

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Does St Ives need levelling up?

At last we have seen what 'Levelling Up' means, according to the Government and Michael Gove. A very large document has been produced, which offers lots of action, not just for communities up t'north.

The main, and most interesting point of the report is 'a complete system change' of how government works that will be implemented to level up the UK.

The report continues: *[the] Biggest shift of power from Whitehall to local leaders in modern times - every part of England to get 'London style' powers and mayor if they wish.*

Now this implies that St Ives might get more power to determine its future rather than just accepting what we are given (see Parklets article page 2).

Lets face it there is much that can be done, HOWEVER you will not be surprised that *The Riverporter* has concerns, the main one being will we get what St Ives needs or will we get what some of our councillors think we need?

Of course this criticism will, to some readers, seem predictable for a newspaper that is often critical of councils and here is the dilemma.

We can simply print word for word what we are being told by councillors, as most other local papers do, in the vague hope that our readers will not be wholly taken in by the well-written press release.

Or we can try to inform our readers about what we believe to be the reality of any initiative. Will it be a good use of money and resources and will it deliver improvements or is it again just rhetoric to calm the masses.

Past experience doesn't fill us with confidence that we will get real consultation but we remain optimistic that 'a complete system change' will be implemented here as well.

Is St Ives Corn Exchange the best music venue around?

Our Corn Exchange is fast becoming **THE VENUE** for live music since it was refurbished during lockdown - if the numbers attending and the variety of artists on offer is anything to go by.

In January Lexie Green and Johnny 'Magic Boy' Wright played to a full house in the Riverport Café Bar and the following evening the main hall was packed for a performance from ABBA (Planet ABBA actually).

This month sees the sophisticated CBT Jazz Quartet playing at the Chapel Arts concert (see below) and on 19th March you can see more international stars with performances from Meat Loaf and Rod Stewart. (Okay one of them died last month but apparently he's still in good voice!)

Sandwiched in between these on the first Sunday of each

month is the *Sunday Sessions*. The first, last Sunday, was also packed and featured The 29th Funktion (see picture) and Freddie Hall. March's Sunday Session will feature Sara Ashley playing acoustic, Country and Americana style.



Following the success of last year's Uke Fest ...

The Old Riverport Ukulele Festival invites you to ...



This year's Festival will take place on Saturday 15th October in St Ives Corn Exchange and will include: two workshops, a flash mob, a dedicated room for friends to meet up and play and a concert featuring three nationally acclaimed entertainers.

You will also be able to see and buy the latest ukuleles from two trade stands and once again there will be an opportunity to purchase song books, t-shirts and programmes plus a prize for

The best Viking outfit

The outline programme is:

- Flash Mob - meet at 9am for a 9.30 strum
- 10am workshop with Plastic Jeezuz
- 11am workshop with the Hedge Inspectors
- Midday concert with Hamish Currie
- 12.30 - 5pm Ukulele Groups take to the stage
- 5.30pm Concert with Plastic Jeezuz, Marc Gallagher and the Hedge Inspectors
- 7.50 - 8.30pm Singalong and close.

For details see the Facebook page: Old Riverport Ukulele Festival 2022.

BANDSTAND UPDATE

Following the request in the last issue of *The Riverporter* for pledges towards the installation of a bandstand on The Waits to mark the Queen's Jubilee, pledges have been received totalling £9,100. The Town Team has now secured over £17,000 for the project that is estimated to cost around £40,000. Individuals and groups wishing to support the bandstand project can help by pledging funds, either by visiting the Town Hall, (between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday) stating the amount and giving contact details or you can email: townteam@theoldriverportstives.co.uk. Donations can be given at www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stivescambstand. PLEASE NOTE: Funds donated will be returned to the donors if the project does not go ahead.



Friday 25th February 7.30pm
The CBT Jazz Quartet

Tickets: £10 from

www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives
or purchased from the Riverport Café Bar.

The complete line-up for 2022

25th March - Daniella Rossi - amazing classical guitarist

29th April - Fran McGillivray and Mike Burke play blues and country

27th May - Dickie de Vere & The Dorchester Mavericks - The very finest in toe-tapping light music entertainment from the 20s and 30s.

24th June - Chris Newman & Humfry Finkel - Ragtime improvisation from these 'duelling' guitarists.

29th July - James Schouten, Tenor - An evening of Operatic arias and contemporary songs.

26th August - Kimberley Rew & Lee Cave-Berry - A special evening with this Eurovision winning musician and song writer with Lee Cave-Berry.

30th September - Ruth Holden - a welcome return of the accomplished harpist with a new programme of music.

28th October - Johnny 'Magic Boy' Wright & Chris Newman - A special treat for guitar lovers from two of the best performers around.

25th November - Four Winds Saxophone Quartet - Music from Bach to Gershwin.

All concerts start at 7.30pm in the Riverport Café Bar, St Ives Corn Exchange. Doors open at 6.30pm. Tickets: £10 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives or can be purchased in advance from the Riverport Café Bar. A TOWN TEAM EVENT



Parklets: part of a recovery programme or a missed opportunity?

There have been several comments about the Parklet, which suddenly appeared a fortnight ago. Although many, as seen on Erik's letter page, are not flattering there is a much more important issue about the Town Centre improvements.

A bit of history

Way back in time, over 20 years ago Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) were discussing with St Ives Town Council (SITC) quite dramatic changes to the town centre, which included options for altering the layout of Market Hill and redevelopment of the bus station and the buildings adjoining it. As you can imagine when the three options were presented there was quite a lot of discussion and little agreement about which option would be best for the town.

The result was that HDC seemed to disagree with what Town Councillors wanted and took some of the funds away. Only part of the refurbishment was done in the Bridge Street, Merryland and Crown Street area. (You can see reference to this on pages 12, 14, 15, 42 and 58 of St Ives: a New Millennium, which we featured in RP102).

Since then various opportunities have come and gone to make improvements, such as developing the Octagon, which was formerly the auction ring for the livestock market. (The Riverporter has banged on about this many times see RP issues 1, 9, 14, 22, 23 and 24.)

A building that could have been transformed into an indoor market or been used again for auctions, had HDC councillors not blocked proposals from the Save The Octagon group and Hyperion Auctions. Ironically the area by the Octagon would have been a much more appropriate site for a Parklet, had it become an indoor market rather than the bin store it is.

Some two years ago HDC produced a Prospectus For Growth document that proposed a Masterplan for St Ives. It was agreed with the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and funded to the tune of £1million, the money to be spent by mid 2022. The Masterplan was severely criticised by various groups, including the Civic Society and the Town Team (see RP06 June 2020) and the agent, Metro Dynamics, used by HDC to create it apologised that it had been issued in error and a new version would be available for consultation prior to implementation.

This has failed to happen and yet some of the proposals seem to have been going ahead. As *The Riverporter* pointed out in the last issue, SITC were only informed of the installation of the Parklets in December by emails and this didn't seem to confirm the location of the one now installed.

Tax payer's money wasted

Another issue is the cost of these actions. We know that £50,000 was spent on repairs to the Octagon, supposedly to allow it to be used by the community. This seems a waste of money as 6 years later it remains a bin store.

Metro Dynamics was paid £50,000 to produce the Masterplan and according to Meristem, the company supplying the parklets, they each cost £10,000 per unit.



Parklets prevent parking?

Conclusion

It's hard to believe that what HDC is doing will aid the recovery that St Ives businesses need, following the past two years of closures. There has been little or no meaningful consultation and some of these measures, being imposed on the town, are unlikely to help its economic vitality.

With around £120,000 spent so far [our estimate] and just one badly sited Parklet being the result, will this transform St Ives Town Centre?

Or is it a vanity project for HDC leader Ryan Fuller and Cllr Marge Beuttell who were pictured at the parklet in the Hunts Post, explaining how it will increase footfall, encourage people to leave their cars at home, showcase local businesses and clean the air! Many of our readers do not agree. Much higher on the list is sorting out the illegal street parking, allocating periods of free parking in the car parks and working with shopkeepers to reduce the numbers of empty shops.

Although the state of our streets may not attract more visitors initially, properly maintaining our existing paths, benches, rubbish bins and street furniture will make their visits more enjoyable and even encourage people to return. It wouldn't cost that much either by comparison. (See letters page 3)

New 'Street Food' outlet offers something different



Maria Goldberg from Boxworth, who says she enjoys cooking has, after several months of research, chosen St Ives as the place to bring a new, healthier concept on street food - Bread Bowl Broths.

Maria who retired from aviation engineering over ten years ago spent many cold weeks, with a little help from her father, converting a horse box into a mobile street food outlet, suitable to produce Bread Bowls Broths, which Maria says 'offers good old-fashioned food'.

Eco aware and no soggy bottoms

Cooked from scratch, straight from the horse box to our customer, it reduces the carbon footprint and uses eco-friendly packaging to reduce waste. All broths are cooked using local fresh produce. 'Our bread bowls are specially made so they do not leak, hence the slogan *No Soggy Bottoms Here!*', said Maria. 'The bread is warmed to receive the hot broths, then wrapped in foil ready to be eaten straight away or they can be taken home and re-heated in the oven to eat later!'

In addition, Maria's aim is to reduce food-waste by making other food items from the bread hollowed out of the bowl, such as bread budding. [The editor, who has a penchant for bread pudding can testify that this is excellent.] Maria is also looking at other sweet-bite options.

'We use our bread bowls as a vehicle to transport not just broths but have other exciting ideas for other food-stuffs throughout the seasons. Bread Bowls are a great way of serving food without using dishes, so saving water on washing up. We are also planning to offer an online ordering and delivery service in the near future.' Maria told *The Riverporter*.

Bread Bowl Broths can be found at the Market Road entrance to the Courtyard shopping arcade. For more detail see <https://www.facebook.com/BreadBowlBroths>.

The Town Team has been busy

The Town Team has been pretty busy as several of their projects have come to fruition. Recently we reported on the installation of two information boards about St Ives Station and we also published details of this year's Jazz & Blues Festival and the Chapel Arts programmes.

Last week the Team installed a 'History of The Old Riverport' display in the long closed Molise Restaurant window in Bridge Street (see right), designed to improve the street scene.

Over the next two weeks The Quay will be enhanced with the installation of three large trees in containers that will offer shade in the summer and soften the aspect all year round. It is also hoped that the damaged **Welcome**



The Old Riverport St Ives sign above *Waterway Hair & Beauty* on The Quay will be replaced with a fresh new one.

Look out for Morris Dancers on The Quay on the afternoon of Saturday 26th February to welcome the arrival of the trees.

8pm Thursday
17 February 2022

Tickets £5 from screenstives.org.uk
or in the Corn Exchange

Pre-screening drinks in the licensed
Riverport Cafe from 7pm

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SCREEN ST IVES

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★★★★★
"WITTY, POIGNANT,
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COMPOSED"
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★★★★★
"SUBLIME... WILL BREAK
AND REMAKE YOU"
TIME OUT

★★★★★
THE SKINNY
★★★★★
THE LIST

PG



having your say ...

**Get it off your chest,
email Erik at:
editor@theriverporter.uk**



Milly looks up to Erik.

COUNCIL NEWS

Town Council discusses flooding

On the agenda of February's Town Council meeting was a presentation from Hilary Ellis of Cambs County Council about flooding and a lengthy report on action being considered to mitigate flooding in the town by St Ives Flood Action Group (FLAG). Also on the agenda was a welcome to a new St Ives Police Sergeant Rob Saville. Cambs Police have announced the arrival of 12 new Police Officers, however none will be stationed in the St Ives/Ramsey sector.

Your chance to question councillors

The Annual Town Meeting this year will take place at The Corn Exchange on **Saturday 12th March at 6pm**. A Community Fair will run from 3pm until the Town Meeting starts. The Annual Town Meeting gives local councils and authorities a chance to update St Ives on what they have been doing over the last 12 months and also gives residents a chance to ask questions directly to the relevant people. If you wish to book a community stall for your group or you would like to send questions in advance, please contact Emma at the Town Hall by telephone on **01480 388929** or you can email her on **admin@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk**.

Mayor suddenly denied access to Dolphin

A group of male asylum seekers from Afghanistan and other central Asian countries have been living in the Dolphin Hotel since 24th November (see RP 99). Serco working on behalf of the Government with HDC and Cambs CC have been responsible for their welfare. The Mayor, Cllr Pasco Hussain and the Town Council, with other groups have been welcoming the men and helping sort out some initial problems, such as language and food issues. The Mayor, who has daily meetings with the group of men, reported at Wednesday's Town Council meeting that, without explanation, he and the other groups have now been denied access to the Dolphin.

**Dear Erik,
Subject: Parklet**

There is so much wrong with the first 'carefully designed and located parklet' in St Ives, that it would take several sides of A4 to comment in full. However there is one statement I must take issue with.

The HDC spokesperson points out that 'pollution absorbing plants will clean the air!' In relation to 'parklets' this is laughable. If HDC are really serious about improving local air quality, they should at least be considering a row of mature and leafy trees planted centrally in St Ives Market Square running from WH Smith to the War Memorial.

This could easily be achieved with a simple re-jigging of existing parking places - making a real contribution to improved air quality and bringing a softer ambiance to our cherished Market Square. So much more likely to encourage visitors to our town.

Stewart Denham

**Dear Erik,
Subject: Taxis letter RP 101**

Thank you for the publicity for the company my mother works for (T&T taxis). I would like to highlight my mother has a valid disabled badge and she has the right to use any disabled bay for parking. Please may you highlight in your future publishing that not all DISABILITIES ARE VISIBLE plus there was a disabled badge in the windscreen. I would appreciate if you would refrain from posting stories such as this on your page especially when the full story was not given. I wish you well.

Name withheld.

Thank you for your letter which we will publish. This way you can explain why the taxi was parked there. However we will continue to publish letters from readers except when they contain something racist or homophobic etc. or are likely to be against the law or contain something we know to be blatantly incorrect.
ED.

**Dear Erik,
Subject: Parklet**

Please can you tell me where the sheltered bike rack has gone? Please please don't tell me that they got rid of it so they could put in the parklet! I am all for more seating in the town but put it where it's needed, by the cafés.

It seems to me that the cars are parked where the people should be. Is the council suggesting we sit in the car park? Oh hang!

No not in the car park and don't get rid of the minimal bike facilities.

Has the world gone mad!

Maybe the council haven't noticed that our little town is very popular with walkers, cyclists, families, mobility vehicles & tourists and if we made it more accessible for them the businesses would do better. **Becky**

Dear Becky, We asked a prominent St Ives citizen, and well-known cyclist, if he knew where the bike rack has gone? He said HDC removed it seemingly without informing anyone and he was equally dismayed about its loss from the town centre.

**Dear Erik,
Subject: Bandstand on The Waits**

Like many others in St Ives I am looking forward to the Bandstand celebrating the Queen's Jubilee. However wouldn't it be great if the rest of The Waits got a face-lift which would enhance one of the prettiest parts of the town.

A St Ives Fan.



Come on Town Council - let's see a bit more pride in our town, this can't be allowed to happen.

More traffic problems

Last week yet another large lorry was unable to manoeuvre around our busy town centre. As the pictures show it first tried to go around the Victoria monument but failed, due to a car parked illegally there.



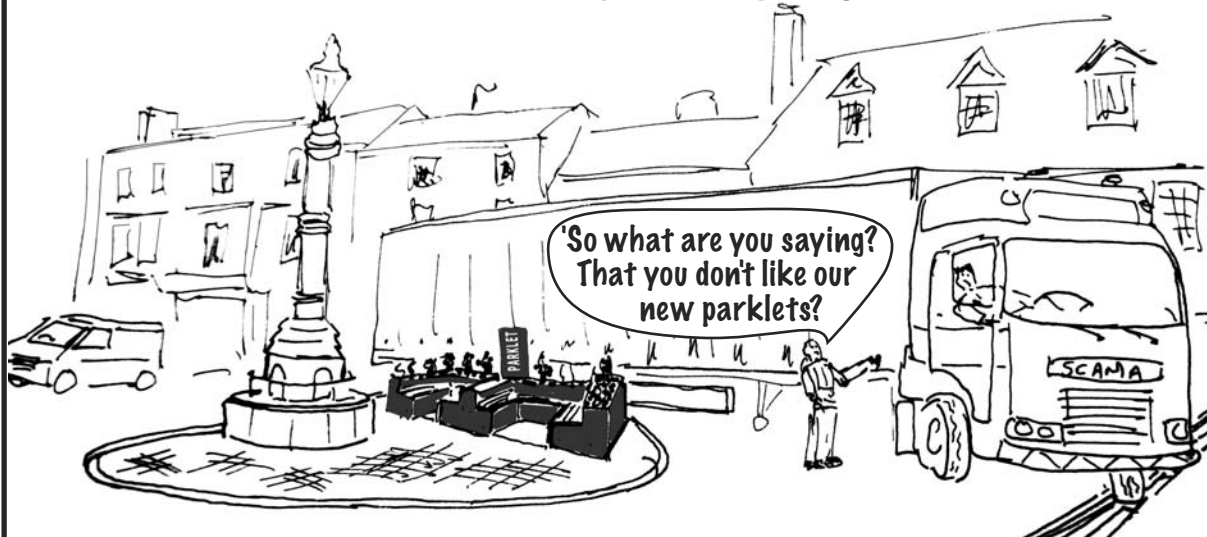
The driver then decided to go straight on into Crown Street and attempt to turn into Bridge Street. On-line comments soon queried how it had got past the T&T Taxis usually blocking the road. Further comments referring to the company name being spelt wrong followed.



Finally it came across some more illegally parked cars. (Okay there aren't yellow lines but access to Bridge Street is for residents and delivery vehicles only!) We're not sure if it tried to go up Merryland but assume it probably went over the bridge to get out, unless of course it's still here!



Is this a better site for a Parklet? At least it will prevent cars parking here.



**Entries Invited for Our
Next Antiques & Later
Sale on Saturday 19th
February**



Sold In Our Last Antiques & Interiors Sale

Rare Cambridgeshire Regiment group of 4 medals to corporal/Sergeant Charles Walton from Wisbech.

Sold £1500



David Grundy Hand Made Manhattan Major sofa

Sold £650



Edwardian 9ct Gold cased James Walker 'To the Admiralty' pocket watch

Sold £430



Collection of Hand Painted 25mm Games Workshop figures

Sold £220

Hyperion Auctions, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH
www.hyperionauctions.co.uk 01480 464140



Here's your chance to get involved with shaping our local Climate Action Plan



Climate Cafés

Join the conversation in 2022 to help to shape our local Climate Action Plan. We may not have all the answers but we've lots of ideas, and your voice matters!

The third Saturday of every month, 10am-12pm

St Ives Free Church,
Market Hill,
St Ives

Climate Café dates for 2022:

February - Saturday 19th
March - Saturday 19th
April - Saturday 16th
May - Saturday 21st
June - Saturday 18th
July - Saturday 16th
August - Saturday 20th
September - Saturday 17th
October - Saturday 15th
November - Saturday 19th
December - Saturday 17th



The future of the planet is in our hands.

St Ives EcoAction is a community-led local climate action group founded in 2020 when local people came together to begin to form a local climate action plan.

For further information please email: stivesecoaction@gmail.com

Or see our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stivesecoaction>

With HUGE thanks to St Ives Free Church and East Street Creative.

ADVERTORIAL

One of the best estate agents in the UK



Ellis Winters are delighted to have been included in the Best Estate Agent Guide for 2022, having been awarded an 'Excellent' status by the Property Academy, ranking us within the top 10% of estate agents across the UK.

Mike Ellis, Managing Director of Ellis Winters comments 'I'm delighted for the team to receive this recognition from the highly respected Best Estate Agents Guide. For all three of our branches to be assessed as Excellent is quite an achievement and proves we're consistent in our high levels of service across our business.'

Selecting the right estate agent can seem a daunting task for many home sellers, the Best Estate Agents Guide gives sellers peace of mind that when they speak to us, they're dealing with one of the best.'

How agents were judged

The Property Academy, together with Rightmove, identified criteria that define exceptional service for home sellers. Having combined in-depth analysis of performance data whilst carrying out the biggest mystery shopping review process ever undertaken of the property industry, The Best Estate Agent Guide lists the top 20% of estate agents within the UK.

The Criteria:

How well properties are marketed on Rightmove and perform on Rightmove. Including the number of daily views and enquiries a property receives. [As measured by Rightmove].

Actual delivery of the sale or let. Including the time taken for the listing to be Sold subject to contract and the percentage of sales that reach successful completion. [As measured by Rightmove].

How good is the customer experience on contacting the agent via email and telephone? [As measured by Property Academy mystery shop]

Market share

The Best Estate Agent Guide looked at performance over a 6-month period, involving analysis of:

- Over 25,000 branches
- 1 million properties listed at any point in time
- 1.5 million transactions
- 25 million leads
- 1.5 billion property views

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