

Welcome to the ABOYNE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION monthly newsletter for
NOVEMBER 2014

This newsletter aims to keep our members up to date with any developments, major and minor, that are likely to have an impact on where we live.

ST CLAIRE'S, CHURCH CRESCENT

The proposed development of the former St Claire's nursing home into a HMO (Houses in Multiple Occupation) - which in its current form aims to house 17 people on a short-term basis - is concerning many residents. ARA were present at a packed (around 100) and heated meeting with the charity and the council on Nov 21. Many views were expressed - here is a précis of Ward Councillor Simon Grover's very fair summation. A follow up meeting has been agreed, but we are still awaiting a date.

"...I remain unconvinced by the proposal and am against it in its current form. Whilst that is my view, I will do my best to help residents have their voices heard, whatever their views are. If anyone in St Peters ward of whatever view feels that they are NOT being heard, I would ask them to contact me..."

I (am) seeking a significant change to the proposals. It may be that Hightown can be persuaded to explore selling the building and creating smaller, more 'human scale' temporary housing units in St Albans. For me, density of tenants in the proposed facility is the biggest issue, the one that the largest majority of people seem to agree on, and the one that perhaps has the most possibility for change...

The other factor in all of this has been the disastrous communications coming (or not coming) from Hightown and the Council. Residents have been completely let down on this, and are understandably fuming...I will be urging much greater openness from now on..."

For further information contact stclairesactiongroup@gmail.com; cllr.s.grover@stalbans.gov.uk; or speak to us at the ARA - aboynera@gmail.com We are aware there are a range of views on this development. The charity involved is Hightown Praetorian And Churches Housing Assoc. Councillor Chris White is also very involved - more info at www.chriswhite.mycouncillor.org.uk.

THE BRICKYARD

The Brickyard pub was granted a licence on its second application. Many who objected to both applications could not really detect what had changed in the interim. The enforcement notice regarding the breach of planning - the owner has overextended the property way beyond the agreed planning limit - will be heard on Tuesday December 2. If you're thinking this all sounds a bit strange - surely Planning and Licensing work together, and can't possibly operate separately? - sadly they do.

IT'S YOUR ARA TOO!

People - we need more of you to join our committee. Our original band of 6 has barely been augmented since we revived the ARA nearly two years ago. With a few more of you on board, we can spread the workload and it therefore needn't be a huge drain on your spare time. Please get in touch with any one of us if you are at all interested, and we can explain more, and discuss what roles would best suit your own area of interest or expertise. Right now we'd welcome help with our new website. Don't worry, a conversation is not a commitment.

ABBAY LINE CLOSURE

The Abbey Line will be closed for 4 weeks from 19.30 on Saturday 29th November until Monday 29th December. Rail replacement buses will aim to get you there instead - though maybe not as quickly. There are some further closures planned for January and February; it's all part of an improvement plan. We're not sure how well this has been publicised - don't get caught out.

PARKING CONSULTATION FOLLOW UP

The non appearance of any results has been commented on, so we've chased this up. Apparently the analysis of the returns is now complete and results will be on the Parking Consultations Completed page of the SADC website sometime next week -<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/trafficregulationorders/completedconsultations/>

HAPPY WITH YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY?

Herts County Council's "inspiring Libraries" consultation on changes to our library service runs until December 7. If you want your views heard on this, have your say at www.hertsdirect.org/inspiringlibraries or use the pen and ink option - there are questionnaires at local libraries.

STRATEGIC LOCAL PLAN

The ARA contributed to this rather dense document - well done to any members who managed to read it, we'd love to know what you made of it. Difficult decisions about the Green Belt are likely to dominate the next few years in this part of Herts; meanwhile, our main area of local concern is the potential development threat over Aboyne Lodge School. Here's a summary of what we wrote - **The proposal to locate a major retail development (department store) in Drovers Way raises concerns. Any development here would entail the removal of the current car park and Aboyne Lodge. Neither action seems advantageous. Clearly the school is a major asset, not just as a valuable educational facility, but also as a cohesive influence in the locality. The Aboyne community is well established and over the years, the school has added to the social integrity of the surrounding streets. This community-enhancing characteristic would not easily be replaced. The city centre is already full of traffic. A large retail development in Drovers Way would inevitably only exacerbate the current congestion. This location would also seem to reshape the city centre in an unfortunate way, expanding it and diluting what is presently a well-contained and pleasing linear arrangement.**

FUNDRAISING FOR THE NEW MUSEUM IN THE OLD TOWN HALL

Staff and volunteers are now busy raising as much money as possible for the above; if you want to find out more or take part, go to renaissancestalbens.org.uk. The key aim of St Albans Trust is "the advancement of the education of the public by the development promotion assistance and improvement of museums historic buildings and archaeological sites in and around the District of St Albans." Which may sound a little worthy, but their impressive pedigree includes playing a key part in extending and improving the Verulamium Museum, and the reinvigoration of the Roman Hypocaust and Mosaic floor in Verulamium Park.

You can contact ABOYNE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION at aboyne@gmail.com

