

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Everyone's a winner

Once again there is controversy surrounding the elections for St Ives Town Council and Huntingdon District Council. This time it is the absence of Town Council candidates resulting in all of those standing being elected.

Four years ago the controversy was about the adopting of the 'Independent For St Ives' title by most of the Tory candidates in an attempt to bamboozle the public at the ballot box. This time there are no official conservative candidates standing for the Town Council, which was clearly unexpected and has resulted in only 14 candidates for 17 places. This is the first time in living memory that there will be no elections for the entire Town Council as all 14 candidates will be automatically elected on 5th May.

### Tories abandon Town

Following public criticism of Conservative District Councillors for not attending last month's Town meeting, it would appear that St Ives Tories have decided to abandon the Town Council altogether.

With no official Tory candidates for the Town Council, another first in St Ives, it is unlikely that this situation came about by chance.

One current District and Town Councillor, Craig Smith, did stand for the Town Council but did not declare himself as a Conservative. This is not unprecedented but it begs the question - Was it official party policy not to take part in the elections? If it was - is Craig in trouble?

### More questions...

The Town Council is already having a difficult time with the Town Clerk still ill and her deputy having just retired. The loss of nine experienced Town Councillors is unprecedented.

Those not seeking re-election include former Mayor and Planning Committee Chairman, Nick Dibben, former Mayors Jonathan Pallant, Dan Rowe and Tim Drye. The other five not seeking re-election are Angela Dickinson, John Parkin, who was coopted last April, Dr Carla Pegoraro, elected four years ago, Rianna D'Souza a current District councillor and Ryan Fuller, the current Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council and a County Councillor, first elected to the Town Council in 2008.

*The Riverporter* has spoken to several experienced local politicians about why the Tories have left the Town Council en masse and one view was that the Tories were only interested in paid positions.

One prominent Conservative was reported to have said that the Town Council often disagreed with the District Council - the conclusion being that they didn't want to work with a difficult Town Council.

This comment is very worrying because most residents would assume that both authorities should work together for the benefit of St Ives. This attitude would appear to explain why the Town Council has not been kept informed about HDC's plans for some time (see RP106). And why items such as the 'Parklet' appearing without appropriate consultation or warning.

### District will be contested

The District Council seats for St Ives will be contested and for once it could be a very close call. The Conservatives did put forward five candidates for the five seats available and they will be compete against 6 other candidates.

In **St Ives East (2 seats)** two Independent candidates, Michael Burke, who organised last year's popular Christmas Lights and Shariqa Mokbul, a dedicated Town Councillor will stand against the current Tory District Councillors, Adam Roberts and Craig Smith.

In **St Ives South (2 seats)** Labour's Cath Gleadow and Lib Dem's Nick Wells, a current Town Councillor, will stand against Tory candidates Martin Gill and Rianna D'Souza, a current Town and District Councillor.

In **St Ives West (1 seat)** The Green Party's Daniel Laycock and Independent candidate Julie Kerr, who is a Town Councillor and founder of the Flood Action Group, will compete with Ryan Fuller for the one seat available.

**The Riverporter will be offering to print in full and unaltered an election address from each candidate in our next issue so you can decide who to vote for on 5 May.**

## An awe inspiring and proud day

Sunday 27th March saw the 'Play for Ukraine' event at the Corn Exchange where 16 bands, musicians and poets came together to raise funds for Ukraine refugees.



The all-day event raised a stunning £6000 from donations as band after band played on the Corn Exchange's two stages. The money raised is going to the 'DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis' appeal.

Each of the appearing artists made no charge and each member of the Corn Exchange team and bar staff worked for free on the day. Suppliers also made no charge, and there was free entry to the event.

'This was a truly heartfelt response from our amazing town' said Corn Exchange Chairman, Ron Westrip, who spoke of his pride in the work of his team and the many hours they had put into the project to get it off the ground. Ron, who co-edits *The Riverporter* wants us to thank all those that came along and gave such great support for the cause.



### The day saw other wonderful stories

Local singer/songwriter Paul Dodson wrote a special song called *White Dove (wings of peace)*, which has gone viral. Paul performed it at the end of an emotional day. It can be found on Youtube and is well worth a listen especially as it continues to raise money for the appeal. Belinda King, a singer with the 'What's that Band' went to the Cherry Valley Restaurant after the show but when the staff found out that she had sung at the event, they refused her money and asked for it to be donated to the cause. WELL DONE ST IVES.



Above: Paul Dodson sends a message



to Putin. Above right: So 80's had everyone up on their feet.

Right: Outgoing Chairman, Ron Westrip with Hospitality Manager, Monica Mallo-Wright (left) and Events Manager, Kate Holly just before the doors were opened.

Below left: Ffion Rebecca and right the Dark Horse band.



## BANDSTAND UPDATE

**BAD NEWS**... Our bid for a grant from the Mick George, Grantscape fund has been unsuccessful. This means that we need to raise more money. **GOOD NEWS**... Pledges are still coming in and we will be contacting St Ives businesses to help raise the rest of the funds needed. We now have over £20,000 pledged and our aim will be to raise another £20,000 over the next two months.

You can make a pledge, 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@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk). Alternatively you can help by donating any amount, no matter how small at: [www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stivescamsbandstand](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/stivescamsbandstand).

Please Note: Funds donated will be returned to the donors if the project does not go ahead.





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## Sutton Masque entertain flowers and people

The wonderfully attired Sutton Masque Morris dancers spent the day in St Ives on 26 March entertaining the people who came to see the installation of new planters at Kings Hedges and the trees on The Quay.



Pictured above is Dan Carson, landlord of the shops at Kings Hedges, with Linda Croucher, St Ives In Bloom's project leader for planting, 'opening' the new community area with help from Edith Grace Young and Eloise Cole, who had come along for the craft activities and to watch the dancing.



### A VISIT TO GRESSENHALL FARM & WORKHOUSE WEDNESDAY 11th MAY

**£30 INCLUDES**

- WELCOME TALK & WORKHOUSE TOUR
  - Other attractions -
  - WORKHOUSE GALLERIES
  - MUSEUM OF NORFOLK GARDENS & GROUNDS
  - THE NORFOLK COLLECTION CENTRE
  - THE WORKING FARM
  - VILLAGE ROW AND CHERRY TREE COTTAGE
- To book tickets call 01480 300726.

Hemingford Ladies Choir are now singing together again every Wednesday morning from 10am to 11.30am in the Free Church, St Ives.

Perhaps you are retired or have flexible working arrangements and would like to join us.

We particularly need Alto voices but all are welcome.

If you are interested, please contact Viv Oxley on 01480 417927 or email [vivienneoxley64@gmail.com](mailto:vivienneoxley64@gmail.com).



Above: Sutton Masque dancing on The Quay in The Old Riverport.

## CONCERT CANCELLED

April's Chapel Arts Concert, on 29th April in the Corn Exchange, featuring Fran McGillivray & Mike Burke, has had to be cancelled due to a booking error. The Town Team will offer a refund or tickets to an alternative event for those who booked on-line. Anyone who may have purchased tickets from the Riverport Café Bar can get a refund or tickets for another event. Please contact the Town Team at [townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk) if you have any queries.



An 'Eagle Eyed' reader sent us these pictures of a new beer, called Old Riverport Stout, produced by Papworth Brewery and currently available from Wadsworths shop in The Broadway. We haven't tasted it yet so cannot say how good it is, but it's a fine name!







having your say ...

# The Riverporter

Voted Best local newspaper of the year 2019/20 in the Cambridge Building Society's Community Magazine Awards

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

## COUNCIL NEWS

### Combined Authority may push ahead with St Ives and AI4I upgrade

Following updates on the progress of the St Ives Local Improvements Study and the A141 and St Ives Outline Business Case(OBC), the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) will ask officers to prepare a grant funding agreement with Cambs County Council.

The plan is for the A141 and St Ives Local Improvement schemes to run concurrently to make sure there is co-ordination between the two projects, offering the best solutions possible while at the same time moving forward 'Local Improvement' solutions specific to St Ives.

There are five 'packages' of schemes planned.

**Package 1 – St Ives Town Centre** Introduction of a 20mph speed limit across St Ives Town Centre. Changing priorities and road widening at the Ramsey Road/North Rd, Globe Place/Broad Leas and West Street/East Street junctions. Changes to on-street parking restrictions in the town centre area, to reduce illegal parking and reducing congestion, rat running and improving bus access.

**Package 2 – Silvaco West Roundabout Improvement** Silvaco West roundabout improvements, replacement of the roundabout at the St Audrey Lane/Somersham Road junction with traffic signals. A right-turn ban for all traffic from Needingworth Road onto St Audrey Lane.

**Package 3 – Bus Stop Improvements** Improvements to bus stop infrastructure, including: 22 priority bus stops; Removal of redundant bus stop infrastructure; and on-priority bus stops and hail and ride. To make travel by public bus services in St Ives a more attractive option by improving the bus stop infrastructure facilities.

**Package 4 – Walking and Cycling Signage Improvements** Package of walking and cycling signage improvements to encourage increased levels of walking and cycling.

**Package 5 – Non-Motorised User (NMU) Routes Development Study** Development of a network of active travel routes in and around St Ives that can be considered for investment.

### Someone is missing on our High Street

The Riverporter learned this week of the sad passing of a regular lady busker. Sheena could be heard playing her songs, many of which she told us she wrote herself, at any time of day and evening, when there is only a rare passer-by on the way home. We don't know anything of her past, but she was certainly part of the town and noticeable by her absence. We understand she passed away at home of a heart attack.



### Group fighting medical waste incinerator seeks royal support

Campaigners opposing plans for a medical waste incinerator at Woodhurst have written to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales about their environmental concerns.

The Prince previously visited the site to see ground breaking work in producing peat and soil substitutes. The facility's current owner, Envar Composting Ltd, now wants to build an additional hospital waste incinerator on the site.

Local resident and member of the POWI campaign group, Lorna Watkins, said: 'We feel the Prince would be shocked to hear that this rural site could now morph from a green waste recycling business into a waste burning operation on an industrial scale. The incinerator would in effect be burning fossil fuel in the form of single use plastics mixed up in the waste, so it can hardly be described as organic waste processing or clean, green energy. In fact the project can best be described as a wolf in sheep's clothing,' she added.

The POWI group represents over 3,500 residents opposing Envar's application, which is open to comments until April 19 and will be decided by Cambridgeshire County Council's planning committee in the summer.

### Man who assaulted 4 women in St Ives jailed

Ionut Bleoju first put his arm around a 17-year-old girl who was walking her dog in Warners Park at about 2pm on 13 January. He pulled out £40 and said 'you, me, hotel?' before lunging towards her and kissing her on the face.

The 40-year-old went on to attempt to block another woman from leaving the park around the same time and in East Street at about 2.40pm he grabbed a woman around the waist in an alleyway. Then at 5.30pm he approached a woman who was sitting in her vehicle with children in Market Hill. He opened the door and tried to get in the car. The victim got out and Bleoju put his arms around her waist before offering her and her husband £80 when he arrived. All the incidents were reported to police and descriptions of the suspect given. The next morning Bleoju was arrested. At Cambridge Magistrates' Court on Thursday 31 March, Bleoju, of no fixed address, was sentenced to 26 weeks in custody after pleading guilty. He has been given a restraining order and put on the Sex Offenders' Register for seven years.



Dear Erik,

#### Everyone's Favourite Subject - Parking

Do BMW owners have special dispensation to park wherever they want?

The top car was parked there overnight.



Thank you. **Non-BMW Owner**



Dear Erik,

#### Subject: Arson in St Ives

Attached [is an] unfortunate photo of a fire set beside my house last night (20 March).

Two young girls turned up with cardboard boxes and deliberately set fire to [the] grass.



Neighbours kindly alerted me to the blaze, after the smell of the acrid smoke penetrated their property. I would be very grateful if you would consider a mention of this irresponsible behaviour in *The Riverporter* thanking the neighbours who were quick to alert me to the blaze and put out the fire.

**Everybody needs good neighbours!**

Kind regards **Richard**

Dear Erik,

#### Never let the truth get in the way of a good smear!

That was my comment when I saw the latest election leaflet from Ryan Fuller. I consider the leaflet an absolute disgrace.

My main complaint is that the leaflet suggests that - *Lib Dems, Labour and Independents failed local residents* by not supporting a Tory motion condemning the Envar incinerator proposals.

Anyone reading this would think only the Tories will oppose the incinerator, WHICH IS CLEARLY NOT THE CASE.

As the planning authority on these matters it would be wrong for the County Council to pre-judge the planning application and potentially allow Envar's plans to go through by default.

It is yet another occasion where the full story is not given in order to imply something that will smear the opposition.

This is not the first time that Conservative leaflets have been criticised for doing this.

Considering HDC has been under Tory control since 1990, and that St Ives has only elected Tories during that time, and also that the District Council Leader has been from St Ives since Jason Ablewhite took control in 2010, it is somewhat surprising that St Ives has had so little District funds spent here.

Compared to the other market towns in Huntingdonshire, St Ives has been long neglected and although much has been promised very little has materialised.

**Name withheld.**



HE'S NOT AN INDEPENDENT

April 2018



HE'S A VERY NAUGHTY BOY

## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

April 2022

HE'S NOT HERE



HE'S A VERY NAUGHTY BOY

Dear Erik, Would you please be able to print our appeal for bus escorts in the Riverporter. We cannot run the bus service without them. Thanks **Gill**

**St Ives Day Centre has reinstated their minibus service to collect and return members from their homes and the centre on Ramsey Road. We cannot operate this important service without the assistance of volunteer escorts.**

**We currently need somebody on Wednesday and Thursday mornings and people who can offer their services on an ad hoc basis when our regular escorts are on holiday. The sessions start at 9am and will normally take around 1-1½ hours. If you could help us with this role, please contact us on 01480 463444 or daycentre25@googlemail.com**



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