

Community NEWS



AUTUMN/WINTER 2021

Christmas Street Party!

Thousands expected at spectacular City Centre event on Sunday 21 November

The festive season will get underway in St Albans District with a fantastic Christmas street party.

Much of the City Centre will be closed to traffic for the free-to-attend event – called the St Albans Christmas Cracker – which was cancelled last year because of the pandemic.

The fun will start at noon on Sunday 21 November and carry on until darkness falls around 5pm when the Christmas lights will be switched on after a countdown.

Among the attractions will be dozens of food, drink and gift stalls, Santa's grotto, funfair rides and live music from some of the District's most talented musicians.

Other highlights of the festive season across the District are:

St Albans District Mayor's Carol Concert – join the Mayor, Councillor Edgar Hill, for traditional carol singing at the Clock Tower in the City Centre on Sunday 12 December, 4pm to 4.45pm.

Harpenden Christmas Carnival in the High Street on Sunday 28 November from noon to 6pm, including the Farmers' Market, Santa's grotto, a funfair, live music and a procession from 3pm from Sun Lane with the lights being switched on at 5pm.

Redbourn Christmas Market – there will be some 90 stalls selling a wide range of goods along with takeaway food and drink in the High Street and Cumberland Gardens on Sunday 28 November.

Further information about festive events in the District will be available on the Enjoy St Albans website: www.enjoystalban.com.



Olympic legend Max Whitlock helped open Harpenden's new leisure centre, page 5.



What's on at the museums this autumn and winter, page 4.

Recycling and waste collection calendar, page 3.



Community News is published by St Albans City & District Council

www.stalban.gov.uk



Don't lose your voice at future elections!



The Electoral Commission

Secure Your Vote

If you received a canvass form or letter checking who is registered to vote at your address and haven't yet responded, it's important to do so now.

If you have just moved into your new property, you'll also need to register to vote individually. This can be done online by visiting www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. If you don't register, you may lose your right to vote at next year's local elections.

More information about the annual voter registration canvass and how to register is available at www.stalbans.gov.uk/household-voter-registration-canvass.

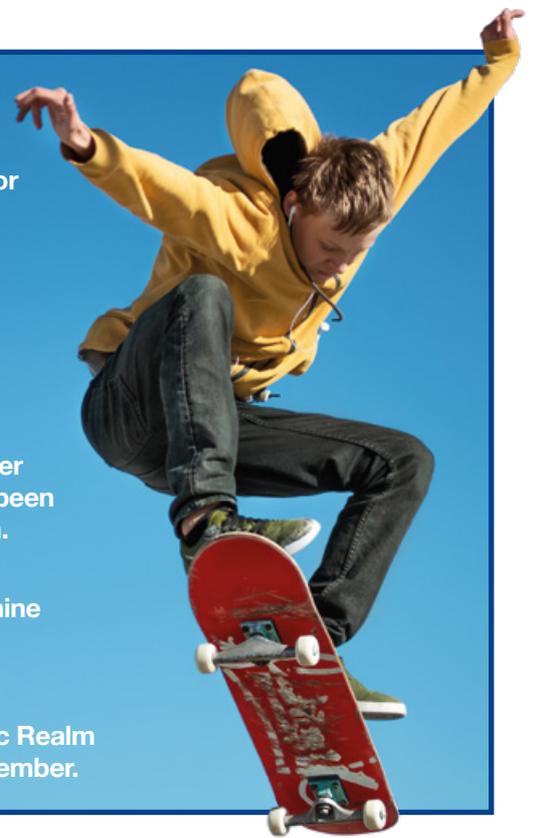
SKATE PARK

Plans to create an exciting outdoor skate park in St Albans are being considered.

The park would cater for the increasingly popular activities of riding skateboards, BMX bikes, roller skates and scooters.

A petition calling for a skate park was submitted to the Council earlier this year and a working party has been set up to look at the issue in depth.

The group will seek to establish a suitable location as well as determine how the park will be funded with community groups consulted throughout. It is due to report on progress to a meeting of the Public Realm Committee on Wednesday 24 November.



COVID Update

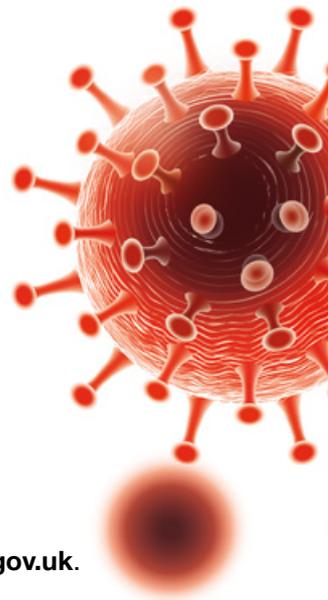
The Civic Centre – our main offices – have reopened again following the lockdowns.

As the virus remains a major threat, many of our staff are working remotely and people are asked not to request face-to-face meetings with Council officers unless absolutely necessary.

If you need help, our customer services team are available on the phone and virtual appointments can be arranged.

Most of our services, including the payment of bills, can be accessed via the MyStAlbans online portal at www.stalbans.gov.uk/mystalbans.

Local businesses and residents can also find advice and information about COVID on our website: www.stalbans.gov.uk.



Bonfire Plea

Residents are reminded to avoid having bonfires and to follow advice on letting off fireworks.

Gusts of smoke from bonfires can impact on people who are suffering from COVID or have other health issues such as a respiratory illness.

In addition, bonfires can result in calls to the emergency services, putting extra pressure on their resources.

The RSPCA has issued advice on how to make fireworks less

frightening for dogs and other animals.

Residents celebrating Bonfire Night, Diwali, the New Year or other occasions should follow the guidelines to minimise the risk of causing an incident.

The bangs and cracks of fireworks can be a terrifying experience for dogs as they have highly sensitive hearing.

For information on how to reduce the risk of fireworks upsetting or injuring pets, livestock and wildlife, see: <https://bit.ly/3DnzIUV>.

Eco Issues

Active Travel Boost

A plan to create better cycling and walking routes in St Albans District is to be drawn up to encourage active travel.

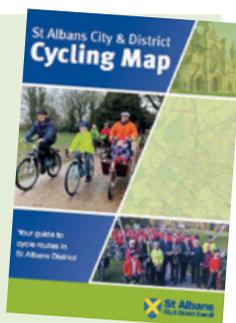
St Albans City and District Council (SADC) is to work with Hertfordshire County Council, the highways authority for the area, on the project.

The two councils have signed an agreement detailing their commitment to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Such plans are a new approach to identifying cycling and walking opportunities at a local level.

They are a long-term approach aimed at developing cycling and walking networks over a 10-year period and form a key part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.

One of the Council's main priorities is tackling the climate emergency with the promotion of green travel being one of the actions it is taking.



Green Flags

Five Green Flag awards have been given to parks and other open spaces managed by the Council.

Verulamium and Clarence Parks, Hatfield Road Cemetery and the Sopwell Nunnery were all given the national honour.

In addition, Verulamium achieved coveted Green Heritage Site Accreditation, supported by Historic England, for the care shown to its major features.

Green Flags are an international quality mark for parks and green spaces with the awards now in their 25th year.

Festive Season: Recycling and Waste Collection Dates

Normal Collection Day	Revised Collection Day
Mon 27 December 2021	Wed 29 December 2021
Tues 28 December 2021	Thurs 30 December 2021
Wed 29 December 2021	Fri 31 December 2021
Thurs 30 December 2021	Tues 4 January 2022
Fri 31 December 2021	Wed 5 January 2022
Mon 3 January 2022	Thurs 6 January 2022
Tues 4 January 2022	Fri 7 January 2022
Wed 5 January 2022	Sat 8 January 2022
Thurs 6 January 2022	Mon 10 January 2022
Fri 7 January 2022	Tues 11 January 2022
Mon 10 January 2022	Wed 12 January 2022
Tues 11 January 2022	Thurs 13 January 2022
Wed 12 January 2022	Fri 14 January 2022
Thurs 13 January 2022	Sat 15 January 2022
Fri 14 January 2022	Mon 17 January 2022
Mon 17 January 2022	Tues 18 January 2022
Tues 18 January 2022	Wed 19 January 2022
Wed 19 January 2022	Thurs 20 January 2022
Thurs 20 January 2022	Fri 21 January 2022
Friday 21 January 2022	Sat 22 January 2022



Help Improve Verulamium Park

Visitors enjoying historic Verulamium Park in St Albans are being urged to help improve the surrounding environment by not feeding the birds.

The practice may seem like a nice and harmless thing to do – but it has been causing problems at the park's two artificial lakes.

Feeding encourages birds to settle around the park rather than follow their natural migration paths. This causes overcrowding with more birds coming to the park than the natural habitat can sustain.

An excess of bird droppings, combined with discarded food, is adding more organic material to the already heavily-silted lakes. This can result in unsightly, odorous algae blooms and lowers water quality.

In the long-term, we are working with the Environment Agency and other partners on the Revitalising the Ver project.

This multi-million scheme will return the Ver to its natural course as it flows through the park and the Sopwell area of St Albans.

WHAT'S ON at the museums

St Albans Museum + Gallery, St Peter's Street, St Albans, AL1 3DH
Verulamium Museum, St Michael's Street, St Albans, AL3 4SW

St Albans Museum + Gallery

For detailed information about the events programme, go to: www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk.



The Remarkable World of Trees

Now until Sunday
23 January 2022,
Museum + Gallery, Free.

Trees play a central role in all our lives, supporting wildlife and our own wellbeing. During the COVID lockdowns, many of us explored the countryside and took a fresh look at trees, hedges and fields. Inspired by Kate Bretherton's book, *The Remarkable Trees of St Albans*, this exhibition will immerse you in the world of trees, from the soil they grow in to the insects, birds and animals that call them home.



Wreathing Willows

Monday 20 November 2021
at 11am, Verulamium Museum,
£5 per child.

Create a winter wreath from willow branches and other natural materials at a hands-on workshop. Bring along leaves and twigs. Perfect for 5 – 11 year olds.

Vintry Garden Tree Stories

Wednesday 8 December 2021,
meet at the Museum + Gallery,
11am, £5 per person.

Join Kate Bretherton, creator of The Remarkable World of Trees exhibition, for a winter walk through the Vintry Gardens. She will share the fascinating stories of the garden's trees, reflecting on their shapes, types and meaning.

Fibre & Form

Saturday 27 November
2021 – Sunday 17
April 2022, Museum +
Gallery, Free.

The first major exhibition of sculptural textile work by acclaimed artist Anna Ray. The focus is on large-scale sculptural pieces created by Ray over the past 20 years. It features two new sculptures, *Mesh* and *Rosette*, which were sculpted during the lockdowns as well as Ray's seminal wall piece, *Margate Knot*, originally produced for an exhibition at Turner Contemporary in 2017.



Festive Garland Workshop

Sunday 5
December 2021
at 2.30pm,
Museum + Gallery,
£25 per adult.

Anna Ray often takes inspiration for her artworks from handmade objects that she has seen or collected. In this workshop, you will make a garland inspired by a vintage French decoration that she once found in an antique shop, made out of rope and scraps of cloth.

For more details and to book tickets, go to www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk.

HARPENDEN LEISURE CENTRE'S OFFICIAL OPENING



Olympic gold medal winning gymnast Max Whitlock helped open Harpenden's new multi-million pound leisure centre.

Max, who won his third Olympic gold at the pommel horse in Tokyo this summer, was born and brought up a few miles from the centre.



He assisted the Mayor of St Albans City and District, Councillor Edgar Hill, with the official ribbon-cutting.

Joining them was badminton star Gail Emms who won silver at the 2004 Olympic Games.

Customers of Harpenden Leisure Centre, sports clubs and school and community groups were also present at the launch of the centre in Rothamsted Park.

They enjoyed a number of family-friendly games and activities including tennis sessions.

The centre was rebuilt by the Council as part of a £20 million project and is managed by leisure contractor 1Life. It has built up a growing membership of almost 4,000 with more than 1,500 local children on the Swim School swimming lesson programme.



The Eric Morecambe Centre's Opening

A new culture centre named after Eric Morecambe has been officially opened with residents enjoying a launch day event of shows, workshops and other attractions.

The Eric Morecambe Centre (EMC) in Harpenden includes a 511-seat theatre, an exhibition space with two functions rooms, a local history room, bars on two floors and a coffee shop with views across Rothamsted Park.

It was constructed on the site of the town's former sports centre and officially opened by

St Albans District Mayor, Councillor Edgar Hill, along with Eric's daughter Gail Stuart.

The EMC was built by the Council to replace ageing Harpenden Public Halls as part of a £20 million regeneration project. It is also managed by 1Life.

Eric was a Harpenden resident at the height of his international fame as a comedy double act alongside Ernie Wise.

The EMC's theatre boasts state-of-the-art production equipment to allow major touring shows to be staged as well as those put on by local groups.





Winter Health – advice from the NHS

It's important to take action during the winter to look after your own health as well as the health of your friends and family.

Winter is a busy time for the NHS and there are a huge range of services available, so knowing the best place to go to get the right help is vital.

Check out www.nhs.uk for advice on symptoms and the best source of help to meet your needs.

Using the right NHS service first time is better for you and helps the NHS to make sure that resources are used in the best way.

There are things we can all do to be ready for whatever winter throws at us.

These including keeping a well-stocked medicine cabinet at home, getting your flu vaccination and following COVID guidance such as getting your vaccine or booster when invited.

If you do fall ill with a cold or flu, it is best to rest, keep warm, drink plenty of fluids and take painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen.

When you are unwell, wash your hands thoroughly and regularly and stay away from care homes and health clinics for 48 hours after your symptoms end.

If you have an illness that just won't go away, make an appointment to see your GP or practice nurse or speak to them on the phone.

For 24-hour urgent health advice, including mental health help, visit www.111.nhs.uk or ring **NHS 111**.



CCTV Boosted

CCTV cameras have been installed at Verulamium Park to ensure it remains a safe environment for residents and visitors.

The cameras have been placed at three strategic locations and will be in operation 24/7, monitored from a central control room where other parts of the City are covered.

If an operator spots any antisocial behaviour or suspicious activity, they will alert the police so that they can respond immediately.



Burglary Prevention

When looking at how best to secure your home, start from the outside and work your way in.

Make sure you always lock any garden gates and keep fences in good repair. Laying down some gravel is a good deterrent as it is noisy to walk on.

Thorny plants or a trellis on top of perimeter fences can provide a hazard for intruders as do outside lights.

Make a habit out of checking ground floor windows are closed

and locked when you go to bed. Upstairs windows should be locked when the house is unoccupied.

You can make your homes even safer by installing some extra security devices such as cameras and alarms.

Be a good neighbour and keep an eye out for unusual callers in your neighbourhood and don't be afraid to call the police on 101 or in an emergency dial **999**.

For more crime prevention advice visit www.herts.police.uk/protectyourhome and www.hertscitizensacademy.org.

Mosaic Lettings

Mosaic Lettings is run by the Council and is offering a free service for landlords looking to rent out properties.

It will complete tenant background checks, property inventories, inspections and an end-of-tenancy clean for free.

We will also provide a bond deposit of up to two months' rent and pay up to two months' rent if the property is empty and re-let through us.

There is also a £200 cash bonus when we let your property.

Interested landlords should contact **mosaic.lettings@stalbans.gov.uk** or 01727 814674.



City Centre Development

A topping out ceremony has been held for the Council's major City Centre development.

The occasion marked a key milestone of the £60 million project, the completion of the reinforced steel frame.

Contractors Morgan Sindall invited Councillors, key stakeholders and some of its workforce to sign one of the concrete columns to mark the event.

The development is being constructed on the site of a former police station and NHS clinic which have been demolished.

It will include a residential block adjacent to a commercial one with the buildings separated by a landscaped pedestrian walkway that will wind through a revitalised Quaker Garden.

There will be 93 new homes including 60 for sale at market price and 33 for social rent. There will also be around 6,000 square metres of business space and 100 car parking spaces. It is due for completion in October next year.



E-billing

Residents are being urged to help the environment by signing up to have their Council Tax bills sent electronically.

By agreeing to ditch paper bills, you will be helping to preserve precious resources as well as saving Council Tax payers money.

It costs more than 40p to print and post a bill with thousands of households having to be contacted each year.

To sign up to e-billing, you just need to set up a MyStAlbans District account: www.stalbans.gov.uk/mystalbans.

parish council *noun*
 trative body of a PARISH

Community Governance

The Council will be conducting a community governance review of the District next year.

This will look at governance arrangements at parish and town council level to ensure they reflect local identities and are effective.

The review may consider various issues including whether to create a new parish or town council or alter electoral arrangements such as the number of wards or councillors.

It can also look at whether to change boundaries or group a number of parish councils together.

Further information about this type of review is available on the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's website: bit.ly/3uQQGT8.

A public consultation will begin in early 2022 with information becoming available on a dedicated page of the Council's website and at the Civic Centre council offices.

For further information, contact Electoral Services on elections@stalbans.gov.uk.



Bumper Turn-Out At St Albans Festival

More than 15,000 people attended the highlight of the District's Food and Drink Festival – the St Albans Festival.

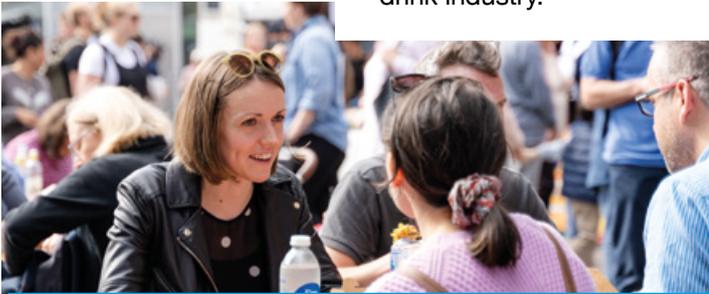
Huge crowds packed the City Centre for the return of the family event that was cancelled last year because of the COVID pandemic.

The many attractions included 70 stalls showcasing an astonishing variety of food and drink products, many from local suppliers. There was also a cookery theatre, charity fun fair, and a kids' zone with free arts and crafts activities.

Live music was provided by local musicians from two separate stages to add to the atmosphere.

A number of COVID precautions were taken, including using some extra streets and public areas to provide more space. There were multiple hand sanitiser stations, free disposable face masks and a team of cleaners were on duty.

The Food and Drink Festival is organised by the Council with the help of a number of partners including SA Law and St Albans BID. Its aim is to promote all aspects of the District's food and drink industry.



Food and Drink Festival Award Winners

Three community heroes have shared the single award presented by this year's Enjoy St Albans Food and Drink Festival.

Normally, the Festival makes around a dozen awards to celebrate the District's vitally important hospitality industry.

However, with the pandemic having disrupted business over the past year, it was decided to suspend all but one of them, the Kate D'Arcy Award.

This is for an individual who has given exceptional customer service.

The winners, pictured with the Mayor, Councillor Edgar Hill, were from left to right: Caz Kaur who runs the Portland Arms pub in Portland Street, St Albans; Jamie West who runs the Hare and Hounds in Sopwell Lane, St Albans, as well as the Rose and Crown, Sandridge; and Raihaanah Ahmed co-owner of the Meating Room restaurant, Catherine Street, and a trustee of the Sopwell Community Trust.



St Albans
City & District Council

Have your say... we welcome anything you want to say about our services.

We hope you enjoy reading Community News. If you can spare a moment, please email communications@stalbands.gov.uk and let us know your views and what else you want us to include.

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