

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Dolphin to return to its prestigious position?

According to reports in the media The Dolphin is one of the hotels that the Government will no longer be using for asylum accommodation. St Ives County Councillor, Kevin Reynolds, said he was hopeful it will return to its previous prestigious position and condition.

Clr Reynolds told *The Riverporter* 'Cambridgeshire County Council and HDC had no say or input into the allocation of migrants to the Dolphin, it was just imposed upon us with no consultation.'

He also said 'I am pleased to say that discreet lobbying seems to have worked, as the Dolphin is a very important part of our local tourist economy, and I am hopeful it will return to its previous prestigious position/condition.'

An email from the Home Office's Tim Rymer to the CCC said:

'I am therefore pleased to inform you that the Home Office is now terminating the contract with The Dolphin Hotel, as asylum accommodation and it will cease being used by the end of November 2023, reflecting the contractual notice period on this property.'

Residents currently accommodated in the hotel will be moving to other parts of our asylum estate. They will

be notified a minimum of 5 days in advance and moved by the Home Office in line with our existing published policies. Whilst we expect impacts on local authorities to be minimal, we are putting in place additional resource to work with our accommodation providers and local partners to manage this process and minimise disruption, particularly focusing on families.'

The *Riverporter* wonders just what will happen to the hotel now?

Below is a picture of the terrace,

before the current owners took over. It was an important venue for the town with 67 rooms, a large restaurant, a gym and was a popular wedding/party venue.

Since its acquisition in 2017 there have been numerous 'incidents' with poor reviews by users. It seemed the asylum contract may have been a welcome deal for the owners, who recently gave £3,000 towards the St Ives Christmas Lights.

But will it now become the prestigious venue it once was?



St Ives & Music - Don't miss . . .

FRIDAY 24TH NOVEMBER

Kimberley Rew & Lee Cave-Berry

Kimberley Rew was a founder member of Katrina and the Waves, writing the hit songs Walking on Sunshine, the Eurovision winning Love Shine a Light, and the Bangles' Going down to Liverpool.

Kim and Lee formed their duo in 1998, recently achieving six singles in Mike Read's Heritage Chart.

They are joined by Christine Kitching on cajon.



7.30pm in the Riverport Café Bar. Tickets: £10 from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or from the Bar.

## DIARY OF EVENTS

### NOVEMBER

**Saturday 11th - Handel's Messiah.** 7.30pm St Ives Free Church.

This masterpiece is generally regarded as one of the finest examples of Handel's oratorios and is performed worldwide. St Ives Choral Society present it with full choir, four soloists and an orchestra of local professionals. Tickets available from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society)

**Sunday 12th - Remembrance Sunday Parade.** Market Hill 10.30am.

**Monday 13th - Snowman Festival Trail starts.**

A chance for children (under 12 years) to win a prize by completing the Snowman Trail available at participating stores.

**Saturday 18th - Christmas Lights Switch-on.** Market Hill with The Mayor and Father Christmas

**Friday 24th - Chapel Arts Concert with Kim and Lee.** Eurovision winner Kimberley Rew (Katrina & The Waves) and Lee Cave-Berry. The Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Sunday 26th - On the Way to Christmas** - an informal concert by Hemingford Ladies Choir. 3pm St Margaret's Church, Hemingford Abbots with refreshments and a retiring collection in support of the Church.

**Sunday 26th - Fenstanton Christmas Market**- 12-4pm, Fenstanton Church Centre, School Lane. Christmas gifts including Artisan Cheese, Spirit Distillery, Jewellery, Home Decor, Art, Floristry, Wax Melts, Cakes & Bakes plus Mulled Wine whilst you shop. Entry is free.

**Friday 31st - Free COSI concert featuring violin and oboe solos.** St Ives Free Church 1pm.

### DECEMBER

**Saturday 2nd - Mayor of St Ives Charity Concert** with the RAF Wyton Band. The Free Church 7.30pm.

**Saturday 9th - ArtsFest.** Art, crafts and gifts for Christmas. The Corn Exchange from 10am. FREE entry

**Saturday 16th - St Ives Choral Society Family Christmas Concert** 6.30pm, Free Church, St Ives.

**Saturday 16th - Sunday 17th - Two-day Santa and Snowman Festival.** Games and craft activities plus a FREE Santa's Grotto. The Corn Exchange from 10am.

**Friday 22nd - Carol Concert with RAF Wyton Brass Band.** The Corn Exchange from 6.45pm. Tickets £10, include a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie, from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

If you care about nature do not miss this event tomorrow

THE CLIMATE CAFÉ  
10AM  
SATURDAY 4TH NOVEMBER  
THE METHODIST CHURCH

**CLIMATE CAFE**

Do you care about nature?  
How can we increase nature in St Ives' green spaces?  
Why does this matter?  
[LEARN MORE, CARE MORE, DO MORE](#)

HAVE YOUR SAY

Can we increase NATURE IN ST IVES GREEN SPACES?

Join Philip Bubb, and Cllr Lara Davenport-Ray, to find out how to get involved in shaping a nature recovery plan for our town.

FIND OUT MORE

VENUE: ST IVES METHODIST CHURCH, THE WAITS, PE27 5BY  
TIME: 10AM-12PM

THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET IS IN OUR HANDS - JOIN US

St Ives ecoaction

SATURDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 2023

Email for further information: [stivesecoaction@gmail.com](mailto:stivesecoaction@gmail.com)

# 'Paradise Garden' gets planted

Regular readers will remember that St Ives in Bloom, working with the Islamic community in St Ives, has been building a new 'connected communities' garden at Ramsey Road Cemetery.

The new raised beds, which were planted up on Sunday 29th October, are arranged in four quadrants to resemble the ancient Persian 'Paradise Garden' design.

They now have roses, jasmine, honeysuckle, white tulips and narcissi, waiting to put on a show next spring and summer.

Below: Robin Bletsoe of the Gardening Club demonstrates how to tie the honeysuckle into the arches.



Many kind volunteers gave up their Sunday morning to the project.

If you would like to join the group helping to care for the planting at the Cemetery, we have a daffodil planting morning arranged on Saturday 11th November, and a further work party on Thursday 14th December. Please get in touch on [siibinfo@gmail.com](mailto:siibinfo@gmail.com) for more details, or just come and meet us at the Cemetery at 10am on the day.



Volunteers clearing a new border bed.



Below: Mr & Mrs Tiddy clearing a new border bed.



Volunteers planting pansies and the Mayor sowing wildflowers in the new border.

## More good news . . .

Using the ex Budgen, Poundstretcher, and more recently YMCA store, the Loungers restaurant chain is gearing up to open **Ivo Lounge** on **Wednesday 15th November 2023**. Ivo Lounge will be open all day, every day for breakfast, brunch, lunch, dinner and drinks, including full kids', gluten-free and vegan menus, served in a relaxed, welcoming space.

The Loungers build and design team will transform the site on Sheepmarket, St Ives in their unmistakable and unique style, which they describe as 'A real home from home.'

Ivo Lounge will cater for all tastes throughout the day with a varied and innovative all-day menu. Particular attention will be paid to families with a selection of games, books, colouring pencils and pads on offer. A full menu, high chairs and baby-changing facilities are also available for Little Loungers. With community and neighbourhood at its heart, Ivo

Lounge will welcome locals looking for a space for regular catch ups, meetings and events – everything from business networking, book or knitting clubs to parent and baby meets and life drawing classes.

Gemma Irwin, Community Manager at Loungers, says: 'We're so looking forward to opening the doors of Ivo Lounge in November. We hope our family friendly environment and top-notch food and drink offering will prove popular with local residents.'

*'We're passionate about integrating genuinely into the communities we serve so we're looking forward to meeting everyone and to playing our part at the heart of St Ives' food and drink scene. Anyone looking for a space to host events or groups should pop in once we're open, we'd love to hear from them and see what we can do to help.'*

A range of front- and back-of-house roles are on offer. Anyone interested in joining the team should visit: <https://thelounges.co.uk/jobs/> to find out more about the exciting opportunities available.



A typical Loungers interior

# Royal Oak reopens



The Royal Oak in Crown Street is welcoming customers again after a renovation by pub owner Greene King. Reputedly St Ives' oldest pub, which opened in the early 1500s, will be run by Rodger Scotton and Justine McKenzie, who also run Slepe Hall Hotel and The Windmill pub in Somersham.

A spokesperson for Greene King said: 'The Royal Oak is full of charm and character.'

According to a recent visitor it is very nice inside and has quite a large outside courtyard area, for fine weather.



## THE PERFECT GIFT

### The Holt Island Nature Reserve Calendar

Friends of Holt Island Nature Reserve have just launched their 2024 Calendar, featuring stunning wildlife and scenic views taken on the island by local photographers.

Priced at £8.00, all proceeds will go towards the fundraising campaign to replace the wooden boardwalk around the Island with the UK-manufactured material FibreGrid.



This maintenance-free and extremely durable product is specifically designed for safe foot traffic in wet environments and has been chosen to ensure the nature reserve can remain viable to the public for many years to come. The calendar is available now from Jill Burt (07796 326931) or email: [jillburt@btinternet.com](mailto:jillburt@btinternet.com) or the Norris Museum.

## Is it me or the world that's mad? by The Editor

**I wonder if, like me, you are finding everything you thought you knew about the world has been turned upside down?**

I'm not talking about the problems in the middle east, which have been brewing all my life time. No I'm concerned about how we behave every day and what is now considered normal practise. This doesn't only apply to matters of courtesy but how we behave at work and what is expected of us and how businesses treat their customers. Last year my overdraft with Barclays was removed without consultation, no big deal I agree. But last Friday I received a letter from them saying they had closed our village hall account because I hadn't responded to requests from them. I had of course, my telephone bill clearly

showed how long I spent waiting to talk to a human. Their left hand doesn't know what their right hand is doing, but the really bizarre thing is that they sent a cheque for the balance, made out to this now closed account.

When it was pointed out that: A. I had been reassured that they wouldn't close the account and that B. I couldn't bank the money as it was made out to the now defunct account they seemed somewhat puzzled. The result of this bombastic approach to customers is that our village hall committee can no longer pay it's bills and yet Barclays continues to close



Erik loves your letters.

 **having your say ...**

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

## OTHER NEWS

### St Ives Town into round 2 of FA Trophy

Following an assured display, St Ives Town had a magical 3-1 victory over Marine AFC. In the second round they have been drawn away to Aveley who are currently second in the National League South, six points behind leaders Yeovil having lost four of their opening 14 league games this season. The tie will be played at the Parkside Stadium on Saturday 18 November.

### Cambridgeshire's brand new 'ghost town'

Britain's biggest new town, built for 26,000 people, is so empty locals have parties in the road. Northstowe still has no shops, cafes or GPS six years after the first families moved in. Around 1,200 homes have been built since construction work started in 2017. Around 10,000 homes are planned, which will make it the biggest new town in England since Milton Keynes, Bucks, was built in 1967. However frustrated residents have hit out at the developers saying Northstowe has been left like a 'ghost town' without promised facilities.



### Ivo teachers to strike

Teachers at a Cambridgeshire school are set to strike on November 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 over working conditions. Members of the NASUWT teachers' union describe the school's behaviour policies as 'heavy-handed' and claim that they do not allow teachers to manage behaviour fairly or proportionately.



### Cuts to services could be coming

The Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire County Council has said he believed savings and cuts to services will need to be made to bridge the £23million funding hole. The Council has said its estimated funding gap for next year has increased by around £7.3million due to rising costs and increased demand for its services.

In February this year when the county council set its budget, the authority estimated it would be facing a £16.3million budget gap in 2024/25. However, the authority has said the 'financial outlook has worsened' over the last eight months.

### Will sign stop cars turning left?

It would appear that the County Council have put extra signs up on the exit to the cattle market car park on station road as shown right. Hopefully it might stop drivers turning left and heading towards the car park.



### Confusion over NP and Vision documents

The first few comments are coming in on the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and people are getting confused between the HDC Vision Document and the Neighbourhood Plan. There have been several comments saying 'I don't like the pontoon in the river' although this is not mentioned in the NP at all. The HDC Vision Document is a set of ideas, rather than specific proposals, that is being used to obtain Government or local funding.

The Neighbourhood Plan does not include specific proposals but tries to define the local context such as the architectural style, key views and linked spaces. Once accepted the NP will contain statements that any future ideas for the town centre will have to comply with.

**If people are still confused, then the Neighbourhood Plan team will be at the Farmers Market on Saturday 18th November to answer any questions.**

The Draft NP can be found on the Town Council web-site:

[https://www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk/Regulation\\_14\\_Consultation\\_Oct\\_2023\\_45793.aspx](https://www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk/Regulation_14_Consultation_Oct_2023_45793.aspx) and there are paper copies to read at the Town Hall and St Ives Library.

### Labour on termination of 2 asylum hotels

Cambridgeshire Labour have issued the following statement about the Government's intention to stop using 100 asylum seeker hotels 'in key battleground seats' which the press said was a bid by the Prime Minister to improve Conservatives general election prospects in those areas.

*'The reality is asylum seekers have been waiting for much longer than the 6 months the Home Office aims for their applications. The asylum backlog is in the tens of thousands and has been as high as 170,000. Asylum seekers want to learn English, work, integrate and have a normal life in the UK like everyone else. The Home Office seems to be more concerned with gimmicks like the costly and unsuccessful Rwanda plan rather than pragmatic policies of hiring more caseworkers and speeding up claims, while tackling criminal gangs exploiting asylum seekers.'*

**Latest:** There could be another empty shop in town as His & Hers Footwear, in Bridge Street is closing and moving to Rushden according to a notice in their window.

### JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

The Centre Theatre Players are busy in rehearsal for their forthcoming production, the traditional family pantomime 'JACK AND THE BEANSTALK' which they are presenting in The Burgess Hall of One Leisure, St Ives on January 10th – 14th.

Written especially for The Players by Daniel Bell and Directed by Nick Thompson the show contains some fabulous characters, intriguing plots, catchy songs and of course bags of audience participation.

The Centre Players have provided the town with seasonal entertainment for the past 48 years and have gained an excellent reputation for their standard of performance, winning several NODA awards for best Pantomime in the district.

Tickets are already selling fast particularly for the matinee performances and can be obtained on line from [www.ticketsource.com/burgesshall](http://www.ticketsource.com/burgesshall) or from the Leisure Centre reception.

Dear Erik,

**Subject: Christmas events**

I just wondered if you have been informed of the up-and-coming Christmas Craft and Gift Fair to be held at the Burgess Hall on the 3rd December from 10.00 until 16.00, with free admission.

From an aviation artist and historian and a regular stallholder at the event with kind regards **Barry G Limbrick**

Dear Erik,

**Subject: St Ives Xmas lights**

I refer to the article in RP145, on the funding process. Whilst this is a very worthy cause, I find it somewhat ironic that the owners of the Dolphin are contributing £3,000 of what appears to be Tax Payers money!

This establishment is currently being used to house immigrants, funded by the UK government, and is not an Hotel in the accepted sense. I stand to be corrected, of course.

Keep up the good work. Best wishes  
**Stanley J White** Hemingford Grey

Dear Erik,

**Subject: Traffic works**

Please trot round to East Street and find out why the roadworks are taking so long. Perhaps the company involved is aiming for a place in the Guinness Book Of Records.

Certainly the workmen are taking a very zen attitude towards the project judging by the amount of time they spend standing in silent contemplation. If you could use your considerable charm and influence to get things hurried up so that the East Street bus stops can re-open it would be much appreciated. Thank you. Yours sincerely, **John Lee**

Dear John,

Following your emails I went straight round to have a chat with the workmen and you may have noticed my efforts have succeeded.

Erik.



branches and still make £billions despite being completely useless at dealing with customers.

**What has happened to common sense?**

I heard today that a Met Police Commander has been dismissed after refusing to take a drugs test. The Officer was on full pay (a tidy sum) for over three years while his case was considered!

Even worse, it was he who wrote the force's anti-drug policy. He joined the force in 1976 and had presided over 74 misconduct hearings, dismissing over 60 officers. No wonder the Met is in trouble if it cannot deal with senior officers appropriately.

I was very upset about the Bianca Williams incident with the police. Returning from training Bianca and her husband, both Olympic athletes, were stopped and searched in a very aggressive manner, while their baby was in the car. The video of the incident was disturbing enough but the latest news is even worse.

Following a hearing about it two police officers

were sacked for gross misconduct, having lied about smelling cannabis in the athletes car.

Afterwards a crowdfunding page saw £140,000 donated to the two sacked officers, while Bianca Williams received on-line abuse, blaming her for the officers dismissals.

**How can this be?**

**Is this a society I want to be part of?**

I've been watching the Covid enquiry this week. Fascinating. It has been confirming what many of us thought about Boris and his pals.

Namely that they were lying, cheating and looking after number one. Also that they were useless at governing, particularly during the pandemic, creating a 'toxic' environment in Downing Street.

They were so poor I can't even say that they couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery because, as it turns out, they could organise a piss-up anywhere.

HYPERION

Entries Invited for Our Next  
**Antiques & Interiors Sale**  
on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>  
November



Sold In Our Last Interiors Sale



Boxed Tag Heuer Formula 1 wristwatch with diving strap with papers CAZ1010  
**Sold £500**

Collection of Boxed and unboxed Corgi & Dinky Super toys and Major  
**Sold £500**



A Good Collection of British Coins. 2 Folders of Coins to include Edward I Penny, Silver Three Pence pieces, Half Crowns etc  
**Sold £200**

Hyperion Auctions, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH  
[www.hyperionauctions.co.uk](http://www.hyperionauctions.co.uk) 01480 464140



December, 22nd 18:45

AT ST IVES CORN EXCHANGE  
RAF WYTON BRASS BAND

Christmas

CAROL CONCERT



Tickets include a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie

Tickets are £10.00

Tickets available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents)



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**A MAN CALLED OTTO**  
Thursday 7 December 2023  
Starts: 7:30pm  
Doors open: 6:30pm  
Director: Marc Forster,  
121m, Cert: 15

A Man Called Otto is a 2022 American comedy-drama film directed by Marc Forster from a screenplay by David Magee, about a bitter old man reluctantly getting involved in the lives of his neighbours. It stars Tom Hanks in the title role, with Mariana Treviño, Rachel Keller, and Manuel Garcia-Rulfo in supporting roles. It is a remake of the 2015 Swedish film A Man Called Ove, which was based on the 2012 novel by Fredrik Backman.



**WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?**

Thursday 4 January 2024  
Starts: 7:30pm  
Doors open: 6:30pm  
Director: Shekhar Kapur,  
109m, Cert: 12

What's Love Got to Do with It? is a 2022 British romantic comedy directed by Shekhar Kapur, from a screenplay by Jemima Khan. The film stars Lily James, Shazad Latif, Shabana Azmi and Emma Thompson. Zoe, a documentary filmmaker, uses a dating app that delivers an endless stream of Mr. Wrongs. For Zoe's childhood friend and neighbour, Kaz, the answer is to follow his parents' example and opt for an arranged marriage to a bright and beautiful bride from Pakistan. As Zoe films his hopeful journey to marry a stranger, she begins to wonder if she might have something to learn from a profoundly different approach to finding love.

Tickets £7 from [screenstives.org.uk](http://screenstives.org.uk) or in the Corn Exchange