

The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue II5: 5 August 2022

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Do we live in a digitally divided society?

According to David Bailey Chairman of COPE society is being divided, not as in the old days, by class, but by whether you have a computer and more importantly whether you can use it.

COPE, the Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise that provides friendship and support for the over 50s, regularly sends *The Riverporter* a copy of its newsletter. Normally we extract the details of their meetings and advertise them for people in St Ives to see. COPE is a

registered charity and a self-help forum which campaigns on issues that affect older people. The lead editorial in the informative and most recent newsletter raised an important issue that everyone needs to be aware of, so we have decided to re-print it here.

COPE
Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise

Editorial reprinted from the COPE Newsletter August - September 2022

Three years ago, I wrote to the Chief Executives of all the Councils in Cambridgeshire pointing out that to access their services a person needed to use their website or contact by email. Only one replied immediately, and provided information as to where they can be contacted without the need for a computer. Eventually, one other Council responded but said their phone number was available, but on their website.

Obviously policy makers these days are those who think everyone has a smartphone, tablet or laptop. They do not realise that 70% of those over 75 do not own a smartphone and neither do half those aged between 65 - 75. To try and obtain information from Government and council services we are told to get on a website or get an app - whatever that is. Similarly, businesses are urging customers to use their app. There is a rush to be digital. The unforeseen consequences is that many sectors of the population especially the elderly are unable to access these services. We are told that to get a train ticket you must have an app, as is the case with paying for parking in Cambridge. Similarly, COPE is receiving letters from residents that the Planners proposing redevelopment of their property have not informed them, as all the information is sent out digitally. Society is being divided not as in the old days by class, but by whether you have a computer and more importantly can use it.

Unfortunately, the Coronavirus has led to the rapid digitalisation as during the pandemic we isolated ourselves so there was very limited personal contact, and various scares led to cash not being accepted and many companies not accepting cheques. Fortunately, Government and the public in general realise problems with the lack of cash. So we trust that it is not too late before cash is kept as a regular means of shopping. **David Bailey**

Of course *The Riverporter* is a traditionally printed newspaper, but like every organisation these days we also offer a digital version on-line and this has proved to be very popular. Printed issues can be picked up from local newsagents, St Ives Library, the Corn Exchange, Morrison's garage and various shops in town.

The Editor, who has recently returned from a holiday in Italy, was surprised to find that some restaurant menus were only available through an app on his mobile phone.

By the way he prefers a printed version rather than having to squint at his mobile phone to choose which of the 50 pizzas to try!

This amusing letter from a Rosemary Mathew was also printed in the Newsletter

Words did actually fail me on first reading your article 'New Stamp Arrangements' in the last COPE newsletter. 'Stamps will have a bar code digitally programmed to show a video of Shaun the Sheep' and 'you will be able to send birthday messages through the bar codes.'

No need to buy a birthday card - just stick a stamp on an old envelope and bung it in the letter box. And no doubt in due course there will be an (other) increase to cover this 'exciting new era of bar coded stamps'. At the moment my excitement does remain within manageable bounds!

COPE meetings in St Ives are on third Thursday of each month from 2pm to 4pm in the Corn Exchange.

Outings from St Ives - Thursday 25th August: Woburn Safari Park £37 per person. Depart St Ives 10:00 am. to register or for details contact Angie on 01480 300726.

Bandstand appeal reaches £33k but we still need more . . .

Around 70 local families have pledged money towards the bandstand and together with pledges from a few businesses, the Town council and the Town Team the fund now stands at over £33,000.

This is an amazing effort and we hope to reach our target over the next month or two, while we await planning approval.

The Town Team was hoping to receive some funds from the local CIL fund (a Community Infrastructure levy that developers pay), however this project doesn't fulfill all the requirements, specifically around procurement arrangements.

CIL funds have to come through the local council, in this case the Town Council. That determines how the money is spent and requires a rigorous tendering process, which would effectively mean starting the project again and would likely end up costing more.

What can you do to help?

Well apart from making a pledge (see below) you can help us raise £1,000 by attending

The Old Riverport Sailors Club at St Ives Corn Exchange, 7.30pm on Thursday 8th September. Come and enjoy an evening of rollicking good fun with the large mottly crew of Old Time Sailors (below) in what promises to be an evening to remember.

To see a video of a typical performance go to: www.facebook.com/theoldriverportjazzandbluesfestival
Tickets: www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives or from the Riverport Café Bar.



It's not too late to make a pledge towards the bandstand and it is easy to do - all contributions are welcome. You can make a pledge (from £25 upwards) by sending your contact details (address, email and telephone number) to:

townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk, stating the amount you wish to pledge.

Alternatively you can give details at The Town Hall between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday. Your pledges and donations will be recognised. Every person or company that donates to the bandstand will be inscribed on a panel (unless they wish to remain anonymous) so that future generations will see the people who contributed. Please note: contact details you send us remain confidential.

SPECIAL EDITION PLANNED FOR *The Riverporter*

In December *The Riverporter* will have produced 125 editions that reflect the life and times of St Ives over one of the most important and unusual periods of the Town's history. We are planning to produce a book, which will contain a copy of every issue from Jan 2018 until the end of 2022.

If you wish to have a copy of this unusual publication please order your copy by emailing: editor@theriverporter.uk.

Copies will cost £15 and will be available from 16 December.

Read on-line at www.theriverporter.uk or see our Facebook page. Email: editor@theriverporter.uk

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Cambridge water chaos

A resident, alarmed by a letter from Cambridge Water (CW), has sent *The Riverporter* a copy of his reply after visiting CW's customer liaison vehicle.

Ian Jackson wrote: *I visited your customer liaison vehicle which, in my view, was parked in an unsafe place on a main road (Ramsey Road), near a busy crossroads with traffic lights with no parking opportunities nearby. I presented my letter to the OnSite customer liaison person and mentioned that I had also received four other letters in the same envelope addressed to residents in The Cloisters, a development in the centre of town, again nowhere near your works.*

He confirmed that my road, The Broadway, and The Cloisters, will be unaffected by the development, and said that 'the letter was badly written'! He did not know where either road was. This whole experience was a total waste of my time, and reflects badly on the competence of your planning and customer liaison departments. How many other residents have received your badly written and misleading letters I wonder, and been both alarmed and inconvenienced?

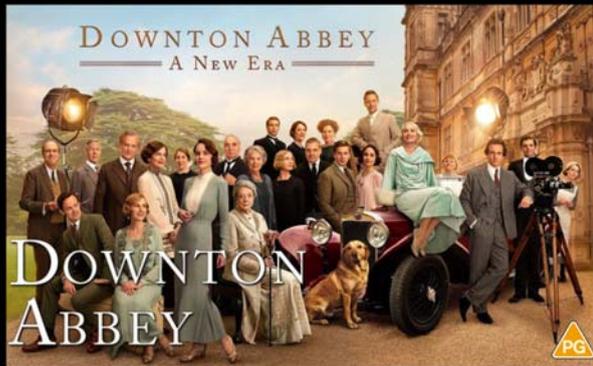
*In the circumstances I think the very least you can do is inform our Town Hall of this situation and correct the information you have sent our residents, along with an apology. In the meantime I shall copy this email to our Clerk and our local free newspaper *The Riverporter* to help inform residents of the situation you have created.*

Utter failure by Stagecoach

Another reader also copied *The Riverporter* in on a complaint to Stagecoach about their failure in diverting bus routes because of the roadworks by Cambridge Water.

As well as listing details of the buses and routes the letter by Colin Saunderson said: *What is unforgivable is the fact that there were no notices whatsoever about the changes in the buses nor at the stops no longer being served. I did my own using printouts from the website with added comments! This morning I spent some time telling people at various stops that they had a six week wait for a bus! Yesterday I had great difficulty telling a Pilipino carer about the changes who was heading for a nightshift in Cambridge.*

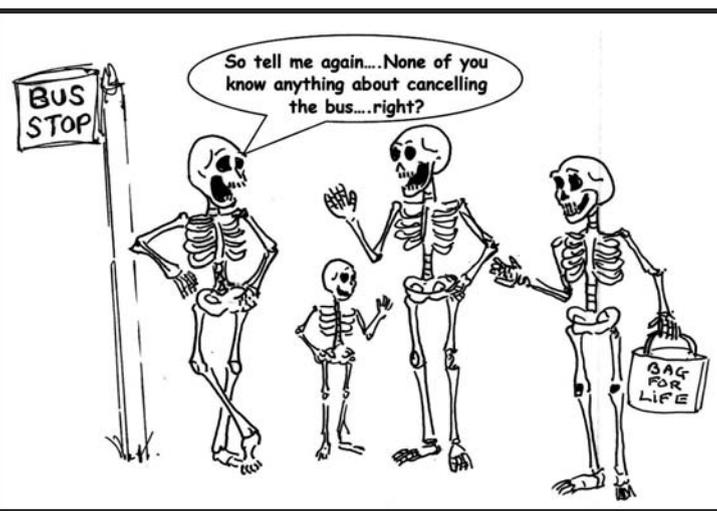
Colin ended his letter with this suggestion. *Finally, you personally should use the national 0345 number. Select 'other' and bear the inconvenience that us customers have to put up with.*



8pm Thursday 18 August 2022
Doors and Riverport Cafe open from 7pm
Tickets available online at screenstives.org.uk or in the Corn Exchange
Screen St Ives will be taking a break in September. We will be back in October

Anglia in Bloom Judges visit St Ives

Thursday 14th July saw the judges from Anglia in Bloom tour of St Ives. Among the areas visited was Kings Hedges, where they were most impressed by the work done on the new community area (see below), and Wheatfields School where they were showed around by an enthusiastic group of children – who were especially proud of their golden beetroot plants! They also visited Station Road, where St Ives in Bloom have joined together with all the businesses to put it forward as 'Best Commercial Area'. The new tubs and window boxes, the beautiful planting in Cromwell Mews and in The Courtyard, all looked after by small independent businesses, won their interest, and they did seem to be impressed. The beautiful 'silver birches' flowerbed in the Bus Station was also looking its best. They then caught the electric river boat from The Quay back to the Norris Museum, where the volunteers (below) were waiting to join them for lunch. St Ives in Bloom would like to thank Pasco Hussain and Chris Morgan for providing transport for us, the Norris Museum for hosting our day, Phil Pope for coming to welcome the judges as Mayor, and all the hardworking volunteers who helped to get the town looking its best on the day. Let's hope it turns out to be another Golden Day for St Ives when the results are announced.



Cambridgeshire Solar Together scheme criticised

It isn't unusual these days to be a bit disappointed when suppliers don't deliver on time, or when products we buy aren't up-to-scratch. It's also not unusual to be unable to rectify these problems, or spend hours on the phone trying to speak to a human being. Somehow one assumes that if a scheme is supported by the local authorities it would be exemplary. For one of our readers this is not the case as the following shows.

A Mr David Jones wrote to Solar Together, a group buying scheme for Solar installations, which is backed by many local authorities including Huntingdonshire District Council. Part of the iChoose group, which started in Belgium and operates in several European countries including the UK, Solar Together pre-registers installers and as their website states they 'must comply with their criteria to guarantee the quality'. However Mr Jones wrote to Solar Together stating that 'You have failed local residents as the chosen installer is totally incompetent'.

The company, Green Energy Together (GET), would appear to have not performed to the standards set by Solar Together if the online reviews are anything to go by (see below just two of the many complaints made).

Mr Jones continued, 'GET has consistently failed to fulfill promises to customers... Failure to deliver as promised, attend when promised, poor quality equipment, equipment that fails, batteries promised even though it is evident that they have had supply issues since last year, no after sales service, failure to supply equipment, lack of communication, not responding to emails, telephone call back requests ignored, long waits to get through on the telephone etc etc'.

After a survey, some changes to the plan and paying the deposit for a PV and battery install we patiently waited for our install date. Twice GET postponed and on the third date no one showed up. After hours on hold we found out that GET had decided that ACTUALLY our survey showed installation was not possible. At no point did anyone at GET contact us. At no point did anyone at GET explain why it got to installation. We are still waiting for our deposit back and I expect to have to take them to Small Claims Court.

Faulty panels installed. Was finally able to get a repair technician, however, like many others, the technician was a no show. The following day the repair technician turned up. Luckily we were home. Battery packs never worked. Attempted to get repaired but unable to get through. Called on a different number and Clive answered straight away. He then dropped the call. Repeatedly attempted to contact Clive but he has now turned his phone off... SCAM COMPANY - GOING TO WATCHDOG

Pidley & Fenton

Village Eco Market

Sunday 21st August
10am-2pm Pidley Community Centre
Warboys Road, Pidley, PE28 3DA

- Cakes
- Plants
- Arts and Crafts
- Brewery
- Local Produce

- Florist
- Refill Shop
- Bike Repairs
- Toy Exchange

(bring your unwanted toys in exchange of another's!)
and more!

Pidley and Fenton's first ever Eco Market!

Milly and Erik play ball.



having your say ...

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

The Riverporter

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

OTHER NEWS

CENTRE THEATRE PLAYERS SUPPORTING HCCN

The Centre Theatre Players are busy preparing for their forthcoming Charity Cabaret show 'ON YOUR FEET' which they are presenting in the Burgess Hall of One Leisure on Friday and Saturday the 9th and 10th September, starting at 7.30pm. The show is a variety of music, comedy and dance featuring many of The Players regular performers together with the Vicky Grant dancers. This year the Players are supporting the Hunts Community Cancer Network. This team of nurses are based at Hinchbrook Hospital providing support and help for patients living with their cancer diagnosis and beyond.

To date The Players have raised nearly £90,000 supporting 35 different charities.

Facelift soon

Following the piece about the Poundstretcher store in our last issue we can announce that The Town Team has prepared a series of posters that will welcome visitors to the town.



This will, hopefully, present a better face to visitors than the out-of-date posters currently on display. It is hoped that the posters can go up next week. It remains to be seen what will happen to this prominent and quite large store.

Barclays and Peacocks to become flats

The owners of the empty Barclays Bank premises have applied to turn the building into flats. Their initial application was to simply alter the building from the inside but a later application was to knock the building down and build flats in its place. This latter proposal, seemingly suggested by HDC planners wasn't supported by the Town Council, mainly because of the disruption this would cause and objections from neighbours. This new building would infringe on the pavement and look pretty much the same as the current one, so there would be little, if any, enhancement to the street scene. The Peacock store is also destined to become flats. A concern raised by a member of the Civic Society is the lack of parking for all these homes.

Dear Erik,

Ref: Bus Station Toilets

I spoke to a town councillor regarding the state of the new toilets and was told that HDC, who did the refurbishment, has installed the wrong tiled flooring that it is not safe to mop. So, at a ridiculous cost, a contractor comes in once a month, closes a cubicle one at a time to jet wash them. I was also informed that the drain was installed wrong, hence the closing of some toilets. All in all an expensive cock up by HDC.

Joe

Dear Erik (and Russell Sprout),

In reply to The Gusset's thoughts on 'that pong' (see RP 114), might it be time to have another look at the ancient sewer vent pipe which stands 40 feet high on the junction of Station Road and Market Road (see pic 1)?



I believe this has been investigated before - but does anyone remember any findings being published? With increasing temperatures and changing local climate conditions, downdrafts for example may be driving the sewer odour down to street level? However, there is another very compelling reason why this ancient and crude piece of sewage technology requires further examination. - its current location very close to the edge of this busy corner, means that the radius of the kerb on the bend is extremely small - now totally inadequate for the vehicles having to use it. I am sure everyone has seen the latest and longer buses and Waitrose lorries negotiating this bend with increasing difficulty, often resulting with the vehicles front end sweeping over the kerb in front of Nuts Bistro.

Isn't it time that our sewerage engineers brought some 'NASA' technology to bear on this piece of smelly Victoriana - and if nothing else, moved it away from the kerb so that a safer radius can be created at this extremely busy junction (see pic 2).



Hope this brings some fresh air to the pong problem. **Stewart Denham**

Dear Erik, Ref: Music on The Waits

James Schouten, a young tenor with an amazing powerful and beautiful voice, gave a wonderful concert at 'Music on the Waits' on Sunday 24th July - held in the Methodist Church as it was too hot and windy outside.

To round off this sensational concert, our town Mayor Cllr Philip Pope sang a duet with him - Frank Sinatra's 'My Way'! James has been offered a place at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's Alexander Gibson School, starting in September. He has a part scholarship but does need extra support. So if anyone who, like me, heard and was impressed by him, would like to assist him please contact me at gillyjackson@ntlworld.com. I will then let you have the link to his 'go fund me' page. James is also available to book of course.



Gilly Jackson

Dear Erik,

Subject: Apple trees

I have been walking by these trees for several years on my way to town. They are laden with apples but are not eating apples, nor do they seem to be a cooking variety. Every year they just fall to the ground and are wasted. Maybe in days gone by there was a communal apple press.



Any suggestions? **Theresa Norris**

Dear Erik,

Would it be possible to put details of our Eco-market in your paper? Boasting as the village located in the geographical centre of Cambridgeshire, Pidley is hosting its first Eco Market. **Moira Munro. ED. Yes see page 2.**

Dear Erik, Subject: Bull Lane

Whilst slowly walking (I am disabled and stagger a lot) down Bull Lane towards a gentleman coming from the river, a lycra-clad cyclist raced round us. Since I didn't know that he was behind me it was a shock. The gentleman passed comment, which was repeated by the cyclist when he joined his two friends on the Quayside. Is cycling permitted in Bull Lane? **Worried of St Ives ED. I wish cyclists would use their bells!**

Dear Erik,

Having nearly been hit by a car that didn't stop at a red light on the guided busway crossing, and this is not the first time, I contacted Cambs County Council. As far as CCC are aware, this is not an issue, presumably as nobody bothers to report it. I know from speaking to others that this is a fairly regular occurrence, so perhaps we should report such instances to CCC. I would hate someone to be hurt or worse. **Peter**

Example shown:

- 3.6m wide opening
- 77" Anthracite grey slats

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Price on this door style can range from £1,440 - £2,740 depending on the width of door opening.

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HYPERION

Entries Invited for Our Next
Antiques & Interiors Sale
on Saturday 20th August



Sold In Our Last Antiques & Interiors Sale

Nathan Circles Mid Century Teak
Sideboard
Sold £400



Boxed Pelham Puppets Rabbit and Baby Bear
Sold £250

Interesting Fall front Coal Perdonium with inlaid
detail in the style of Shapland & Petter. with
applied copper detail
Sold £280



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



**A CHANCE TO ENJOY
ST IVES MUSIC ROYALTY?
FRIDAY 26TH AUGUST**

Kimberley Rew & Lee Cave-Berry

St Ives is blessed to have a number of excellent musicians that live here. However there are few who can compete with the national fame of Kimberley Rew, who was a Eurovision winning musician and songwriter with Katrina & The Waves. Not only did he write their most popular hits 'Walking on sunshine' and 'Love shine a light' his other compositions have been performed by many artists, including Celine Dion and The Bangles.

Tonight Rew will be joined by his partner and bass player, Lee Cave-Berry and percussionist Christine Kitching.



ALL CONCERTS START AT
7.30PM IN THE RIVERPORT
CAFÉ BAR.

DOORS OPEN AT 6.30PM.

TICKETS: £10 FROM
WWW.TICKETSOURCE.CO.UK/
EVENTSSTIVES

OR CAN BE PURCHASED FROM THE
RIVERPORT CAFÉ BAR.

A TOWN TEAM EVENT.

ADVERTORIAL

Record property prices continue to rise this summer in Cambridgeshire



The price of property coming to the market during July was up for the sixth consecutive month, reaching an average of £369,968.

Whilst the number of new sellers coming to the market is up 13% compared to this time last year, stock levels are still down some 40% compared to June 2019.

This imbalance between supply and demand continues to underpin price rises and is likely to continue throughout the rest of the year.

The school holidays often bring some respite to the property market, however, we have seen little slow down in the number of homeowners booking a valuation and buyer enquiries continue to flood in.

Whilst interest rates have adjusted to the new Bank of England base rate, buyers have not been deterred from offering the asking price or higher to secure their purchase.

Those lucky enough to have an offer accepted now have the task of navigating the legal conveyancing process.

With good organisation and the right guidance they should be in their new home for Christmas, however, the window to make this possible is closing.

At Ellis Winters we have dedicated sales progressors to help advise and guide you through your sale or purchase. All our sales are dealt with in-house, by an experienced member of our team.

If you're thinking of moving, perhaps would like to be moved by Christmas, we would be delighted to provide a free valuation and advice on your best step forward.

Call Ellis Winters on 01480 388888 today!

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