

The Riverporter

A SPECIAL AI VERSION - CAN YOU TELL?

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue I36: 9 June 2023

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Erik the Little Dog takes over as Town Mayor!

Extraordinary Paws-itivity Sweeps the Community as Furry Friend Claims Top Spot

In a stunning twist of fate, St Ives has gone barking mad as residents have elected Erik the Little Dog as the town's mayor! Yes, you heard it right, folks! The pint-sized pooch has triumphed over the conventional candidates, leaving everyone in town wagging their tails with delight.

Amidst a sea of suits and polished speeches, Erik managed to capture the hearts and votes of locals with his unrivaled cuteness and infectious enthusiasm. As we all know, politics can often be a dog-eat-dog world, but this election has proven to be a true 'tail' of success for our four-legged friend.

The campaign trail was unlike any other. Erik traded handshakes for pawshakes, unleashed his charm in every backyard, and licked his way to popularity with his endearing doggie grin. His campaign team, consisting of a motley crew of squirrels, cats, and a parrot named Polly, helped spread the woof throughout the town, leaving no lamppost unmarked.

In his victory speech, Erik barked, 'I promise to lead this town with boundless energy and never-ending loyalty! Treats for all, scratches behind the ears on demand, and mandatory belly rubs during office hours. It's a dog's world, and I intend to make it the best place for every resident, whether they walk on two legs or four.'

While some skeptics argue that Erik lacks the experience necessary for such a prestigious role, his supporters maintain that his unwavering commitment to chasing tennis balls and his unconditional love for belly rubs make him the perfect candidate to bring joy and harmony to St Ives.

One of the local residents, Mrs Henderson, remarked, 'I can't think of anyone better suited for the position. Erik's ability to sniff out trouble



Pictured: Erik in the council chamber courtesy of A Bot. See Musings from the Graveyard page 3

and track down squirrels in the blink of an eye proves that he's got what it takes to be our mayor. Plus, just imagine the diplomatic skills he'll display during his 'barks and treats' sessions!

Of course, with this new administration, there will be some inevitable changes. Council meetings will be conducted in the local park, and the town's annual fair will feature doggy obstacle courses and treat stations. Who could resist such paw-some improvements?

As Erik settles into his mayoral duties, we eagerly anticipate the changes he will bring. Will he implement dog-friendly policies or demand the creation of a dedicated squirrels-only park? Time will tell. However, one thing is for sure: St Ives is in for a wild ride, full of wagging tails, wet noses, and a mayor with a bark louder than any town crier!

So, congratulations to Erik the Little Dog, the new mayor of St Ives! Let us raise our paws and give him a round of ap-paws, for he has unleashed a new era of adorable governance in our beloved town. Remember, folks, if you're in need of a good ear scratch or a slobbery kiss, your mayor is always ready to serve!

Disclaimer: This article contains copious amounts of canine humor and is not intended to offend any politician, real Mayor or dog lover. Remember, it's all in good fun, so let's keep our tails wagging!

A Bot.

Bandstand stands proud



Prepare for a Majestic Musical Extravaganza at the Queen's Bandstand Grand Opening!

St Ives is about to witness a regal extravaganza like no other as the Queen's Bandstand prepares for its official grand opening on Sunday 10th September

In a ceremony fit for a monarch, distinguished guests will have the honour of cutting the ribbon, while the charismatic Town Mayor, Phil Pope, joins the grateful masses in paying tribute to the scheme's generous donors.

Following the momentous ribbon-cutting, the air will reverberate with the sweet sounds of music and the infectious energy of the crowd. St Ives Town Team, the visionary organizers behind this grand project, have arranged an afternoon filled

with outstanding entertainment that will undoubtedly leave attendees in awe. Best of all, this fantastic musical extravaganza is entirely free, ensuring that everyone can revel in the joyous festivities. The Queen's Bandstand, a striking architectural marvel nestled in the heart of the town, will serve as a constant reminder of the love and respect the community holds for their queen. Its picturesque location, overlooking The Waits is the perfect backdrop for musical

bliss and the joyous commemoration of Her Majesty's reign. So, mark your calendars and prepare for a day of royal enchantment! Join the jubilant St Ives Town Team, Mayor Phil Pope, and the generous donors on September 10 at noon for a celebration that will make history. Let the melodies wash over you, let your spirits soar, and let the Queen's Bandstand become a testament to the unyielding spirit of St Ives. Long live the music.



Thursday 29th - Chapel Arts concert with Dickie de Vere & The Dorchester Mavericks

Please note this month's concert is on a Thursday and features the always popular and entertaining Dickie de Vere and his friends.

The Riverport Café Bar 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the bar or on-line from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.



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

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Acorn celebrate 25th Anniversary

On 24th May members and guests celebrated 25 years of support for cancer sufferers at St Ives Corn Exchange with an address and presentations following a finger buffet. Below: Simon Townend, Acorn Chairman welcomes the guests.



Is there a solution to the car trap?

Yet another unlucky driver has fallen victim to the infamous 'Car Trap'. It seems that no matter how many large road signs are put up, drivers just can't resist the allure of this treacherous spot on Station Road. The Car Trap, which has been in operation since the Busway opened in 2011, has probably claimed near 100 victims to date, leaving their cars in shambles.

Another proposal involves hiring a team of professional comedians to perform stand-up routines near the Car Trap, hoping to distract drivers with laughter long enough to prevent them from veering off course. While this might be an entertaining solution, the potential for drivers to burst into laughter and lose control of their vehicles poses a new set of risks.



Local authorities are scratching their heads in search of a solution to this seemingly irresistible attraction. Some experts have suggested that the Car Trap has developed its own gravitational pull, attracting cars from miles away. Others believe that it might have secretly trained a legion of mischievous road signs to confuse innocent drivers.

In an attempt to deter drivers from falling into the Car Trap, the town council has considered various measures. One idea is to install an enormous neon sign with flashing lights and sirens that scream, 'Danger! Car Trap Ahead!' However, they fear that this might cause drivers to mistake Station Road for the set of a Michael Bay movie.

Meanwhile, the victims of the Car Trap are growing restless. Some have formed a support group called 'The Car Trap Survivors Anonymous' to share their harrowing stories and offer emotional support to fellow motorists. They meet every Tuesday at a local pub, where the bartender serves them drinks with tiny umbrellas to lighten the mood. While the Car Trap remains an enigma, one thing is for sure – it has become a legendary tale among the townsfolk. Tourists even flock to Station Road, hoping to catch a glimpse of the infamous Car Trap in action. Local entrepreneurs have started selling Car Trap T-shirts, mugs, and even miniature replicas of damaged vehicles as souvenirs.

STAR CRAFTERS CORONATION RAFFLE

Following the fabulous Coronation Picnic Star Crafters have handed out prizes.

The raffle raised £413.90. Thanks to everyone who bought tickets and supported us.

The first prize, a Coronation Blanket, was claimed by the winner on the day of the Big Picnic.

The other prizes were collected later and here are a few of our winners.

Congratulations everyone.



Toilets plagued by persistent vandalism

St Ives, known for its landscapes and vibrant community, has been grappling with a concerning issue that has left residents and visitors alike exasperated. The recently rebuilt toilets at the town's bustling bus station have become a recurrent target for acts of mindless vandalism.

The Bus Station toilets, which underwent a significant renovation project only a few months ago, were to provide much-needed facilities for locals and tourists. However, the reality is that these facilities have become an unfortunate hotspot for vandals, resulting in a frustrating experience for those in need.

Local business owners and residents are increasingly frustrated by the situation. Authorities and local officials have been grappling with finding a solution to this persistent problem. Increased surveillance, additional security measures, and public awareness campaigns have been suggested as potential steps to deter vandals and protect the newly rebuilt facilities.

Constable Laura Davis, the local police liaison officer, assured the public that they were taking the matter seriously. The St Ives Bus Station toilets are not just essential facilities but a reflection of the town's pride and commitment to providing a comfortable and welcoming environment for all.

Do you want a VIP tent for Proms in The Park?



The St Ives Carnival and Music Festival is back at Hill Rise Park, with a magical schedule of events.

Due to HGV driver shortages, tachograph regulations, a lack of volunteers to walk with the floats and fewer people to decorate floats there is no parade this year.

However, you can still get involved and win a great prize by joining our Parade of the Gardens, which will take place between 10am - 12pm on Saturday 8th July 2023.

Our theme this year is 'Could it be Magic'? Using this theme we challenge all you creative people of St Ives to decorate your front gardens, which the Chair of the Committee and the Mayor of St Ives, Phil Pope, will visit and judge.

The Winner will be given sole use of a VIP tent for the Proms in the Park on Saturday 8th July from 6pm at Hill Rise Park, with a hamper of goodies and a winners trophy.

We will encourage the public to come and view the gardens by using green methods of transport i.e. walking, bike. We will let the public know where we will be at what time via our Facebook page.

SEE TIMETABLE RIGHT.

Theatre Artz Dance School mesmerizes audiences with spectacular Beyoncé tribute performance at Butlins

Theatre Artz Dance School, renowned for its captivating performances, set to the stage last Sunday with an unforgettable Beyoncé tribute at Butlins, Skegness. Dancers from the Godmanchester and St Ives based school seamlessly executed intricate routines and electrifying moves, capturing the essence of the pop icon's powerful performances.

Artistic Director, Rachel, expressed her pride in the students' achievements, stating, 'It was an absolute privilege to witness our talented dancers bring Beyoncé's iconic performances to life on stage.'

For more information about Theatre Artz Dance School, visit theatreartz.co.uk



DIARY OF EVENTS JUNE

Wednesday 14th - Arts Society Lecture - Corn Exchange.

Following the AGM: **Artists Along The Ouse 1880-1930** Speaker: Bridget Flanagan. Preceded by Textiles Exhibition from 1pm. Guest fee £5.00. huntsarts.org

Saturday 17th - St Ives Eco Action Climate Café, 10am at St Ives Free Church.

St Ives Repair Café, 1-4pm at St Ives Methodist Church Hall.

Friday 2nd - Sunday 25th - St Ives Fringe - Corn Exchange. Poets, theatre groups, choirs and comedians celebrating the arts!

Sunday 25th - Picnic in the Park - Warners Park. A free event featuring live music, beer tent and food stalls. From Noon to 6pm.

Thursday 29th - Chapel Arts concert **Dickie de Vere & The Dorchester Mavericks**. See cover.

JULY

Throughout July and August - Music on The Waits. Every Sunday from 2.30pm until 4pm.

Friday 7th to Sunday 9th - St Ives Carnival & Music Festival at Hill Rise Park.

Friday 7 July Open-air cinema. **Saturday 8 July** 7pm Proms in the Park featuring The Haverhill Silver Band and fireworks.

Sunday 9 July From noon musical acts, DJs and bands ending with A Night with Take That.

Tuesday 11th - Poetry & Folk evening at the Corn Exchange Riverport Café Bar 6.30pm.

Friday 28th - Max de Bernardi & Veronica Sbergia



Fresh from the USA featuring Country & Western, folk and swing music. The Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the bar or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents



OTHER NEWS

SITI's closing down begs questions

As we reported in our last edition St Ives Town Initiative has been dissolved and we understand questions are now being asked by others about where some of the funds may have gone. *The Riverporter*, despite contacting Directors Michael Burke and Angela Dickinson over two weeks ago, has had no response to our question about what happened to SITI's funds. Originally set up by HDC in the 1990's and incorporated as a private company limited by guarantee without share capital in 2002, the group had over £22,000 in the 2020 accounts, which was up on the 2019 total. In 2021 funds were down to just under £11,000. Sadly the accounts filed at Companies House did not show any expenditure although there were no liabilities. Of course this covered the Covid lockdown period when nothing was taking place and with no staff to pay it is surprising that £11k was spent. As late as March 2022 SITI still had over £2,500. As SITI was a community group that received funds from the local authorities over the years it is unusual that no comment has been made as to why it was dissolved and what has happened to the funds. According to Companies House, in March '21 two directors resigned, councillors John Davies and Ryan Fuller, and in March '22 Ahmed Mokbul resigned leaving Sue Staples, Sindy Surtees, Angela Dickinson and Michael Burke as the only Directors.

Who is responsible for the railings?

In October Regan Payne of Ramsey crashed through the railings on The Waits (see RP121). On 30 March he appeared at Cambridge Magistrates Court where he was fined £350 for drink driving a vehicle without a licence. Enquiries by *The Riverporter* and our 'active' County Councillor, Kevin Reynolds have been unable to establish who is responsible for repairing the railings. Neither the Town Council, County Council, HDC or the Environment Agency will accept responsibility. It begs the question ... is anyone claiming compensation from the motorist?

Parking woes plague St Ives

Inadequate enforcement and illegally parked cars frustrate residents.

St Ives, is grappling with an ongoing parking problem that is causing significant inconvenience for both local businesses and residents. The issue has reached a boiling point, with delivery vehicles struggling to access shops along Bridge Street, due to illegally parked cars on Crown Street. Adding to the frustration, residents complain about a lack of enforcement by the seemingly absent police force.



Local residents, already frustrated with the limited parking options in the town, are growing increasingly exasperated by the lack of police presence and enforcement. Despite repeated complaints, the police seem to be nowhere in sight, leaving residents feeling unheard and overlooked. This absence of authority has emboldened some individuals to ignore parking regulations, exacerbating the problem and creating a sense of lawlessness in the area. The local authorities are being urged to address the parking crisis in St Ives promptly.

Erik is back from holiday.



having your say ...

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

Dear Erik,

Subject: St Ives EcoAction Climate Cafe
PLEASE NOTE THE DATE CHANGE!

The next St Ives Eco Action Climate Cafe is on **Sat June 17th** at 10am at St Ives Free Church. The speaker, Andrew Clark, will relate aboriginal culture to its links to nature. It promises to be a thought-provoking session. Many thanks
Mary Gatehouse

Dear Erik,

Subject: Public Speaking Group in June

Our monthly meetings are friendly, diverse, and fun and provide everyone who comes along with a safe space to build up their confidence.

We are having an open night on **Tuesday 20th June at The Old Ferry Boat Inn in Needingworth, from 6.30pm for a 7pm start. We'd love to see you there!**

Thanks,
John Marsh

Shirley's Kidney Cancer funds reaches £13,000

The 20th May fundraising evening was a great success, where everyone enjoyed first class entertainment provided by Sara Honey and the very tasty fish 'n chip supper went down a treat.

A raffle was held during the interval, with some of the prizes generously donated by local supporters such as Hephers, Morrisons and the Nail Bar.

All this means my latest donation to Kidney Cancer UK has brought my total to date to £13,000, but I'm not stopping there. An event for 18th May 2024 is being planned with the Corn Exchange and Sara already booked, so don't put your away dancing shoes just yet.

Community divided as St Ives grapples with potential loss of YMCA Charity Shop

In a surprising turn of events, the arrival of a new restaurant in St Ives where the YMCA is has raised concerns among some residents, sparking a debate on whether the town truly needs another large dining establishment.

Licensing Act 2003 Application for a Premises Licence	
Name of Applicant:	Longers UK Limited
Address:	Lounge, 9-10 Sheepmarket, St Ives, PE27 5AH
Licensing Authority:	Huntingdonshire District Council

Meanwhile, the closure of the YMCA charity shop highlights the complex dynamics of retail spaces in the town and has generated mixed reactions. While some residents have voiced concerns about an excess of charity shops, this shop's popularity and positive impact on the community cannot be ignored.

Longers UK Limited has recently applied for a restaurant and a pavement licence and we presume will be leasing what is currently the YMCA and converting it into a restaurant.

FESTIVAL EVENTS ST IVES (FEST) PRESENT SUMMER FUN PICNIC IN THE PARK

Warners Park St Ives
Sunday June 25th
12 noon to 6 pm

- Free community event
- Live music
- Beer tent
- Food stalls
- Follow us on facebook
- Activities for children

Sponsors: The Junos, So 80's, Reggae Ray, Chatteris & Manea Silver Band

Now I'm not really into AI, after all I'm a dog, and apart from some BOT adapting my picture to decorate one of those soppy cards with adorable dogs on, I don't see what AI can do for me. It can't magic a bone, can it?

Anyway my owner wanted to see what all the fuss is about, as the news is all about AI possibly causing the end of the world as we know it! Erik and I gave it some thought and we thought AI could help write articles for *The Riverporter*.

So Ron sent off a simple request to a chatbot for an article about 'Erik the little dog' who has been elected town mayor by popular support from local people. He said make it humorous.

Within 30 seconds a 500 word article came back, which we have printed on the front page (sorry to the real Mayor, Phil - it's only a joke).

Now not only was the speed impressive but it was quite funny, well I think so, although the Editor, wasn't quite so impressed!

Apparently AI covers a lot of different disciplines, such as visual arts, where pictures can be created, and music, where tunes can be composed. Amazingly quick computers help the 'BOT' software create songs in seconds and

they can be in almost any style of music, which is worrying musicians. Not only can their work be plagiarised but they may not be needed at all to write songs, as a BOT can do it quicker.

Of course there was the millennium bug that many thought would cause mayhem and even in my short doggy lifetime we've had Covid.

So why are so many people suggesting that AI, which most of us know little about and has only become prominent in the last few months, could be the thing to end the world?

Probably because it could affect almost every facet of our lives. In some industries it already does, such as dealing with telephone calls or on-line ordering, or manufacturing.

Perhaps postie might be a robot one day. But will it have a treat for me? I think not.

AI seems to be a sneaky thing, because of its ability to mimic. Are you sure this article was written by a human being? Is that thesis the work of a clever student or a machine?

Fake news is everywhere and it's difficult to know what is true and what is false. Because the AI BOT has virtually everything ever written at its fingertips it can find information in an instant and produce an article, written in seconds, that appears to be new and original.

It's a forger's charter and a tutors nightmare as lecturers try to decide if Timmy or the BOT wrote Timmy's thesis.

Is that painting a long lost Cézanne?

We won't even mention the use of AI in the military, where the possibilities are endless for a catastrophe in this fractured world.

After all these thoughts my brain hurt so I had to have another treat before we could think what to do. And then, as if by magic it came to me ... **Why not make an AI edition of *The Riverporter*?** And so here it is.

Among the reports in today's *Riverporter* are several pieces written by 'ChatBot'. We simply sent it a topic and a little detail and, once again after just a few seconds the articles appeared.

Can you tell which ones the Editor wrote and which came from the AI BOT?

INFO: An Internet bot is a software application that runs automated tasks with the intent to imitate human activity, such as messaging.

AI started with the pioneering work of Alan Turing and was first used by businesses in the 1970s. The current speed of progress is because of greater computing power and the development of deep learning techniques, now boasting 175 billion parameters, demonstrating unprecedented natural language understanding and generation capabilities.



Musings from the graveyard

Milli has been pondering again about another subject in the news. This time it is about Artificial Intelligence.

HYPERION

Entries Invited for Our Next Antiques & Interiors Sale on Saturday 24th June



Sold In Our Last Interiors Sale

A Bolex Paillard Cine camera, various accessories, instructions, in fitted leather case and assorted Photographic items

Sold £700



Aluminium case containing Dragonball The Tournament of Power 12 Card per Pack & Dragonball Universal Onslaught 12 Card per pack both Sealed

Sold £700

1911 Sovereign on 9ct Gold chain 22g total weight

Sold £510



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



Repair Café

Sat 17th June
1pm – 4pm

St Ives Methodist
Church Hall

We welcome:

- Bikes
- Sewing repairs
- Jewellery
- Ceramics
- Computers
- Tablets
- Mobile phones
- Small household appliances

Repairs are **FREE**
but we welcome
CASH donations!

To book a slot for repair on the day, please email:

stivesrepaircafe@gmail.com

or voicemail : 07377 014401.

Or bring your broken items on the day for assessment ready for repair at a later date, and check out the repair café vibe.



Learn from our repairers, gain new skills and enjoy drinks and home-made cake.

Yes, repairs can be fun
AND reduce waste!

St Ives Repair Café is an initiative of ecoaction



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TÁR

Thursday 15 June 2023
at 7:30pm. Doors open 6:30pm.

Tickets £5

Director: Todd Field,
152m, Cert 15

One of the best films of our time

Set in the world of classical music, Lydia Tár is widely considered one of the greatest living composer-conductors.

A mesmerizing Cate Blanchett performance, Todd Field takes great care in making the craft at which the titular character excels feel lived-in. Blanchett's Lydia Tár doesn't exactly sell her soul to the devil, but she shows us that talent is one thing, morality another.

A Rotten Tomatoes review.

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