

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Trouble at' Hill

Following last week's Town Council meeting, management of the Burleigh Hill Community Centre is being transferred to the Town Council due to concerns about the current management's lack of transparency and financial details.

### History of the centre

To understand the issues it is important to understand how the centre came about and how it is run. When the Coop, the Haywain pub and shops were built on Constable Road around the late 70s and early 80s the Burleigh Hill Centre was constructed. It is owned by the Coop. A 100 year lease was granted to St Ives Town Council and they are the custodians of the building. On 1st Feb 1984 the St Ives Community Association Charity was set up and the Town Council seem to have agreed with the Charity for it to manage the day-to-day running of the Centre, although no agreement has been found.

To ensure the Council maintained some control, the St Ives Community Association management committee included Town Councillors. For many years this arrangement continued with Councillors attending meetings of the Association. Indeed a Town Councillor, Angela Ayers-Wilson was employed to manage the centre by the Association.

### Problems appear

Problems seem to have started when some long-term members left the committee, including the treasurer. Tim Drye, then a Town Councillor, took over the Chairmanship of the Association and concerns, over the lack of accounts and meetings not being properly held, emerged.

In September 2021 Councillor Angela Dickinson became Chair when Tim Drye resigned. At the same time, current Town and District Councillor, Michael Burke became a Trustee of the Association. Burke and Dickinson are the only two Trustees currently listed on the Charity Commission website. A name change followed with the Charity now listed as The Burleigh Hill Community Centre and the constitution for the Association, originally adopted in December 1983, was amended in March 2023.

### At the meeting

Councillor Andrew Riddell gave a verbal report, detailing the current situation. His report noted that there are only two Trustees and no Treasurer. There have been no meetings for a while and over the past 5 years, financial statements had been submitted late to the Charities Commission, which showed a loss of £3,720 over the period.

Because full financial details were not available, Cllr Riddell estimated the income based on the use at the known hourly rate. This indicated that the income might exceed that declared.

Recently the floor of the Centre had been re-varnished but the work was sub-standard and needed re-doing. Cllr Riddell suggested that the insurance of the company used to do the work should pay for the work to be done again, however no invoice

had been received by the council. Some of the costs he had been able to see, he said 'seemed excessive'. His report also said that there was no booking portal only a telephone number and despite assurances to the contrary, given at an earlier Town Council meeting, membership of the support organisation, Cams Acre, had not been renewed.

Cllr Riddell also raised concern about users safety as there appeared to be no risk assessment, potentially leaving the Council vulnerable. He continued 'There are lots of holes that should have been plugged long ago.' Councillor Pascoe thanked Cllr Riddell for the report as the issues about the Centre had been around for quite a few years. Cllr Pascoe said 'There has been quite a lot of bad blood... we had councillors resigning, we had staff resigning, there has been a tug of war... and pencils thrown, we're talking serious stuff here.'

Cllr Pascoe also said that this should have been dealt with ages ago, so that the Centre is run properly and professionally for residents to enjoy.

**Motions agreed by Town Council**  
Cllr Riddell then proposed two motions:

1. That the Burleigh Hill Community Centre will be operated by Town Council staff for all bookings, upkeep and digital marketing and that the full transfer of the building and the operations of it to be completed within 7 days.
2. If authorised and legally allowed the Town Council will conduct an internal audit of the use of the building. To be carried out by two councillors (both unconnected with the Centre over the past 6 years) and the Town Clerk to maintain non-biased, transparency and public protection.

Both passed unanimously. Rather surprisingly Cllr Burke, one of the trustees, did not attend the meeting. *The Riverporter* contacted him to seek his opinion on the matter, but as yet he has not replied. See page 3 for further details.

## St Ives & Music - You can't have one without the other!

It is truly amazing how our little town has become a 'hot bed' of live music and most of it is free to hear.

As we really get into summer with the long spells of warm, dry weather (well it is exam time!) there is so much going on. Of course as I write this it is raining, but for once I am happy to hear the drip, drip, drip of raindrops on the windowsill as the garden and the farmers are desperate for some rain.

I digress. Well there is a lot happening over the next four months and some really wonderful musical treats to hear. The list below isn't comprehensive but shows just how vibrant the town is. Of course there are the usual events such as Picnic In The Park this Sunday in Warners Park and on Thursday is a Chapel Arts Concert featuring **Dickie de Vere and his Dorchester Mavericks** playing their blend of jazz from the '20s and '30s. This always involves some humour and brilliant musicianship. In July it's the Carnival and Music Festival. There is also the odd surprise, one of which I highlight below.

### A one off special treat for classical guitar lovers A Free concert in aid of Amnesty International

On Saturday 8th July two amazing guitarists will perform a selection of South



American music, including the tangos of Astor Piazzolla. Justin Hyer (above right) will be joined by Sebastian Pompilio, freshly arrived from Argentina. Sebastian is an acknowledge master of Piazzolla's music, having studied with original members of Piazzolla's quintet. Organised by the Town Team, the concert is in **The Free Church at Noon on Saturday 8th July.**

## DIARY OF EVENTS JUNE

**Thursday 29th - Chapel Arts Concert** with **Dickie de Vere & The Dorchester Mavericks** (right). The Riverport Café Bar 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the bar or on-line from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Friday 30th - English Serenade** a COSI lunchtime concert. 1pm Free Church.

**JULY**  
**Saturday 1 - 2 July - Needingworth Music Festival** Millfield playing fields from Noon. Music from 2pm. Free entry.

**July 2 - 27 August - Music on The Waits.** Every Sunday 2.30pm until 4pm.

**Friday 7 July - The Pianoman** The Riverport Café Bar 7.30pm. Tickets £5 from the bar or on-line from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

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

**Saturday 8 July - Free Charity concert in aid of Amnesty International** with guitarists Sebastian Pompilio and Justin Hyer. See details above.

**Sunday 9 July - COSI Summer Concert** featuring music by Ralph Vaughen Williams, Doreen Carwithen, Parry and Edward German. 6pm The Free Church

**Wednesday 19th to Saturday 22 July - Imaginary** A new musical from St Ives Youth Theatre at the Burgess Hall. Tickets [www.siyt.co.uk](http://www.siyt.co.uk).

**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](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).



The public attending the Annual Town Council Meeting in the Burleigh Hill Centre on 7th March 2020.

# Erik welcomes Lord Roberts

**N**o he isn't one of Boris' new peers, he is a magnificent steam engine who popped into St Ives on his visit to Holywell for the annual Well Dressing.

Lord Roberts was one of a collection of 27 steam engines, part of an important auction held over two days in 1980 at Tom Paisley's Manor Farm in Back Lane, Holywell.

Lord Roberts was built by Fowlers in 1900 and was saved and restored by Tom Paisley in Holywell.

Lord Roberts and the current owner Stephen Cotton, who lives in Berlin, arrived in Holywell from West Sussex on a low-loader. After arrival Lord Roberts visited surrounding villages 'under his own steam'.

At around 1pm on Thursday 'Lord Roberts' visited the Golden Lion in Market Hill and *The Riverporter* was on hand to capture this amazing sight and sound.

Erik, who is enjoying his role as Mayor, was also on hand to welcome the Lord and his driver Peter.

The Town Team, as part of its efforts to brighten the town with historical items, such as the willow cattle on the Morrisons roundabout, has



suggested putting an old steam engine or model replica, like those built here, on another roundabout.

## Do you know where one is?

As yet no engine has been found. So if you know where there is one or if you know of someone capable of creating a replica please let us know. Incidentally you may have noticed that the willow cattle have disappeared from the Morrisons roundabout. They have gone on holiday but will be back when they are completely refreshed.



# SIYT Presents 'Imaginary'

**S**t Ives Youth Theatre will be performing a musical production called 'Imaginary' at the Burgess Hall in St Ives from the 19th - 22nd July.

SIYT is a registered charity that can hold up to 40 members. We were created in 2001 and we will be looking for a new artistic director to take the reins in 2024.

**Tickets for 'Imaginary' are £15 (concessions £10) with a family ticket (2 adults, 2 children) being £40.**

**Doors open at 7pm, with the show starting at 7:30pm.**

SIYT will also be at the Carnival performing snippets of the show.



**IMAGINARY** is an exciting, funny and inspiring musical about the wonder of childhood, the power of the imagination and what it means to grow up.

Milo is Sam's only friend and they spend all their time together, using only their imaginations to transform their world into a place of adventure and excitement.

But as Sam's first day at a new school approaches, his mother worries that Milo is holding her son back, stopping him from growing up. School turns out to be full of surprises—and secrets.

With a cast of adults and kids, **IMAGINARY** centers on an enduring friendship with other-worldly twists and turns that change lives forever. See advert on page 4.

# THE CAMPAIGN GATHERS MOMENTUM!

The Great Ouse Valley Trust has been in touch with *The Riverporter*. Issue 132 gave front-page prominence to the Great Ouse Valley Trust's explosive revelations of how the government agency National Highways has created a national disgrace. It has reneged on its own contractual pledge to remove plastic tree guards after 3-5 years, pleading no funds available.

The result along the A428, after 20 years of neglect, is miles of ugly and dangerous plastic pollution. And this at a time when another government body, the Environment Agency, is promoting the Plastic Blitz Initiative to motivate local volunteer groups, like GOVT, to organise plastic litter picks!

Why should volunteers risk life and limb on the verges of our major roads clearing up the National Highways own mess? Cllr Stephen Ferguson, then Chair of the County Council, agreed. He accompanied the Trust to a litter hotspot and made a video to add his support - find it at [greatousevalleytrust.org.uk](http://greatousevalleytrust.org.uk).

Now, a GOVT Trustee has told *The Riverporter*, 'Enough is enough'. After two years of lobbying National Highways to honour their pledge,



*Some of the 20 year-old plastic wrapped around trees alongside the roads in our district.*

Trustees have now addressed Government direct, and written to the two relevant Secretaries of State: Mark Harper for Transport; and Therese Coffey for Environment.

The response from Mark Harper's office ignored the litter issue, instead issuing reassurances that the new A14 tree-replanting regime has learnt from the first failures (we shall see).

The Trust has yet to hear from Therese Coffey. In frustration GOVT

contacted our MP, Jonathan Djanogly, knowing from his attendance at their inaugural meeting five years ago that he supports their aims and aspirations.

He agreed to meet and told Trustees he had already been in touch with National Highways at a higher level, and promised to take up matters again on their behalf.

Wouldn't it be great if his influence had some significant effect for his constituents before he steps down?

# The Taproom's new beer garden

A newly decorated beer garden with cushioned sofas and plenty of seating (both in the sun and in shade) has been created.

It features an outside bar serving a wide variety of beers, ciders and an extensive cocktail menu.

Perfect in the summer evenings with outside heaters and overhead fairy lights, our friendly staff and a lovely relaxing feel - it is the perfect place to spend your summer.



# MORE EVENTS TO ENJOY . . .

Don't forget this Sunday **Picnic in the Park** in Warners Park at noon. The weather will be hot, up to 27° with a chance of a shower late on, so bring a brolly for protection against the sun and the rain.

**Sunday 2nd July** at 2.30pm it is the first concert under the new bandstand at The Waits with the wonderful Tenor James Schouten (right).

**Music on The Waits** continues throughout the summer with . . .

<b>July</b>	9th	Reggie Ray	<b>August</b>	6th	Manea Silver Band
	16th	Somersham Town Band		13th	Upwood Ukuleles
	23rd	The Lightwaves		20th	Musical Amigos
	30th	Stamford Stompers		27th	Accoustics Anonymous



## BREAKING NEWS • BREAKING NEWS • BREAKING NEWS

The bandstand official opening will go ahead on Sunday 10th September and the The Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Julie Spence, OBE CSTJ QPM, the King's representative, will be on hand to cut the ribbon at midday.

Also on hand will be the Town Mayor and following the ribbon cutting ceremony there will be an afternoon of free entertainment for all. With fine weather this will be a celebration of the generosity of the people of St Ives who donated over £40,000 for the project. In our next issue we will highlight the local businesses who generously gave their time to complete the installation.

# The Riverporter

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



having your say ...

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



## OTHER NEWS

### Burleigh Hill Centre - latest news

Following the Town Council meeting last week, which we detailed on the cover, *The Riverporter* has attempted to get some answers to some of the questions raised. Having passed a motion for the Town Council to take over running the centre within 7 days we can report that the Town Council has now **'taken back control'** and wishes to let all users know that they will be able to continue using the hall and should contact the Council, either by phone on **01480 388929** or via email: **clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk** or in person at the Town Hall.

*The Riverporter* also tried to contact Angela Dickinson and Michael Burke, in order to find out their opinion of these changes and again there has been no response. We did however talk with some of the user groups and have established that hourly rates have been raised recently. Despite this the users did say that the recent improvements to the facilities were welcome.

Our investigations show the current hourly rates are: Monday to Thursday £24, Fridays and Saturdays £28 and Sundays £30, much more than the £14 previously agreed. We have been able to estimate that total income with the new rates could be around £56,000, a 360% increase on the revenue declared last year. Considering this is a community facility supported with tax payers money it is surprising that there was so little information available to the public or to the Council. Information should be available from now on.

Also surprising is that Angela Dickinson, a former town councillor and Michael Burke, an existing town councillor, who have been in charge of St Ives Town Initiative and Burleigh Hill have not responded to genuine enquiries from either *The Riverporter* or the Council.

**UPDATE:** *The Riverporter* spoke with Angela Dickinson, who did not want to comment on the Burleigh Hill matter but did say 'that funds from St Ives Town Initiative were transferred to the Christmas Lights [Committee] for future use'. (see RP 136 'SITI's closing down begs questions'.) Michael Burke is also in charge of the Christmas lights.

### Planning Matters coming up

Plans for the Houghton Grange, which affects the spatial relationship between the town and Houghton village have been submitted. The application of this sensitive location overlooking the Great Ouse River Valley, is due to come before the Planning Committee on June 28th.

The Gifford Farm proposals have resurfaced as developers try and build on the land alongside the Somersham Road opposite St Ives Industrial Estate. Carter Jonas made a speculative presentation to the Town Council in May for up to 1,700 homes, but as yet that land is not in the local plan as an area available for housing development.

The How made a request to remove some trees but the Town's Planning committee were not impressed with the proposals for replanting. HDC's enforcement team has over 600 cases in process, one of which is the How's attempt to build a landing stage alongside the Thicket path. The gate that was illegally put up has been removed and the fencing could be removed soon.

The repairs to The Waits railings (RP 136) are still untouched. County Councillor Kevin Reynolds has told us he is still waiting to receive definitive information as to which authority is responsible. Meanwhile we do not know if the culprit, 19 year old Regan Payne from Ramsey is being chased for the cost of the repairs, or whether there is an insurance claim underway.

### Man arrested for dragging a child in street

A man was arrested last Saturday after it was reported that he was dragging a young child along a street in St Ives. Cambs Police located and arrested the man on suspicion of being drunk in charge of a child, common assault, and assaulting a constable. A Cambs Police spokesperson said: 'Our thanks go out to the members of the public who called this incident in. You all made a difference and helped safeguard a child.' The man has since been released on conditional bail. If you need to report something visit [www.cambs.police.uk](http://www.cambs.police.uk) and select 'report'.

**Dear Erik,**  
**Subject: Erik becomes Mayor**  
Can I say how impressed I was with the lead article in Issue 136 of 9th June concerning your election as Mayor.  
Well deserved, if I may say, and well over time. Your intelligent and successful use of AI means we can dispense with all the superfluous humans helping you on *The Riverporter* and give you the full accolade you deserve and free 'leash'.  
I have long thought St Ives Town Council has gone to the dogs and I now have absolute proof. Well done Erik - you take the biscuit!  
**Paterfamilias.**

**Dear Erik,**  
**Subject: Wireless for the Blind**  
My name is Megan and I'm a volunteer at British Wireless for the Blind Fund, a charity providing radios to people living with sight loss. As you can imagine, losing your sight is extremely difficult and can be hard on many people. Simple tasks like leaving the house or turning on the radio become a challenge. We provide specially adapted radios, on a free loan, to those unable to purchase equipment to improve the lives of visually impaired people. I'm contacting you on behalf of BWBF in the hope you could publish our press release in the next issue of *The Riverporter*. **Megan Hurl**  
**'Tis done Megan, see below, Ed.**

**COSI**  
Lunchtime Concert  
at  
St Ives Free Church  
  
Friday 30th June at 1pm  
An English Serenade

**The Riverport Lounge**  
THE PIANOMAN  
  
FRIDAY 7TH JULY  
Presenting  
St Ives based singer, songwriter  
& performer  
Paul Dodson (AKA The Pianoman).  
Paul will be performing well known hits  
from Elton John, Billy Joel, Queen;  
The Eagles & many more, plus a selection of  
his own songs. Live from 7:30pm.  
  
RIVERPORT CAFE BAR  
ST IVES CORN EXCHANGE  
Doors open at 6:30pm  
BUY YOUR TICKETS AT  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents)  
01480 496955  
OR AT THE VENUE  
  
TICKETS  
£5  
  
As featured on  
BBC Radio

## What should St Ives be like?

Discussions about the Neighbourhood Plan (SNIP) for St Ives are well underway and at a recent meeting St Ives Councillors and representatives of the Civic Society and Town Team discussed the next stage. Just how St Ives will be developed is still unknown. The much criticised Masterplan for St Ives (not the same as the SNIP) is due to resurface in a few weeks. The draft SNIP has taken into account residents comments, which said that ...

*'St Ives has reached a natural limit and major new development is not appropriate.'*

You also said *'protecting our heritage is important and you want to see enhancements to the local environment'*.

### What is being done now

The Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority Board agreed spending for our market towns, which included these projects in St Ives.

**St Ives Broadway Cycle Link and Highways improvements** - in partnership with Cambs CC.

**Shop Front grant scheme** - This scheme will provide grants to businesses in St Ives and Huntingdon for the purpose of improving shop fronts - in partnership with Huntingdon BID.

Both of the above are still to be completed but the third project **St Ives Bandstand** is now finished.

**Vibrant Communities** is a programme to develop new events and activities designed to promote and support local areas, including new markets, local businesses and events.

**It is expected that the Neighbourhood plan will be on display in the autumn. This will be an important opportunity for residents to have an opinion on what St Ives should be like in the future. The Riverporter will keep you informed.**

### Mayor Erik tells councillors that the dogs of St Ives want more lampposts ...



## Free listening devices for people with sight loss in Cambridgeshire

As the cost-of-living crisis puts more people under strain, a leading sight loss charity is encouraging blind and partially sighted people in Cambridgeshire to claim their free specially adapted listening device. Research shows that people living with sight loss are more likely to be hit harder by the cost-of-living crisis\*. British Wireless for the Blind Fund (BWBF) provides a range of easy-to-use devices for free and for life to blind and partially sighted people across the UK who might otherwise struggle to afford them.

Sophie Jones, for BWBF said: *'Radio is a lifeline for people living with sight loss, keeping them in touch with the world, as well as their local community. Sadly, costs and difficulties using 'off-the-shelf' devices can mean that people with sight loss sometimes struggle to access the same audio content most of us take for granted.'* BWBF's range of devices includes DAB radios, CD players, portable radios, digital radios, Alexa devices and much more.

**If you or someone you know is interested in a BWBF audio device, please contact Sophie Jones at [sophie@blind.org.uk](mailto:sophie@blind.org.uk) or phone 01622 754 757.**

People can also browse BWBF's full range of devices and apply online at [www.blind.org.uk](http://www.blind.org.uk).

\*RNIB, Cost of Living Report (August 2022)

# The COURTYARD

St Ives

Open-air boutique market, run by independents

In the heart of St Ives at Hyperion Salerooms is The Courtyard with a vast range of gifts and crafts ranging from handmade dog treats, candles, soap, art, origami, craft kits, beads, watches, books, furniture, handbags, vapes, make up, antiques & collectables. There is something for everyone!



We have a range of Olive Trees ranging from small stock to large Gnarled aged trees, perfect for your patios as they are ideally suited to the English climate!



We also have our very own café, selling various coffee's, tea and homemade cake

The Courtyard, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH  
[www.hyperionauctions.co.uk/the-courtyard-shopping](http://www.hyperionauctions.co.uk/the-courtyard-shopping)  
Tel: 01480 464140



## Summer Concert British and Regional Music

Sunday 9th July @  
6.00pm

The Free Church St Ives

Conductor - Chris Hiscock  
Leader - Karen Hubbard

WASPS OVERTURE  
BY RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

SUFFOLK SUITE  
BY DOREEN CARWITHEN

OVERTURE TO AN  
UNWRITTEN TRAGEDY  
BY CHARLES HUBERT PARRY

THREE DANCES FROM  
HENRY V III  
BY EDWARD GERMAN

SOIREES MUSICALES  
BY BENJAMIN BRITTEN

TWO ENGLISH IDYLLS  
BY GEORGE BUTTERWORTH

Adults £10 (Under 16s Free)

Tickets on Door or via

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/booking/t-inxkyrg>



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## RYE LANE

Thursday 6 July 2023  
at 7:30pm. Doors open 6:30pm  
Director: Raine Allen Miller  
82m, Cert 15

**Rye Lane** is a 2023 British romantic comedy-drama film directed by Raine Allen-Miller in her feature directorial debut from a screenplay by Nathan Bryon and Tom Melia. Set in the South London areas of Peckham and Brixton, the film is titled after the real-life Rye Lane. It stars David Jonsson and Vivian Oparah as two strangers who have a chance encounter, after having both been through recent breakups, and spend the day getting to know each other.



## EMPIRE of LIGHT

Thursday 20 July 2023  
at 7:30pm, doors open 6:30pm  
Director: Sam Mendes  
115m, Cert: 15

EMPIRE of LIGHT

**Empire of Light** is a 2022 romantic drama film directed, written, and co-produced by Sam Mendes. Set in an English coastal town in the early 1980s, the film is about the power of human connection during turbulent times. It stars Olivia Colman, Micheal Ward, Monica Dolan, Tom Brooke, Tanya Moodie, Hannah Onslow, Crystal Clarke, Toby Jones, and Colin Firth.

Tickets £5 from [screenstives.org.uk](http://screenstives.org.uk) or in the Corn Exchange