficient parking space for residents, the Forum is working closely with County Councillors Su Aves and Percy Prowse, who have been appointed by DCC's Highways and Traffic Orders Committee (HATOC) to form a working group to investigate all aspects including the monitoring and enforcement of the Scheme, and they are determined to drive out all abuse whether by commuters or students ineligible for RPP.

The Forum is also working with Associate Member, the University, looking to it to do all in its considerable power to reduce the pressure on residents' parking spaces through active discouragement of student cars being brought to the City and, where students do choose to bring vehicles, to ensure they do so in a legally compliant way, registering the vehicle to their term-time address and adhering strictly to the regulations of the RPPS.

A start has now been made with amendments to various website pages in an attempt to get the new message across. Too late to inform students before the start of the current term, Rory Cunningham, the University's Community Liaison Officer, is hopeful that the messages will reach students considering bringing a car to Exeter after Christmas.

With indisputable evidence of abuse continuing this academic year, eligible residents, whether student or local, will be watching keenly hoping these messages, and any measures taken by HATOC, do prove effective!

Party in Prospect Park

On the first Sunday of October the residents of Prospect Park held their annual street party to welcome the new students to the neighbourhood. It was as ever a veritable cornucopia and well attended by both permanent residents and students. The weather held good all day despite the occasional soothsayer of doom proclaiming violent storms. A fun day was had by all.



There's plenty to shout about regarding the community's top priority Queen's Crescent Garden project!

As well as being assessed as 'Outstanding' by the RHS's Your Neighbourhood' judges, reflecting in particular the genuine and extensive community participation that characterises the project, matching perfectly the IYN's own mantra of 'By the Community, For the Community!', we are thrilled that a firm base has been laid in preparation for the next major phase of regeneration. The latest in-kind contribution to the project to add to a long list of specialist firms and individuals, has come from local consulting engineers, Sands Consultants of Hem's Court, to whom the Project Group is very grateful.

A bid by the Trust for a maximum £50,000 Grass Roots award, from the neighbourhood portion of money paid to the City Council by developers, won the recommendation of the grants' panel of Exeter Community Forum (ECF). This has since been approved by Exeter City Council. Together with funds already raised, awarded, or donated over the last 20 months, it will be used to complete the restoration of the walls, the creation of two further new entrances and additional work in preparation for the next exciting phase of delivery of the Masterplan to follow. Plans are underway to ensure the work can commence as soon as the Trust finally becomes Leaseholder!

There has been much activity behind the scenes since June as negotiations have been taking place almost daily between Exeter City Council and the Trust, following the Trust's 'persistent insistence' for recognition that it could not be expected to take on unfair and unrealistic financial responsibilities of our precious green space for the next 125 years without appropriate initial support. A very good relationship and sense of common purpose has now developed and proposals for a £50,000 'dowry' investment to provide the financial security to enable the Trust to deal with waste management for the 125 year term of the Lease, and also for a new litter and dog waste bin outside each of the planned entrances, have been approved by Council Executive, with unanimous support from Councillor Members. Final ratification by Full Council is expected in December.

Meanwhile the final legal processes involved in dovetailing the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Lease have been progressing. The Trust anticipates signing an Agreement for Lease imminently, after which the Council will commence the 5 to 6 month General Vesting Declaration process, that will end with the signing of the CPO and Lease on the same day. The best estimate for this momentous achievement is May/June 2018. So get ready to celebrate over 6 years of determined effort to see the community's initial wish to lay claim to the Garden as its Community Hub, come to fruition!

King Billy

Planning permission has now been granted on the King Billy public house site and adjacent land for the development of a 7/8 storey purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) block consisting of 108 rooms above commercial units. The Chair of Exeter St James Forum, Anne Jobson, attended the planning meeting and spoke strongly against the massing of this development on this mostly residential street and the further erosion of the community balance in St James.

Councillors Kevin Mitchell and Keith Owen also spoke strongly against this development. They pressed for verification of the need for further student accommodation given the provision of accommodation, built or pending. The planning officers were unable to provide any evidence of the number of students requiring accommodation in the city, or the empty room statistics, despite this issue being raised on several occasions. Councillors Mitchell and Owen maintained that this information would be vital before any decision could be made on this or any future Exeter PBSA.

With a shortage of affordable housing in the city centre, the speaker on behalf of the development company was asked why they were not submitting plans for private accommodation on this site for young professionals or for social housing. His response was that the geography and amenity of the plot was only suitable for students!



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Trust News

Exeter St James Community Trust Ltd, set up by the Forum as the legal body to take on and

deliver improvements to our community, held its second AGM on 11 October and celebrated the fact that we now have over 230 shareholder members. The meeting was brought up-to-date regarding progress towards the compulsory purchase and lease of Queen's Crescent Garden, a process which should soon be completed so that the much anticipated restoration of the garden can begin in earnest.

As a charitable organisation the Trust exists solely for the benefit of St James and its residents so if you haven't yet joined, please consider doing so. For as little as £5 you can have a say in how to improve our neighbourhood and share in the future prosperity of St James. Full details and application forms can be found on the Trust page of the website:

www.exeterstjamesforum.org



Farewell to the Grandstand

By the time you read this edition of 'About St James' the Old Grandstand at St James Park will be no more. The picture, taken on 2nd November shows the 1926 built structure being taken apart to be replaced by a new grandstand which will hold roughly the same number of spectators, but on a smaller footprint.

The Community Liaison Team

The University of Exeter values its relationship with the residents of Exeter.

We appreciate that Exeter is a growing city and there may be new residents who have come to live in St James who are not aware of the support the University can provide if problems arise. The Community Liaison Team, including Estate Patrol, work alongside the Police and Environmental Health in a variety of ways.

The Community Liaison Team consists of Rory Cunningham, Community Liaison Officer, Sophie Parker, Student Support Administrator and a team of ten Student Community Wardens. The team can make contact with addresses during the daytime if there are any concerns or queries – from home security to recycling and refuse disposal. If you have concerns about a student address and are unable to make direct contact, please contact us at streetwise@exeter.ac.uk / **01392 726252**. We also work to develop community campaigns and projects, based on the ongoing feedback we receive.

As December approaches, the Student Community Wardens will be busy promoting final bin collections and home security. They will also be running a series of bicycle stop-checks to deter students from cycling without lights.

Estate Patrol can attend off-campus noise disturbances (pending on-campus emergencies) and can be contacted 24 hours on **01392 723999**. Rory Cunningham also makes follow up contact with each address that Estate Patrol is called to visit.

If you have any questions about our off-campus activity or you wish to discover more about accessible events and activities on-campus, please contact Rory Cunningham on **01392 723721** / rj.cunningham@exeter.ac.uk

TWRA support YMCA

At the recent TWRA (Thornton West Residents Association) AGM, discussions centred around the recent 'Tea in the Park' which was a very successful turn out of the neighbouring streets for the perfect combination of tea, cake and putting the world to rights. These events are held each year in support of local charities and TWRA have confirmed their next charity of the year to be YMCA Exeter. Local resident Dr Jonathan Snicker, YMCA Trustee recalled one early September morning:

There was a disturbance; a 50 something year old rough sleeper had settled for the night next to our house, along with his bottle of gin. He was making a lot of noise and suggested that he was 'sleeping in the woods'. This difficult and poignant encounter was a reminder of the reasons I became a Trustee of YMCA Exeter. YMCA Exeter is intervening early to help prevent young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness from ending up in such dire circumstances later in life.

Some have been in care, others escaping domestic violence or contending with family breakdown. YMCA provide a safe and warm place to call home, whole person development activities including health, nutrition and wellbeing, as well as skills and training to assist with employment.

"At school, I just messed up all the time, I was hardly there because I was excluded most weeks. I didn't have a proper education from year 10 onwards. YMCA didn't give up on me when others did and fought my corner the whole way."

TWRA hopes that donating to YMCA Exeter will contribute to their vision of transforming communities where young people can be empowered to develop their full potential in body and mind.

If you wish to read more or support YMCA please visit: www.ymcaexeter.org.uk or you can contact Jonathan directly - jonathan.snicker@ymcaexeter.org.uk

