

# ARA

## Aboyne Residents Association

ADELAIDE STREET  
BRITTON AVENUE  
CHRISTCHURCH CLOSE  
CHURCH CRESCENT  
CATHERINE STREET  
(South side)  
ETNA ROAD  
FOLLY LANE  
(38-150 evens only)  
GOMBARDS  
RUSSELL AVENUE  
SELBY AVENUE  
SPENCER ST  
STAPLEY ROAD  
UPPER DAGNALL SREET  
UPTON AVENUE  
WORLEY ROAD

Newsletter | January 2014

# Your new Aboyne Residents Association is up and running

**Hello from the new ARA committee. You may know some of us - we are...**

**Mary Conneely** - Chair

**Andrew Dawes** - Deputy Chair

**Cynthia Ireson** - Treasurer

**Sue Noon** - Secretary

**Brian Benson** - Planning Issues Lead

**Fiona Couper** - Communications Lead

**T**his committee came together formally in March 2013. We're motivated in part by the marvelous track record of this Association. **The ARA has protected our local area from many past proposals that would have seen a main road running through Gombards car park, and Aboyne Lodge primary school demolished to make way for a department store. We have a lot to thank them for!**

At a time when the face of local government is changing, a vibrant local residents association is vital. The aim of the ARA is to

promote and protect the common interests of people living in this area. We're here as a forum to exchange information and discuss problems; to be aware of and (where we can) to challenge the major issues, if we think that they may negatively impact the quality of life of city centre residents; and to keep us all alert to any developments and plans that will have a bearing on how and where we live.

We want to represent your interests; to work in close contact with other local organisations with complementary interests; to publicise both achievements and problems pertinent to this area; and to garner support when necessary if the things that matter to us are under threat and need to be safeguarded.

We're independent of party politics, but how we operate and where we direct our energies is determined by you, by local developments and by local government and how it's run. The recent Local Government Act – the Localism Act – has been something of a game changer. Its aim is for local groups to co-operate with local authorities in many aspects of decision making, particularly planning. The intent behind the Act may be sound, but it's new territory for everyone, and there are many loopholes.

## Street reps old and new

**E**ach of the streets listed below has – or will have – its own street rep. Street reps are the eyes and ears of the community. Some streets still have their reps in place; but the majority needs a new voice to come forward to take on this role.

If your street is one of those, and you think you would like to get involved, please get in touch at [aboynera@gmail.com](mailto:aboynera@gmail.com) – we'd love to hear from you and welcome you to the ARA. Below is a list of how these streets are either grouped together, or broken down into more manageable numbers.

**CHURCH CRESCENT** - rep Jackie Bell

**ETNA ROAD** - rep Bashir Javani

**GOMBARDS** - rep Christine Williams

**SELBY AVENUE** - rep Julia Duschenes

**SPENCER STREET & UPPER DAGNALL STREET** - rep Rita Waldon

**FOLLY LANE** - rep needed

**ADELAIDE STREET & CATHERINE STREET** - rep needed

**BRITTON AVENUE & RUSSELL AVENUE** - rep needed

**WORLEY ROAD / top & STAPLEY ROAD** - rep needed

**WORLEY ROAD / middle** - rep needed

**WORLEY ROAD / bottom** - rep needed

**UPTON AVENUE** - rep needed

**CHRISTCHURCH CLOSE** - a rep would be welcome; subs are collected differently

## Becoming a member

**I**t couldn't be easier. Your Street Rep is responsible for collecting the annual ARA subscriptions. Do say hello when they knock on your door (early in 2014) and take a few minutes to get to know them. We're asking for a household subscription of £5 per annum (or £3 for single households / unemployed). We'll take more if you insist and want to help support us (for things like the printing costs for this newsletter, the hiring of rooms for our AGM and other costs that will enable us to represent you and work with other groups).

All the committee work voluntarily and we are always looking for others who want to join and offer their expertise, on single issues or our ongoing work. It's also a chance to talk about the issues that most concern you. Your Street Rep will want to know, and will report back to us. Your Rep will carry a small card that will identify them as a genuine ARA representative.

**Living in the city centre, there will always be development issues. It's essential that we as residents work collectively to have our voice heard. We believe we have a valuable contribution to make to any proposals affecting our lives and the area we live in.**

---

## Our work so far...

**A**s a group, we're best described as a bunch of willing and interested neighbours. We know a lot more than we did a few months ago about planning, about licensing, and about how our local government works, within St Albans and at county level. We're getting to know our local councillors and were very pleased that Simon Grover attended our last meeting - many thanks to him.

The revived ARA is only one of many local residents associations in St Albans. We're working alongside many of them - meeting and sharing information, know-how and important local intelligence. Where we can we are linking up and working with others, to form a stronger voice and a more formidable community partnership.

It's an exciting time to be involved in local issues. All town centres are changing, and our own is very different to how it was even a few years ago. However, there are concerns too that St Albans is still lagging behind other similar towns with its lack of a Strategic Plan, making it easier for random (and sometimes poor) planning decisions to get passed. One of our main roles is to focus on maintaining the balance of St Albans, with its thriving restaurant and pub scene AND a dense city-centre residential population, which is increasingly attracting young families.

---

## Street lighting

**I**f you're not usually out and about after midnight, you may be taken aback at how dark some local streets are, now that the midnight-to-06.00 switch-off is well established. However, until the midnight hour, all street lights should be working. Increasingly it can seem that regular lights are also not being turned on, but don't mistake this as part of the money-saving exercise - they simply need repairing.

To report a fault, telephone **0300 1234 047**; or go to [www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults](http://www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults). With a bit of patience, you should be able to navigate your way through their intriguing online fault reporting system. Or try [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com)

---

## Potholes and the state of our roads

**T**his is a top concern for many of you. All we can advise is - **report, report, report**. Particularly if you feel a pothole is likely to cause an accident or damage to vehicles. You might even find you get taken a little more seriously if you make that point. And if a pothole has been filled in the past, but has since deteriorated and needs a further repair - let Herts Highways know. [www.fixmystreet.com](http://www.fixmystreet.com) is the place to go for this too, or tell us and we'll do it for you.

---

## Yellow lines are good news...

...for residents driving along Britton Avenue in the evening or on Sundays (that's probably most of us), the new double yellow lines are a welcome development. They signify progress in terms of residents' voices being heard, as the double parking was at best inconvenient and at worst dangerous. We can't claim credit for this development, but we're encouraged by it.

**Parking is a BIG issue** for city centre residents. Let us know where you feel we should focus our energies next on this subject. And we're not the only ones thinking about it...

---

## Proposed new parking strategy for St Albans

**P**arking is clearly a difficult issue and a new strategy is now being proposed and discussed. In principle, any efforts to address this issue are welcome. But what we've seen so far is not filling us with confidence that much will change for the better.

The issues prompting the strategy are as follows, and won't surprise anyone who parks locally -

- Demand for on-street parking often outstrips supply
- The multi-story car parks are underused
- There is dissatisfaction amongst the public with the ease and cost of parking
- Off-street parking is inflexible, with a one size fits all approach that does not encourage users to park in the most appropriate location

The paper focuses on car parks and we're disappointed that very little direct attention is paid to street parking and the likely interests and concerns of residents in areas like ours. Also, the fact that a significant amount of parking capacity in the district is controlled by a number of private operators would appear to pose an obstacle to change.

Disappointing too is the fact that there is no quantitative analysis of the parking problem. One point in the strategy is more cheering, and it's their green one - the proposal to refashion the tariff for residents' parking permits to reflect carbon emissions. While this idea may not address all the issues, it at least has a precedent in the charges for car tax discs, and it would clearly help environmentally.

---

## Changes!

**T**he old **Spotted Bull** public house is no more - building work is underway and a new wine bar will replace it. It's likely this will generate a need for more parking in the evenings, and an application is also in to extend the property. Licensing hours remain the same - for now - but the old Bull didn't always use its late license, so local people might be more aware of early hours activity than before, once the new venue is up and running.

**The Snooker Club** has also recently succeeded in being given a later license. So - more cars, and potentially more noise.

Meanwhile the old **Royal British Legion** building on Verulam Road is under threat of being sold to developers. A new group has got together to try to save it. If you want to find out more, or join their Action Group, contact them on [verulamroadra@gmail.com](mailto:verulamroadra@gmail.com)

---

It's important for you as residents to be aware of changes like these AS THEY ARE HAPPENING. **Your voice is vital and your concerns matter.** So, if you have any worries...

---

## ...contact us!

We want to know what's bothering you, and what we can help you with. Get in touch - email on [aboynera@gmail.com](mailto:aboynera@gmail.com) - we check emails regularly and will respond quickly.

---

## Have you ever thought of becoming a School Governor?

**T**here is currently a vacancy for a Community Governor at Aboyne Lodge School. Governors have responsibility for raising school standards through their three key roles of setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability and acting as a critical friend.

There are no particular qualifications or requirements, other than a willingness to give time to the role and a capacity for working with other people.

If you would like further information and to learn more about the work of school governors, please contact Nick Ridout ([gov.ridout@aboyne.herts.sch.uk](mailto:gov.ridout@aboyne.herts.sch.uk)).

---

## Enjoy a glass of wine at our AGM

Come along on Thursday, 27 March to the Lodge Rooms, Aboyne Lodge School at 8pm

**It's a great opportunity to talk about local issues, meet local residents, talk to your neighbours.** It's also a chance for us to update you on what we've been doing, what we've learned, and what's happening locally in the upcoming months. You will be most welcome and we hope more of you will want to join us.