

## ST SIDWELL'S SCHOOL – AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITY

St Sidwell's C of E Primary School & Nursery caters for children aged 3-11 years. We put children at the heart of all that we do. We are very proud of our school and our children. This academic year we have been rated Ofsted 'GOOD' and SIAMS 'OUTSTANDING'. We still have some spaces in our Nursery for September. Our Nursery is a Teacher-led provision where play is at the centre of everything. We believe that our youngest children learn and develop best in a play based environment supported with high quality interactions from skilled Early Years professionals. Our children are happy, inquisitive learners and we provide enriching, fun filled indoor and outdoor learning spaces to give them a great start. With our Fun Club provision, we are able to provide an exciting, safe, happy environment for children from 7.45am-5.45pm Monday-Friday. We also run holiday clubs. We would love to show you our Nursery! Please phone the office to arrange a visit. We look forward to meeting you soon.



## TWRA WILDLIFE SURVEY

Thornton West Residents Association (TWRA) is made up of 5 streets in St James; - Thornton Hill, West Avenue, Waverley Avenue, Hillside Avenue and Highcross Road. Many TWRA properties have large mature garden settings and as a result the residents have been carrying out a spring wildlife watch.

Early results show that hedgehogs are finally making a comeback, with several reported sightings from residents who have not seen one in the area for many years. One home owner saw a hedgehog darting for cover in a neighbouring property and another's garden is visited nightly. One resident has a nesting family of Great Tits and there have also been recent sightings of a Green Woodpecker, a Dartford Warbler and a Jay. Information has also



come to light that there were two sightings a few months ago of badgers in the area.

An additional feature of many TWRA gardens are the high brick walls and recently a large dog fox was seen in a walled garden with no other means of access other than by scaling it! Another resident reports possibly the same fox sitting quietly alongside them in the garden, and another as follows - Like

other residents, we have a part of the back garden that's a miniature version of the land that time forgot; it's surrounded by shrubs such as Mahonia and Pieris that we clip back year after year, with no knowledge of what lies beyond. Yesterday afternoon an ebullient fox leapt from the said land and cavorted on our lawn, rolling on its back and kicking its legs in the air like a spring lamb. We raced for the camera but - too late - our quarry had gone. The next day, I noticed that a leather gardening glove I'd left nearby had mysteriously disappeared - was this the fox's supper..? Phil Davies, 28th April.

A further report has been received of a fox sunning himself for an extended period of time on a garden wall and the resident also sent in this recent photograph of a larger fox taken from their study window.



TREE SERVICES

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- Tree Surgery
- Fencing
- Landscaping
- Emergency Call-out
- Hedge Cutting
- Hedge Laying
- Hedge Removal
- Garden Clearance
- Pressure Washing
- Log Delivery

# ABOUT St James

A joint publication by Exeter St James Forum & Exeter St James Community Trust distributed to all households in St James Issue 9 May 2019



EXETER ST JAMES  
COMMUNITY TRUST LTD  
a shared interest



DELIVERING THE NEWS AND STORIES AROUND AND ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

DCC PARKING PERMIT SURVEY P.2

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## DEVONSHIRE PLACE ORCHARD BIO-BLITZ

Some of you will remember the official launch of the Devonshire Place Orchard Regeneration Project in 2014 which was set up to return an abandoned Victorian apple orchard to its former glory. This is just one of the green spaces in St James where residents are working to improve the quality of the area whilst retaining historic origins and helping the environment.

Last summer, Devonshire Place's very own resident entomologist, together with various other experts donated their time for a Bio-Blitz and identified over 200 species of insects, plants, birds, and other wildlife in the Orchard. Further recommendations were also suggested to establish a greater bio-diversity. These included changing meadow and grass cutting regimes to encourage wildlife and creating 'corridor' and 'hot spot' areas for wildlife to connect habitats whilst maintaining a balance with people accessing and using the Orchard.

Since then, the project has been working with Exeter City Council to implement these recommendations. Local volunteers have mapped out areas where the grass can be kept longer and have created two log piles with wood purchased from The National Trust grounds at Killerton and Knightshayes.

This summer there are plans to have a second 24hr Bio-Blitz where it is hoped many more interesting species will be identified! We all look forward to hearing the results but I am sure you will agree that the project is already a great success and a beautiful asset due to the hard work and dedication of friends and residents of Devonshire Place.



find out more at  
[www.exeterstjamesforum.org](http://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.

## Free graffiti removal

Many of you may be exasperated by the mounting issue of graffiti in our ward. Everyone can help to reduce this problem by keeping their own property free of graffiti; this in turn deters further graffiti on their own and neighbouring properties and gives a clear message to offenders that their tags will not be tolerated.

Exeter City Council has continued its commitment to tackling this problem by repeating its offer of free graffiti removal upon request. You can follow the link on the council website to report graffiti on your own property or public areas: <https://exeter.gov.uk/clean-safe-city/anti-social-behaviour/report-some-graffiti-in-a-public-place/> You can also email [cleansing@exeter.gov.uk](mailto:cleansing@exeter.gov.uk) You will need to complete a simple disclaimer form via this link. For those who do not have access to a computer, please telephone: 01392 277888 and ask for "Graffiti Removal."

Exeter City Council hopes to deal with most requests within 20 days.

**Help to keep our neighbourhood clear of graffiti.**

# Harry's

ESTD 1993

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## A fond farewell to our County Councillor Jill Owen

Jill Owen has retired after 24 years as a County Councillor. Jill began in 1993 as ward councillor for Rougemont and St Leonards, which included parts of what is now St James and St Davids. Jill later moved out to Priory and St Leonards due to boundary changes and has for the last 4 years represented St Davids and St James, where she now lives.



Most of Jill's time has been occupied by highway matters, in particular parking and the maintenance of roads and pavements. When asked which matters have caused her the most concern over the years, she affirmed this to be student related issues, increasingly so as the University continues to expand. Jill explained that although student cars were an issue 24 years ago, in recent times problems have escalated and admitted that although she has tried hard to tackle this situation, it has been without any notable success. Jill believes that the University can and should do more to deter students bringing cars to the city.

Anti social behaviour in St James has been another main concern for Jill, with noise complaints, in particular the reporting of loud parties and young people walking through the ward after drinking sessions, being the main contributors. Jill has also been fighting to tackle an acute drug dealing problem in St Davids, made worse by dwindling police numbers.

On a positive note, Jill is pleased to have been able to allocate money from various available council funds to assist projects within the ward such as St Sidwell's Community Centre, Veitch Lamp Post Trail project, St David's Community Warden Scheme, Theatre Alibi and Queen's Crescent Garden, two of which are featured in this issue.

Jill plans to spend more time with her grand children and pursuing her language interests but has hinted that we may see her again in a voluntary capacity. At the last meeting of Exeter St James Forum Steering Group, appreciation was expressed for Jill's stalwart support for the Forum together with best wishes for a well-deserved retirement.



## PARKING PERMIT SURVEY RESULTS IN CANCELLATIONS

Any car owner, whether commuter or student, tempted to apply fraudulently for a resident's parking permit **BEWARE!**

Following last year's 'Have Your Say!' meeting where suspected instances of abuse of residents' parking permits were raised, the Forum accepted a proposal from a local resident, and together with Cllr. Jill Owen, met Devon County Council officers who agreed to investigate the eligibility of a small pilot sample of permit holders whose cars were parked in residents' parking bays across St James.

The investigation is yet to be completed, but DCC has supplied an interim summary of results of about 1/3 of the data collected. This reveals 28% of the permits displayed in the vehicles concerned have been cancelled as no evidence of eligibility was provided at DCC's request.

It is too early to reach any firm conclusion regarding the scale of the problem. It may be that no further instances of abuse come to light, but should a similar proportion of permits cause such concern that DCC again decides cancellation is appropriate, residents struggling to find a space to park during term time are likely to demand a fuller investigation with more robust scrutiny of eligibility evidence before permits are issued and more rigorous checking of the permits displayed in parked cars.

### WATCH THIS SPACE!

Only residents of St James who are over 90 years old will remember the time when the approach to Well Street Bridge wasn't dominated by the green cladding of "The Old Grandstand" at St James Park. Built in 1925 to replace a previous stand destroyed by fire, the building will be dismantled during the summer of 2017 to be replaced by a smaller, safer and more functional structure. This will not be as difficult a wrench for City fans as was the 'destruction' of the Cowshed in the 1990's, but nonetheless it is a building that is redolent of a bygone era and a reminder of the changing face of St James Ward.



## SUCCESS FOR THE LOST TREASURES OF ST SIDWELL'S

St Sidwell's Community Centre has been running a Heritage Lottery funded project 'Reviving Lost History and Building Community' since July 2016. As part of this project they recently ran an appeal to restore The Lost Treasures of St Sidwell's.

On May 4th 1942, St Sidwell's Church was bombed during the Exeter Blitz. The church was originally built in 1812 and its unique and beautiful stained glass windows featuring Exeter's Patron Saint were rescued, put into storage and forgotten about until their recent rediscovery. Two statues, of St Sidwella (Exeter's Patron Saint) and St Boniface, by world renowned Victorian sculptor Harry Hems, also survived the Blitz but, until recently, lay forgotten in their grounds. The Community Centre recently ran a Crowdfunder to raise £5000 to help restore these lost treasures.

By the 75th anniversary of the Exeter Blitz on May 4th the team at St Sidwell's had successfully raised a fantastic total of £5463 meaning that The Lost Treasures, once restored, will be homed at St Sidwell's Community Centre for everyone to enjoy and feel proud of. This amount (over their original target) will also help them extend their work to help to revive

the rich history of Sidwell Street that was lost in 1942, by creating a funky archway over the entranceway to St Sidwell's Community Centre, reflecting & updating Georgian heritage.

Dave Wright, the St Sidwell's Centre Manager said: *"In part, of course, our appeal was about restoring pieces of heritage that survived the bombing of Exeter in 1942, but our heritage project isn't just about the past, it is also about the present and the future. By bringing people from all walks of life together to focus on reviving the long and rich history of this vibrant but often neglected part of the city, our heritage project is supporting St Sidwell's ongoing work to promote inclusion and to build a stronger local community."*

You can pledge to support the Lost Treasures of St Sidwell's by purchasing beautiful historic prints or various courses and events on their Crowdfunder appeal web page at [www.crowdfunder.co.uk/the-lost-treasures-of-st-sidwells](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/the-lost-treasures-of-st-sidwells) and you can read more on our own or the church website about this extraordinary discovery.

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**Trust News**

In January the Trust Board was delighted to welcome, Trust and Forum member, Rebecca Bower as a new Director. Rebecca's expertise is in finance and accounting and she has already proved invaluable in organising the Trust's accounts to a professional standard. We currently have over 230 members but hope many more will join now that the end of the process to acquire Queen's Crescent Garden is in sight and we are on the brink of being able to begin in earnest the restoration and reinvigoration of this wonderful green space at the heart of our community. If you haven't already, join the Trust and help make good things happen in St James! **For details see the Trust page at [www.exeterstjamesforum.org](http://www.exeterstjamesforum.org)**

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## WELL WELL WELL!

You might wonder why Well Street is called Well Street. Well, it's wells. This area of St James has been the supplier of water to the City since the Roman period due to a large number of springs feeding the now buried Long Brook which flowed to join the River Exe near the Mill on the Exe pub. If you stand at the end of South View Terrace by the railway bridge you can hear rushing water under the man-hole covers. There also used to be an open gully at the side of the railway running with water all year round – that too has been buried in a pipe, much to the chagrin of the vegetable gardeners above the station! Interestingly, before Powderham Crescent was built, the site was known as Cistern Field. By medieval times there were several wells in St James feeding a system of wooden pipes which went into the underground passages to public water fountains in the city centre.

When the railway was built around 1860, they dug out the cutting and created the



Cathedral Well Head at St James Park Station tunnel under Old Tiverton Road. This work involved rebuilding several of the ancient wells. St Anne's Well was close to the tunnel entrance below Prospect Park. On platform 1 at St James' Park station there is a brick structure partly buried in the bank by the steps at the bottom of the path. This is the Cathedral Well Head (see photograph), built several metres below the original ground level. Additionally, the St Sidwell's well has recently been excavated and can now be seen in the Rabbit Vegan Café at 3 Well Street.

The ancient wells are probably still working today, if only we could get in and have a look.

## University asks residents

Exeter University has launched the 2017 Community Survey and we are seeking responses from Exeter residents. The survey asks a range of questions about the community engagement activity undertaken by the University and Students' Guild - with an opportunity to suggest ideas for future projects and campaigns.

Responses are combined with ongoing feedback received by the University to help revise our Community Engagement Strategy for the next three years. Your opinion is extremely valuable to us and we hope you can take around 10-15 minutes to complete the survey. An online version of the survey can be completed here: [www.exeter.ac.uk/surveys/community](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/surveys/community) Hard copies of the survey will also be made available within the summer edition of the 'StreetWise' newsletter.

If you require additional hard copies of the survey, please contact Rory Cunningham, Community Liaison Officer on: 01392 723721 / [streetwise@ex.ac.uk](mailto:streetwise@ex.ac.uk)

## QUEEN'S CRESCENT GARDEN NEWS

Despite the frustratingly slow progress it appears that the CPO and lease agreement between the Trust and City Council are in the final straight! The Council has confirmed there were no objections at the final consultation stage, so now we await the outcome of negotiations between legal representatives as the lease agreement is finalised.

Meanwhile the Project has benefited from generous donations and grant funding. Cllr. Jill Owen awarded every last pound of her County Council's 'Invest in Devon' capital grant allocation to the Project before standing down as our County Councillor. This will enable further work on the walls and new entrances over the coming year. Thornton West Residents' Association donated a further £103.04, this time from the proceeds of a Christmas Event, and a local resident, Alice Sefton has recently very kindly donated a large number of suitable, reclaimed external grade bricks that will be used for the next phase of wall repairs. It is great to witness the community spirit willing this Project on!

Many thanks to these people and to those volunteers who have once again commenced the regular mowing of the grass, making the garden a pleasant destination even before the transformation that will begin to take place once the lease is signed and major funding has been secured. More volunteers to join the team are always welcome – contact [info@exeterstjamesforum.org](mailto:info@exeterstjamesforum.org). It is now possible to access the mower after work hours and at the weekend, so if a 9-5 job has prevented your involvement in the past, do reconsider! It is always a joy to see people using this precious community space especially during the warmer months, but we would like to send out a plea to dog walkers to ensure, please, that they clean up after their dogs, so that the experience is also a joy for each and every user!