

# ABOUT St James

A joint publication by Exeter St James Forum & Exeter St James Community Trust distributed to all households in St James Issue 2 Autumn 2015



DELIVERING THE NEWS AND STORIES AROUND & ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

EXETER ST JAMES  
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## THE WAY FORWARD

### BETTER TERMS

It's almost that time of year again when the city's population swells, as the freshers and returning students arrive for the start of term. The University and the Guild of Students, in conjunction with a range of partners, have been busy preparing for this influx by putting various measures in place to educate the students about life in Exeter.

All students will receive a welcome email, emphasising the need to socialise safely and responsibly and there has been increased work done with private landlords and the providers of purpose built accommodation, to emphasise the safety and conduct messages given to students via a new online community newsletter. Additional staff support for the Welcome Team Volunteers (a body numbering around 200) has been given and this has included making two additional Estate Patrol vehicles available.

A bin audit has been completed in the key student streets in St James ensuring that the



The Peace Makers – the 200 strong freshers welcome team

appropriate bins are in place for the start of the year and a Freshers' Week litter-pick, along Pennsylvania Road and Longbrook Street, will be organized by the Exeter Student Volunteers.

Further to all this, the University has been engaged in working with the Best Bar None network to increase positive messages about responsible drinking.

The Community Liaison Officer, Rory Cunningham, is keen to remind residents that the Estate Patrol can be contacted 24 hours a day on 01392 723999, if you are

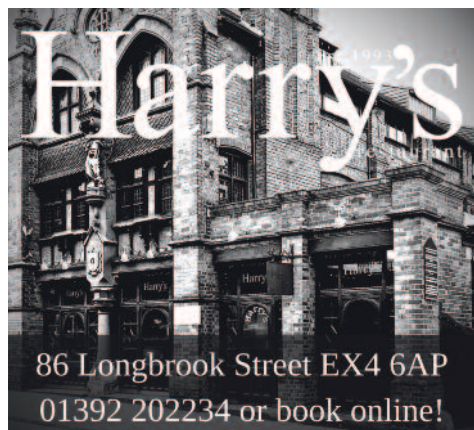
encountering noise and disturbance from student properties. The patrol can get to properties in St James relatively quickly and Rory will follow this up by visiting those properties contacted. He stresses that past experience has shown that very few repeat complaints have been made about the same student address after an initial house visit has been made.

If you would like to find out more about preparations for the start of the new academic year please contact Rory on

**01392 726252 or email: [streetwise@ex.ac.uk](mailto:streetwise@ex.ac.uk).**

### STUDENT ACCOMMODATION BEHIND FOOTBALL CLUB?

Exeter City FC needs to replace the old green stand on the Well Street side. To pay for a new stand and other improvements, the Football Club and its developer, Yelverton Properties, are proposing to build 320 student units on land behind the Big Bank stand (northern end) and the adjacent Yeo & Davey site on Old Tiverton Road. Pre-application public consultation started in July.



Why does this matter to local residents? Because St James has policies in our Neighbourhood Plan for appropriate mixed use development on this site, for purpose-built student blocks and for sustainable design. These policies are intended to maintain a balanced community. More than half the residents of St James are full-time students.

Another 300 students can only add to the

imbalance. While the University continues to grow, purpose-built blocks in St James will not take pressure off the demand for student HMOs.

Yelverton says student accommodation is the only way to finance a new stand. ESJF's Planning & Design Panel does not agree. If the future of Exeter City FC is so important to the city of Exeter, the council could assist in finding viable alternatives to student-only development.

**What do you want for our neighbourhood? Keep up to date with the St James Park Development proposals and send your comments to:**

[www.thestjamesparkdevelopment.com](http://www.thestjamesparkdevelopment.com)

FIND OUT MORE AT [www.exeterstjamesforum.org](http://www.exeterstjamesforum.org)



# Queen's Crescent Garden

## Planning Application Successful!

The application by Exeter St James Community Trust Ltd for planning permission for change of use of Queen's Crescent Garden from private to public open space has been granted. Many thanks to all who wrote in support. The QCG Project Group must now await further progress by Exeter City Council towards the compulsory purchase of the garden before bidding for the major funding required for Phase One of the community's Masterplan.

In the meantime it is vital that the QCG fund continues to grow to contribute towards the

matchfunding that will be required for successful bidding. Just over £250 profit was raised for the project on 28 May at the Tea in the Garden event. The refreshment table fairly groaned with delicious home-made cakes and elsewhere plantsales drew an eager crowd of people looking for inspiration for their own gardens.

Local residents and groups from across the city have volunteered to help undertake renovation and maintenance tasks to keep the garden as attractive as possible in the

interim period. Four teams have shared the grass cutting using an excellent petrol mower donated by another resident. An enthusiastic group of young police cadets, with advice from University of Exeter grounds staff, spent a couple of hours on May 28 removing years of ivy growth from a section of the wall. A large group of well-equipped volunteers from Exeter Round Table descended on the garden on the evening of 15 June to reclaim a long section of border along Queen's Crescent. Any offers of help with garden maintenance will be gratefully received – contact [info@exeterstjamesforum.org](mailto:info@exeterstjamesforum.org).

## TRAFFIC UPHEAVAL FOR ST JAMES

**Major changes to the road system north and south of Sidwell Street are proposed in the planning application for the redevelopment of the Bus & Coach Station area. They will have a big impact on St James.**

Crown Estate and TH Real Estate, joint applicants for the redevelopment of the shops and parking area on the east side of Paris Street, intend to pedestrianise the top end of Paris Street. The knock-on effect for St James is a new one-way system for part of York Road and King William Street and changes to several junctions. The John Lewis end of New North Road will become two-way for buses and taxis only.

Exeter St James Forum met the applicants' team in late August to discuss our many concerns,

including the expectation of more rat-running through residential streets. Our Planning & Design Panel has sent preliminary comments to Exeter City Council. Until there is more robust evidence that the closure of Paris Street is justified and that road changes will work, we are objecting to the outline application. We need to be satisfied that measures will be taken to minimise the impact of traffic on residential streets (Neighbourhood Plan policy T2 on through traffic).

To find out more about the redevelopment and traffic changes, go to Exeter City Council's website: [www.exeter.gov.uk](http://www.exeter.gov.uk). **Planning application no. 15/0791/01.**

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

Facts... Anecdotes... Stories... Please email us at [info@exeterstjamesforum.org](mailto:info@exeterstjamesforum.org)



## Another successful AGM for the Forum

It was Exeter St James Forum's fourth AGM and members could have been forgiven for giving it a miss, but didn't. It was a good attendance for what was expected to be a routine meeting.

The business went smoothly and we have a newly elected steering group, an approved treasurer's report for 2014/15 and draft budget for 2015/16. Names of Steering Group members and the financial reports can be found at [www.exeterstjamesforum.org](http://www.exeterstjamesforum.org)

One vacancy remains, the Chair of Exeter St James Forum. Having shared the load between elected officers last year, the Forum will continue without a chair for the time being. Annette Plaut, Treasurer, was thanked for her work in chairing Steering Group meetings in the past year.

An unexpected matter drew most discussion at the AGM; motions on the Local Government Boundary Commission's Draft Recommendations for Boundary Changes for Exeter City Wards and Devon County Divisions. Members were strongly in favour of sending critical responses to the Boundary Commission with our concerns about both proposals and their impact for St James. The Boundary Commission's final recommendations will be published on 29 September. The Forum's letters are on our website.



LaLa Community Choir Sings for Fun!  
Left: Exeter Round Table at Work  
Middle: Tea in the Garden Event

## Great Fundraising Opportunity!

**Do you shop or take coffee in John Lewis? A chance to show your support for Queen's Crescent Garden Project and help secure welcome funds!**

In the 3 months up till the beginning of November, John Lewis is featuring Queen's Crescent Garden Project as one of four beneficiaries in its 'Community Matters' green token scheme. Every time a customer makes a purchase, including a cup of tea or coffee, a token will be handed over for the customer to place in one of three boxes to show support for one of the local initiatives. In November £3000 in total will be donated, and will be allocated in proportion to the number of tokens shoppers choose to post in each box. The QCG project shares a box with a St Thomas community project, so will receive 50% of the amount tokens placed in its box 'earn', so needs as much support as possible!



## St James Allotments - a site in transition

These allotments, situated on a bank adjacent to the St. James Park Station on and accessed via Powderham Crescent, have undergone a massive change in the last two years illustrated by the before and after photographs below.

Following site clearance, the allotment holders have been busy achieving great results in both planting and encouraging wild life. Congratulations to those whose hard work has made a difference to the site!



## University Grand Challenges

**University students go Beyond Conflict.**

During the first week of June, undergraduate students from the University of Exeter took part in an interdisciplinary practical project - Grand Challenges - aiming to tackle 21st century

issues. The Beyond Conflict challenge looked specifically at entrepreneurial, collaborative and creative methods of conflict resolution and one of the enquiry groups dealt with the relation between the university and the local community. Throughout the week, students worked on a business plan for a Garden Party to be organised for local residents and students. The seven students in the group – Alice Davies, Lucy Heywood, Minh Tri Le, Yang Wang, Paul Enebeli, Deborah Adebisi and Melika Carlson-worked closely with representatives from the University and the local community, trying to find the best ways of improving the relation between the student and the local communities and developing long-term projects and collaborations.

The result is a business plan for a Garden Party to be organised for both local residents and students. It is intended that this will take place towards the end of September in Queen's Crescent Garden. We look forward to hearing more about this event.

## Bloomin' Lovely



## St James and the Royal Horticultural Society

If you think that St James has been getting a bit greener and more flowery over the last couple of years it could be something to do with a number of St James groups taking part in the RHS 'Its Your Neighbourhood' scheme. The RHS It's Your Neighbourhood (IYN) campaign supports community groups in cleaning up and greening their immediate local environment.

More than 1,600 groups already take part around the UK and each group receives an annual visit from an IYN assessor who provides feedback and advises how further improvements might be made. Those taking part report cleaner, greener and safer surroundings, a growing sense of community pride, increased rates of local recycling and environmental awareness, and a reduction in anti-social behaviour with the regeneration of run-down areas.

This year seven St James groups entered this scheme. These are: Bury Meadow Park; St Sidwell's Community Centre; Queen's Crescent Garden; Powderham Crescent Garden; St James Park Station; St James Vegetable Gardens (allotments) and Devonshire Place Orchard. We hope you have noticed some improvements in these places. The assessor visited at the end of July and we will hear how we got on before too long.

In addition St James entered the RHS Britain in Bloom competition this year for the second year running. Last year we were given a silver award and we are hoping for an improved score this year.

We would encourage more St James based groups to consider taking part in the RHS IYN scheme. There are a number of sporting clubs in our ward, which might consider joining, as well as some gardens or streets, which might be interested. If you would like more information do look at the RHS web site [www.rhs.org.uk/communities/campaigns/britain-in-bloom-exhibitors/welcome](http://www.rhs.org.uk/communities/campaigns/britain-in-bloom-exhibitors/welcome)

or contact the Forum at...

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

# Local Round Up

## Prospect Park Bake Off

On July 19th a merry band of cake enthusiasts gathered in St. James hall for what proved to be a nail biting afternoon! At 3.30pm the judges descended to sample items from the six classes which included cakes, savoury quiches, scones and cupcakes, with categories specifically for women, men and children. Following the awarding of prizes and a very generous speech given by one of the judges, the bakers and their supporters sat down to a fabulous spread. It was a lovely convivial afternoon attended by around 50 people and it is hoped that it will be repeated next year, when it is suspected the competition will be closer and more fiercely contended!



## Powderham Crescent's BIG LUNCH



On Sunday 31 May for the fifth year running PCRA held its Big Lunch, the annual get-together for neighbours and friends, in the crescent garden. Despite a rather damp beginning this year's event was well supported and got off to a rousing start with an energetic performance of taiko drumming. After an excellent lunch further entertainment was provided by our local resident musicians prompting an outbreak of spontaneous dancing! Climax of proceedings was judging of the very closely contested customary cake competition with first prize awarded to Gemma Ruffle for her impressive looking beehive cake.

The Big Lunch is an excellent way of getting to know your neighbours whilst having fun and fostering a positive community spirit. Last year over 4.83 million people took part in the UK.



## Bury Meadow Residents' Association Summer Barbecue

The Tennis Club on Velwell Road hosted the annual summer barbecue on June 20th in bright sunshine.

Burgers were cooked, wine and juices shared and bowls of delicious food were cheerfully devoured by all. Even pets were welcomed. Afterwards we combined our intellectual skills to complete answers to a quiz about aspects of Exeter and our national heritage, which included the words to Edward Lear's "The Owl and the Pussycat"! Some of us even played with bats and balls before choosing our prizes from the raffle. The coming summer was well and truly celebrated.



## Devonshire Place Regeneration Project 2014- 2015

The official Restoration Launch took place in 2014 and was well supported by residents, neighbours, local councillors, students and the Devon Wildlife Trust.

The orchard has been thriving, the new trees are growing well and the planting has had a positive effect on the way the space is used. As it has improved, people are spending more time there having picnics, playing in the area beyond the Wildflower Meadow and, in particular, enjoying the new swings and wooden bars. The space has been respected and litter has been minimal.

A notice board has been installed detailing historical and botanical information about the site and several events have taken place including a wassail back in January. In March Devon County Council installed road tables which have created safer access to the orchard.

All year round the residents are involved in caring for and developing the orchard. In future a low, angled, pictorial information board is planned for young children and new benches have been commissioned. What a difference a year makes!

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## Exeter St James Forum has come a long way

Exeter St James Forum has achieved a number of firsts:

- First forum to be established to prepare a neighbourhood plan
- First referendum for and adoption of an urban neighbourhood plan
- First forum to set up a community trust to support projects identified in its plan

Above all, the Forum is helping St James to become a community by bringing together the residents' associations in St James and the many volunteers who sit on our project groups (such as Queen's Crescent Garden) and panels (Planning & Design Panel, for example).

We've been busy in the two years since the Neighbourhood Plan was formally adopted. There are regular meetings with the University at two levels – operationally about the issues such as noise and rubbish collection, and strategically – a joint meeting with the University, Exeter City planning and community liaison officers and St David's Neighbourhood Partnership on University growth and student behaviour.

Exeter St James Community Trust is the action arm of the Forum, ready to take on the lease for Queen's Crescent Garden as a public open space once ownership issues have been settled. A lease from Network Rail for St James Vegetable Gardens (the allotments) at St James Park Station is expected.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have helped us – St James residents, university wardens and other students, Exeter Round Table, police cadets – and our ward and county councillors.

**What next?** How do we achieve the community hub in Well Street/York Road area? By accepting the challenge, encouraging more volunteers and more residents' associations, and continuing to champion the policies and projects in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Our achievements give us confidence to keep going to make St James 'A Great Place to Live and Work'.

  
**EXETER ST JAMES  
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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
All Trust members are cordially invited to attend the very first AGM to be held on Monday 21 September 2015 in the Rougemont Room St Sidwell's Community Centre at 6.30pm. The meeting will last no longer than an hour.  
Not yet a Trust member? Help us achieve great things – visit the Trust page at [www.exeterstjamesforum.org](http://www.exeterstjamesforum.org) for more information and application forms.  
**Have Your Say Meeting**  
**St Sidwell's School Hall**  
**Wednesday 14 October at 7 pm**