



MINI-NEWSLETTER – SPRING 2026

Fishpool Street Residents' Association (FSRA)

THANK YOU TO 50% OF RESIDENTS WHO HAVE PAID THEIR £10 FSRA SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2026 – POLITE REMINDER FOR THOSE WHO HAVE YET TO PAY:

Account Name: Fishpool Street Residents Association

Sort Code: 30-97-25

Account Number: 00617601

Please use your “Surname/House Number” as the payment reference

Dear Residents and Members of the Fishpool Street Residents' Association (FSRA),

Please forgive another detailed update on bus matters. I am conscious that this topic has, in the past, prompted some frustration; however, it is important that residents are kept informed of developments—and, encouragingly, there has been genuine progress.

Survey findings

Last year, FSRA carried out a survey to understand residents' views on the impact of school coaches on Fishpool Street. Of the 74 respondents:

- 74% described the impact as “*excessive*”
- 16% as “*tolerable*”
- 9% as “*negligible*”

The key concerns identified were:

- Traffic congestion during drop-off and pick-up (73%)
- Damage and wear to road surfaces (56%)
- Noise from coaches (50%)
- Coaches exceeding the 20mph limit (44%)

These results clearly demonstrated the strength of feeling within the community.

Engagement with the school

Historically, engagement with the school has yielded limited progress. However, the 2024–2025 period has marked a notable shift, coinciding with the appointment of a new Headmaster, Mr Joe Silvester, and Bursar, Mrs Angela Higgs. Both have shown a willingness to engage constructively with FSRA and to consider practical solutions.

Progress to date

Several positive steps have already been taken:

- The introduction of Sumpter Yard as a morning drop-off point, reducing coach numbers on Fishpool Street from 13 to 11
- This arrangement is now embedded within the school's travel plan

- Bus drivers have been instructed to limit speed to 15mph
- Ongoing dialogue between FSRA and the school has improved significantly

In addition, FSRA proposed two further alternative morning drop-off locations:

- Waxhouse Gate
- Marks & Spencer/St Peter's Street

It is encouraging that a trial at Waxhouse Gate is proceeding. Once signage is in place, a number of buses will no longer need to use Fishpool Street in the mornings.

Marks & Spencer/St Peter's Street proposal

The school has declined to proceed with this option. The primary concern relates to student safety, specifically the need to cross Verulam Road—a busy arterial route—after walking via French Row.

A secondary concern is the longer walking distance for students compared with other drop-off points. While some may question this, it is worth noting the volume of equipment students carry, and that routes such as Romeland differ significantly in character from a major road crossing.

Evening arrangements (Romeland)

While evening dispersal at Romeland is not within FSRA's direct remit, it is worth acknowledging the school's efforts to improve safety and reduce congestion, including:

- Improved and clearer signage
- There will be a consultation about the development of an official coach stop opposite Welclose Street
- Exploring the use of Upper Yard for certain (e.g. 6:00pm) services
- Residents can assist to keep congestion to a minimum by keeping the coach bay free from parked cars?

Conclusion

Coaches will continue to use Fishpool Street in the evenings, and in poor weather may still do so in the mornings. However, the overall position is improving, and the school's increased willingness to engage represents a meaningful step forward.

This progress should be recognised. Madeleine Sansom

Talk by Sam Williams at Kingsbury Manor 18 June

Sam has kindly agreed to speak about his recent renovation of number 13.

Thanks to Jill and Adam Singer for offering FSRA to again use the Kingsbury Manor bothy and garden for the event.

The evening will start with some drinks and nibbles in the garden (weather permitting) from 6.30pm (for which a small charge will be made to cover costs – cash only please!).

Sam's talk will begin at about 7.15pm.

There will be 20 places only available, so please email k.taylor640@btinternet.com if you'd like to reserve a place.

Annual Plant Sale by Ann Stern

On Saturday 18th April Jenny & Anthony Jay opened their garden for the Annual Plant sale and swaps between neighbours and friends.

It was a lovely day, warm and sunny with a blue, blue sky. The flowers, plants, trees and bushes in the Jays' garden were looking absolutely beautiful. The tulips looked particularly splendid. Many neighbours and friends attended, swapping and buying the various plants set out on the gravel near the main gates. Neighbours and friends gathered in groups to enjoy the homemade cakes and biscuits and the tea and coffee provided. Then a walk through and around the delightful garden to smell the gorgeous scents

An Open Day has been arranged for a garden visit on Friday 26th June at 5.30 pm until 7.30pm and on Sunday 28th June between 2pm and 5 pm when the garden will be at its most stunning.

A very pleasant social occasion for everybody. Copyright for photos Stuart Macer.



St Michael's Manor 1586-2026 by Stuart Macer



St Michael's Manor stands on land originally belonging to St Albans Abbey, which, in 1538, was leased for 81 years to Henry Gape, a member of a family with a long tradition of service to St Albans.

Shortly afterwards the lease was converted to a sale, which explains why it did not fall into the hands of the King's Commissioners at the time of the Dissolution. Indeed, tradition has it that it was a Ralph Gape, said to have been the Abbey's last steward, who helped the Abbot pre-empt the King's designs and provide for the monks by selling some monastic property once the royal plans became apparent. In the event, he would clearly have been in a good position to negotiate for land which would be of use to the family, already operating a well established tanning business which seems to have been acquired from one Richard Done as early as 1436.

The lease defined the building as bounded by "The tenements of Fishpool Street, whereof in one of them Robert Longe, wheeler, and in the other Peter the Looder, the first abutting upon the King's Highway on the South part and upon Downfield on the North part..... and the second abutting upon the King's Highway on the North part and prior's pond on the South part, towards Kitchener's Mead and adjoining to the tenement of John Berge, carter, on the East part and the tenement of Robert Clement carpenter on the West part.....Timber needed for repairs to be taken at the assignment of the cellarer of the monastery out of the woods called Prayewood and Batchwood".

It is not clear when a house was first built on the site. The reference to the timber "for repairs" suggests that a building stood on the site before 1530, and this may well be incorporated in the present building which dates back to Tudor times; the cellar contains some evidence of an earlier mediaeval building for it can boast a number of Roman bricks, frequently taken from the ruins of Verulamium for use in new projects in mediaeval times, and the remains of an old flint wall. It is likely that the family began to build a new home for themselves shortly after the land passed into their possession and added new features as time went by.

The Oak Lounge, part of the original Tudor structure, has a fine Elizabethan plastered ceiling with decorations that include fleur de lys and stylised floral bosses; it also incorporates the initials of John Gape and the date 1586.

In 1684 the Mayor of St Albans leased to John Gape the younger" a piece of ground lying in the street of St Albans, joining the North side of his mansion house, about ten feet in breadth along the side of the house, with liberty to enclose the same with posts and rails, yet so all people may pass and repass without hindrance". The lease was for a hundred years at 1d (one penny) a year. This would most likely have been to provide a space for horses which would be tied to the rail- a remote anticipation of our present car parking problems.

The second part of the house was added in the time of William and Mary (1689 to 1694) and a third, smaller extension, which included a new dining room, kitchens and bedrooms was carried out in 1970. The various architectural styles have been designed, in the words of owner Michael Newling Ward at this time, "to make a very satisfying and harmonious whole while other details- a magnificent hand plastered rococo ceiling on the first landing, Georgian panelling in the Oak Lounge, and elegant Edwardian staircase and the like - contribute to the beauty and graciousness of the building".

"1985 saw the completion of the 1970 extension, adding six new rooms to the second floor, the whole attractively tiled and provided with curved dormer windows to match those of a hundred years or so ago".

The Gape family, builders and owners of St Michael's Manor for so long, played a prominent part in the history of St Albans. The third mayor after the granting of the first charter in 1553 was a Henry Gape and in all a Gape held the office of mayor on some sixteen occasions over a period of three hundred years. They also provided a vicar and several churchwardens of St Michael's Church.

The house was sold by the family in settlement of death duties in 1953 and after some years as a country club it was bought by Mr and Mrs Michael Newling Ward in 1965.

There has been much confusion about the history of the Manor lake. The lake does not appear on any map until 1822 and its appearance ties up with the probable date of a major landscaping of the gardens over two hundred years ago. Its relatively short existence became even more apparent in 1976 when Michael Newling Ward took advantage of the unusually severe drought to dredge 1300 tonnes of silt from the lake and invited staff of the Verulamium Museum to observe the process. The clearance revealed a variety of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century building materials and some chalk footings for timber buildings cut into the alluvial peat deposits which formed the plain of the River Ver. In addition, two or possibly three, large rectangular conjoined pits came to light in which were found a sherd of sixteenth century pottery, part of some leather shoes and a leather belt. A smaller oval pit was found on land previously belonging to the Manor and now part of number 133 Fishpool Street.

Henry Gape, the lessee of the monastic lands in 1538, was already well established as a tanner and on his death he left to his son John his freehold property in St Michael's and "all his other leather and hides in his yards and vats and bark ". It seems logical therefore to assume that the family business was moved near to the family home, where there was also a convenient regular supply of water from the River Ver, and that it was the remains of this that was uncovered. There is also documentary evidence as late as 1744 of a large tannery in this area.

The Herts Advertiser ran an article on 12th May 2016 about the sale of St Michael's Manor. The headline ran as 'Family sells St Michael's Manor in St Albans after 50 years in charge'.

It went on to say, "The Newling Ward family said members were "very pleased" to announce that after 50 years of running St Michael's Manor Hotel in Fishpool Street, St Albans, it has been sold to another family".

Sheila Newling Ward explained "My parents-in-law, late husband David, son Richard and daughter Philippa and I have all been involved in improving the buildings, grounds and business over the years".

"With no clear succession within the family and most of my children and grandchildren in Australia, and after much soul searching, I decided it was time to retire and spend more time with the family".

Its new owner, Mauritian born Raj Gunpath, said it would be business as usual, adding " I am very conscious of the long history of independence that St Michael's Manor has enjoyed under the Newling Ward family and wish to retain this as we bring the hotel into my family".

Raj said no immediate changes were being proposed, as the previous owners had built up a thriving and respected business during their tenure; " Our goal is to build on that solid foundation and further cement the reputation of the hotel into St Albans and Herts by continuing to pursue even higher standards of service and quality".

This year marks 10 years of St Michael's Manor Hotel under the stewardship of the Gunpath family.



The 42nd Fishpool Street Summer Party 2026

All members of Fishpool Street Residents' Association (FSRA) are invited.

SUNDAY AUGUST 23rd at 1.00pm-3.30pm at 59 Fishpool Street. Please put this date in your diary. It's a bit earlier in the day this year as we plan to hire a BBQ. More details of this to follow.

We will meet, as formerly, in the paddock to number 59 with us providing tea, coffee, juice for smalls and Bouncy Castle and music. We will all bring cakes, savouries etc for the communal table.

We VERY MUCH need help with setting up, serving tea, clearing up afterwards, and volunteers to organize games for the smalls - football, musical tea towels, sack races, blind man's buff, frozen pea spitting, hunt a bug, face painting etc. Please do be ready to volunteer.

The charge will be the same - £1.50 for smalls, £5 adults and £12 for parents with up to four children.

At the start of August we will send out a RSVP form on which to confirm your attendance (names, numbers attending, house number): this enables us to plan for supplies etc. House guests are most welcome.

Please contact Rosie on 01727 864473 or Madeleine on 01727 846761 if you can help. Thank you.

FSRA Annual General Meeting (AGM) 9 June at the Lower Red Lion

The FSRA committee are looking forward to seeing as many residents as possible at the forthcoming AGM in June.

On the next page please find a copy of the Agenda, procedure for elections, the minutes from last year's AGM and a copy of the nomination form for current and new members of the committee.

We also hope to welcome some local politicians to the event.

Frank, Kate, Madeleine, Mike, Rosie and Trina.

FISHPOOL STREET RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF 2026 AGM

Notice is hereby given that the 42nd Annual General Meeting of the Fishpool Street Residents' Association will be held from **7pm on Tuesday 9th June 2026 at The Lower Red Lion**. We will be inside or, if a nice dry and sunny evening, in the garden. Nibbles will be provided but attendees are asked to buy their own drinks.

AGENDA (formal business at 7.30pm)

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Approval of Minutes of 41st AGM held on Tuesday 3rd July 2025 at the Lower Red Lion
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Officers of the Association
6. Election of Members of the Committee
7. Any other business

The meeting is open to all members of the Association which means all adult members of households who have paid the £10 subscription for 2026. If you are not yet a member but would like to attend the AGM, you can do so by joining on the night.

Procedure for elections at AGM

1. The current Officers of the Association are:- Chair - Revolving rota; Secretary: Rosie Cinicolo (154); Treasurer: Frank Dalton (137),
2. All Officers and Committee Members automatically stand down at the AGM. The Secretary, Treasurer, Madeleine Sansom (124), Kate Taylor (58), Trina Esquivelzeta (68) and Michael Lovett (70) have all agreed to serve for a further year if re-elected. There are four vacancies on the Committee at the moment meaning that we are looking for new nominations.

The FSRA provides a focal point for residents' concerns in dealings with our local Councils and other bodies on matters of common interest, such as traffic, planning issues, rubbish collection – in fact most things which affect the quality of life in the street. And, importantly, for bringing the community together by organising social events throughout the year.

Minutes of 41st AGM of Fishpool Street Residents' Association

held on Tuesday 3rd June 2025 in The Lower Red Lion

KT welcomed all to the 41st AGM and thanked David Worcester for the use of the Lower Red Lion. KT explained the procedure and also thanked the Committee and local Councillors. KT also checked that everyone had signed in.

Present: Clive Parish (CP) (26), Marley Bryon (MB) (26), Madeleine Sansom (MS) (124), Rosie Cinicolo (RC) (154), Kate Taylor (KT) (58), Geraint John (56), Jetta Evans (6), Jenny & John Berryman (92), Alan & Beverley Everritt (180), Jan & Kevin Keenan (KK) (147), Julia Lee (55), Evan and Diane Todd (148), Stuart Macer(84), Christina Charlton (81), Vanessa and Michael Lovett (70), Peter Godwin (54), Paula Dilger (54), Anthony and Tessa Oliver (17).

1. Apologies for absence: Ann & Stuart Stearn (90)

2. Minutes of 40th AGM held on Tuesday 2nd July 2024

Copies were circulated and approved. Alan Everritt asked about the list of traders on the website and said that the WhatsApp group was being used more. Clive Parish said he had spoken to Paul Owens and found that the directory has been updated and hopes to add to the list.

3. Chairman's Report

MS explained that during the year there had been a rotating chair and this had been a successful experiment. There had been a suggestion to try a seasonal chair and this will be discussed. It has proved difficult to recruit younger members to the committee. RC reported on this year's happenings. MS reminded everyone that FSRA had started as a means to oppose planning proposals and it is important to realise the importance of a supportive community coming together as neighbours and to offer support. FSRA has achieved many improvements over the years. MS said that if any residents have concerns they should feel free to speak to committee members.

Kevin Keegan then gave a summary of progress in speaking to the school re coaches.

KT then thanked MS and KK for their reports and asked MS for her Treasurer's Report.

4. Treasurer's Report

MS reported that the accounts have now been checked by two accountants and thanked them.

There is now £1800 in the account. Expenses this year have been £500 for new steps, £200 for the 20mph roundel painted on the road surface and £2,500 for the painting/repairs of the bollards. It was felt that HCC was expensive but we were not allowed to ask for an alternative quote.

MS thanked all for their subscriptions but there were a few still outstanding. The proposal to raise subs to £10 has been delayed till next year. Other outgoings are the newsletter and the website. The listed wine (as a thank-you) and weedkiller was for the school gardener. The maintenance of the Glossop Garden has now been taken over by the school and they have since repaired the wall. A plaque is planned to explain the history of the garden and who Canon Glossop was.

The accounts were accepted.

5. Election of Officers

KT thanked Madeleine and said that we now move on to the election of officers.

She was pleased to say that Rosie Cinicolo as Secretary, and Madeleine Sansom, our Treasurer & Membership Secretary, had agreed to stand again this year and was pleased to announce the aforementioned were duly elected.

6. Election of Committee

KT thanked Clive Parish, Julia Rouse, Paul Owens, Sam Williams, Gordon Baisley, and Julia Lee for their work on the committee as they were now standing down. Kate Taylor and Kevin Keegan will continue as committee members. Julia Lee has offered to help with Christmas arrangements, Clive will help with the website, and Paul Owens will offer help where needed. A request was made for IT support in future.

They were all approved and duly elected. We now had 4 members on the committee.

7. AOB

- Geraint John asked if the coaches seem larger and if it was possible for electric vehicles to be introduced. Kevin Keenan said in answer that much will depend on support from the school and councillors in affecting these decisions. The planned change to co-ed may mean more coaches. There is a need to discuss with the school regarding this change. Alan Everritt queried the weight restrictions for this type

of road but Cllr. Edgar Hill feels this would be difficult to enforce. MS felt it important to sit around a table to discuss these issues and hope for negotiation and that the school recognise the need for a practical solution. Alan also asked about pollution levels but experts cost money and we need definitive evidence. Kevin said that a full safety audit would help but his own survey was ignored. Tessa Oliver asked if the numbers would be increasing following the admission of girls? KT said that MS & KK felt there were definite positives and that the new head seems more willing to listen. Anthony Oliver wondered if it was a one-sided discussion by asking the school to act – there needs to be benefits for the school as well.

MS feels that an academic institution should be seen to be part of the community by the students and how residents view the school. There is a duty of care and the school needs to realise this.

Anthony Oliver wondered if the issue should be in the public domain e.g. involve local press. John Berryman asked if the school have an environmental policy e.g. use of electric vehicles. Anthony Oliver feels they should be using smaller vehicles and not coaches designed for continental use but PPH Coaches has a monopoly locally for school transport. Beverley Everitt said they often seem half empty and KK said they are being used by the girls' High School as well.

KK feels that any animosity needs to be got rid of and maybe alternative locations for collection/drop off would be the best solution. MS agreed with this and research is needed.

Peter Godwin (ex-Chair) said we need to remember the school is a business and that the school is required to deliver the students safely. MS has invited the new head to a meeting to build a good relationship.

KT asked if there was any other business. Everyone was thanked for attending and asked to let us know their thoughts on any issues in the future.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
The Lower Red Lion
TUESDAY 9th June 2026, 7pm for 7.30pm start

FISHPOOL STREET RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION NOMINATION FORM

Name(s):

House No:

I,of No. Fishpool Street wish to nominate

.....of No. Fishpool Street to serve as

Chair / Treasurer / Secretary / Committee Member *(please delete as appropriate)*.

This nomination is seconded by of No.

Signature of the nominee :
(to indicate willingness to serve if elected)