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SUMMER EVENT QUEEN'S CRESCENT GARDEN

**SATURDAY 1st JULY
11AM - 3PM**

PLANTS, BOOKS & REFRESHMENTS!

A special guest appearance of 'Minerva' between 12PM and 2:30PM
Get up close and be charmed by this Little Owl!

Donations gratefully received from 10:30AM or contact
qcg@exeterstjames.org for collection

Ideas with offers to run more stalls and activities to increase the fun and raise funds for the Garden regeneration, also welcomed in advance.

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Litter Picking

Residents from Velwell Road and Horseguards have carried out several litter picks so far this year and have collected a lot of rubbish from the Hoopern Valley Path and the Horseguards playground. Exeter Community Initiatives would like to help organise another litter pick for the autumn – please let Maisaa (Duryard and St James Community Builder) know at duryardandstjamescb@eci.org.uk if you would be interested in getting involved!

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ABOUT St James

A Publication by Exeter St James Community Trust Delivered to all Properties in St James Issue 17 Summer 2023

DELIVERING THE NEWS AND STORIES AROUND AND ABOUT OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

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Exeter City Council
Supported by Exeter City Council New Homes Bonus

Devon County Council


FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.EXETERSTJAMES.ORG

Exeter's Mayor for the Year

In May Cllr. Kevin Mitchell became the Lord Mayor of Exeter! Kevin was born and raised in Exeter and has represented St James on the City Council for the past 20 years. The Lord Mayor is a ceremonial civic role and Kevin will be non-political during his time in office.

Kevin stated: "It has been a great privilege to have represented the community of St James for two decades and I will continue to carry out casework during the year. The role of Lord Mayor is a great honour and I look forward to representing the diverse City of Exeter over the next year."

Kevin will also continue to work as a Nurse Specialist and has chosen FORCE as his official charity. Kevin said: "As a Cancer Nurse I know first-hand the amazing support that is offered by Force to individuals and their loved ones following a cancer diagnosis. I am really looking forward to building up their profile, whilst championing their work and raising funds for our designated project to refurbish the Oncology Outpatients Department during my Mayoral year."



Cllr. Kevin Mitchell

Duke of Edinburgh enhances QCG

Trust Directors were delighted when local teenager, Alistair Smith, approached the Board hoping to undertake various wildlife projects in Queen's Crescent Garden as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. He has sown bee-friendly annuals, made a nest box suitable for a blackbird, and has plans for an insect hotel. Well done, Alistair!



Alistair Smith

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD


Lower Hoopern Valley

The University of Exeter has recently held an initial public consultation about the future of the Lower Hoopern Valley, an important green space for the local community. They have identified four main objectives for the area:

1. Enhance biodiversity and natural capital
2. Community engagement and education
3. Natural sciences research opportunities
4. Carbon sequestration and storage.

Following on from this stage the University is now engaging consultants to prepare proposals and designs for the Valley and there will be a second public consultation about these, expected towards the end of August.

During public consultation leading to the approval of the Exeter St James Neighbourhood Plan the overwhelming consensus of local residents was that the Valley should be kept open for the general public and there was a strong desire to see improved access. The Plan also recognised the desirability to restore, conserve or enhance the biodiversity value of the area. Exeter St James Community Trust believes these aims remain the case and would urge all interested parties to respond to the second consultation to ensure the University is made aware of just how much our community values the Valley, so please look out for information about it and take part to make sure your views are known.



COMMUNITY BALANCE

Can the vision become reality?

Planning decisions update

Two planning applications for purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) have recently been determined. Permission has been granted for the conversion of Beaufort House in New North Road to flats for 107 students, and although the application for 26 bed PBSA on the site of Maximum Motors in Howell Road was refused by Planning Committee, it was clear this would not be the end of the story.



Beaufort House

application (23/0583) for 9x 1 or 2 bed flats on the Howell Road site, the owner has already confirmed his intention to appeal the refusal of his previous PBSA application.

Development of this windfall site as much needed affordable housing for local people, would match the vision of the community expressed within the Neighbourhood Plan, but don't be fooled by this new application. The owner explicitly warned the Trust's representative of his plan to 'play the system' still ending up with at least 26 bed student accommodation. The new application shows that game is now underway as described.



Howell Road

Not taking 'No' for an answer

Meanwhile, an appeal has been submitted with the applicant looking to overturn the refusal to build a 10 bed HMO in the garden of 47 Union Road. And within a new



So, what can be done by individual residents to stem the tide of worsening imbalance?

- Respond to the Council's current

'Houses in Multiple Occupation planning policy consultation'

of interest to all concerned about community balance- runs until 3rd July 2023. More information on the Trust website.

- Keep an eye on the Trust website for these and further significant planning matters, and - keep objecting to applications that would increase community imbalance.

University student numbers

how sound is the evidence base underpinning the Consultation documents?

ECC invites views on 'the evidence behind our proposals'. One vital part of such an evidence base should be accurate data on the number of students occupying residential housing stock in St James. How unfortunate that the Council's proposals were drawn up when this remained withheld, especially as it is anticipated shortly!

Thanks to the much-needed, independent investigative journalism now provided by Exeter Observer Ltd (EO), a not-for-profit community benefit society like the Trust, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests have finally been revealing the extent of the long-suspected misrepresentation of student numbers habitually given by the University. The provision to the Council over the years of serious under-estimates,

has clearly resulted in flawed evidence bases for formulation of related planning policy. The Council has long-recognised and regretted the unreliability of its own best estimate numbers of students living in HMOs using council tax exemption data, so it is unfortunate that the HMO consultation is being undertaken just at the time when accurate figures of the number of students living in the city's residential housing stock should soon be available. Would it be wise to pause the review?

EO is awaiting a final piece of information, so far withheld by the University, which will allow accurate determination of this number for the last full academic year. EO explains: *after Information Commissioner's Office investigation, our public interest quest to publish the truth about the university's impact on the city's housing supply has led us to a First-tier Information Rights Tribunal where a judge will decide the case sometime in the next few weeks.*

Read the full, shocking facts published 22 May 2023 at www.exeterobserver.org, under title *University comes clean on true Exeter campus student numbers over past two decades.*

A message from our Community builder

My Name is Maisaa Sweid, and I am the Community Builder for Duryard and St James. My role is to map what resources exist; create new networks and connect people and opportunities. I also support people to grow their own ideas and try new things together to help improve wellbeing and make our

community an even better place to live. So, if you've got an idea for your street, be it a community garden or a little library, but don't know how to start, I can support you to turn it into a reality. From listening to St James residents, I can see a lot of ideas sprouting in spring, such as laughter yoga, litter picking, yoga in the park, international picnic, women dance classes, women swimming and more! What else would you like to see/enjoy doing in the community? If you feel you are happy to

start or support an idea, please talk to me so that we can work on it together.

As a community builder, I do a lot of 'walk and talk' with residents who love to chat about their life in the area, so if you would like to do that and know more about my work and what's happening in your community, please subscribe to my monthly newsletter and get in touch: Email: duryardandstjamescb@eci.org.uk Tel: 07746472581 Facebook: Duryard St James CB

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JOIN THE TRUST!

Exeter St James Community Trust Ltd is a not-for-profit charitable concern that exists solely for the benefit of St James.

- Become a member for just £5, or more if you can
- Send us a donation or help us raise funds
- Maybe you could join the team as a director. We need people with ideas and a vision for St James
- Already one of our 200 plus members? Why not encourage family, friends and neighbours to join
- Membership is open to everyone - individuals, businesses and organisations - whether local or from further afield

Complete the application form to become a member for as little as £5 - or more if you can

www.exeterstjames.org

QUEEN'S CRESCENT GARDEN

We've already made huge steps forward in the regeneration of Queen's Crescent Garden, but...

We can't let the grass grow under our feet

We need support as well as volunteers to help maintain the Garden

- What else might we undertake now or in the future?
- What improvements would you like to see?

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WE CAN'T DO IT ALONE – WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT



New Noticeboard

New QCG Noticeboard

We are grateful to the Safer Exeter Community Sparks Fund for the award of a grant which has enabled the Trust to source and purchase a replacement noticeboard for Queen's Crescent Garden. The old one had seen better days and was no longer fit for purpose. Now we have a brand-new splendid noticeboard, an imposing feature to the garden's Longbrook Street entrance.

In this prominent position it is visible to all passers-by and will serve to inform the public of the Trust's work in enhancing our local community. Another improvement to the garden environment, we hope the noticeboard will further help to engender a sense of pride in the public ownership of this green haven at the heart of our city.

SAFER EXETER
Making our city safer for all

Nature friendly Horseguards

Local residents living in Horseguards got together to look at increasing the nature friendly planting on the estate. Over the past 6 months, new trees have been planted as well as more bee friendly plants such as lavender. Local residents have also helped plant wildflower bulbs (including bluebells and narcissi) and prepare a wildflower patch,



which has been planted up with annuals and perennials and looks to be flourishing! Delicious bakes were provided by local residents to help fuel the digging!



Waverley Avenue Coronation Party



Residents enjoying the Waverley Ave. Coronation Street Party on 7th May