

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Town Council set Precept

At an Extra Ordinary Meeting yesterday evening, St Ives Town Council set the Precept for 2024/25, the level of spending that the Council has decided they need.

An earlier meeting to decide the Precept had been aborted due to the paperwork not being available (see RP150) and additional time was granted by HDC.

The paperwork submitted for yesterday's meeting suggested a 20% increase was needed, however it soon became clear that the Council's finances were not as they should be. The new Locum Clerk had only been able to use the 2022 figures due to irregularities in last year's accounts and some items were inaccurate.

Prior to the discussion about the Precept councillors decided on the grants to outside bodies, which if agreed in full, would total £123,000, although this did include £33,500 for the Norris Museum, which the Council is responsible for.

Councillors went through the applications one by one deciding what grant to give each group which included: St Ives Dementia (£4,000), Citizens Advice Rural (£7,580), St Ives Town Team (£2,000) and St Ives in Bloom (£3,500), all given what they requested.

The Carnival (£9,462), FESF (£6,350), Hunts Volunteer Centre (£12,000), Hemingford Fireworks (£600) and

KICK Youth (£925) were given reduced amounts. Two groups Fitness Rush and Neotists, received no funding.

Precept increased by 9%

Councillors scoured the balance sheet to find savings. They were able to find several reductions, mainly because the '22 figures used were inaccurate. In the end, the £1,026,110 figure was reduced to £931,549 a 9% increase on this year meaning that a band D property will pay just £1.13 more per month from April.

Questions remain

One cannot be sure that the budget is accurate in every department until a full audit of the accounts is done.

There was no grant application for Christmas Lights and therefore no funds for them, but the Mayor did say they will happen, but may need to be funded in a different way?!

Neither was there funding for the Bridge Magazine, the Council's newsletter. In order to retain Quality Parish Council status the Council are required to publish a newsletter at least four times a year. An on-line version does not cover residents who do not have a computer.

Redaction - a modern curse?

A significant change lately has been the use of redacted documents. Most people who watched *Mr Bates versus the Post Office* will have seen that the Post Office so heavily redacted the paperwork that it was unusable. This allowed the Post Office to cover up the software problem and delayed justice.

This week's Council meeting to discuss grants to local organisations was also redacted making it impossible to see any figures and know whether an applicant had good cause to be funded or not. Not disclosing financial info may be acceptable to a commercial deal but when organisations are asking for public funds, their financial affairs should be open and transparent. See page 3 for another use of redaction.

Local Attraction

Last weekend saw a very well equipped professional bunch of magnet fishers from a group called the Northants magnet fishing Youtube.

They set up on The Quayside and proceeded to pull an amazing haul of metallic brick-a-brac from the river. Having completed their day they kindly removed the impressive hoard of to the scrappers. You can follow the groups adventures on Youtube. *Photo courtesy of Facebook.*

We were amused by one comment on-line from a Peter Blackman who asked: *Is my pound coin still in the trolley?*



Tenth Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival sees 10 new acts and a stunning line-up with 26 FREE concerts over 4 days



THURSDAY 12TH SEPTEMBER

6pm	The Oliver Cromwell	Max de Bernadi & Veronica Sbergia	Country Swing and Blues
6.30pm	Amore Restaurant	Chris Newman & Art Topor	Jazz & Blues instrumental
7pm	Floods Tavern	The 29th Funktion	Blues, Funk, R&B
8pm	Golden Lion Hotel	Brooks Williams & Aaron Catlow	Uk Americana
9.30pm	Nelson's Head	Dickie de Vere & The Dorchester Mavericks	Tunes of the 20s and 30s

FRIDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER

6pm	Foods Tavern	The Gravy Train Trio	Funk, Soul and Jazz
7pm	The Corn Exchange	Jamie Williams & the Roots Collective	Rocking roots
7.30pm	Slepe Hall	Brooks Williams & Dan Walsh	British & Americana roots
8pm	Golden Lion Hotel	The Spiral G's	Jazz, Funk, Fusion
9pm	Ivy leaf Club	Claudio, Freddie and friends	Soul, blues and jazz
10pm	The Corn Exchange	The Houndogs	Rockabilly

SATURDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER

11am	Sheepmarket	The Scoundrels	Punchy Rhythm & Blues
Noon	The Chapel	Myke Clifford Quartet	Pure Jazz
1pm	Bandstand	Slightly Chilled	Upbeat Big Band
2pm	The Quayside	Fred's House	Award-winning folk/rock
4pm	The Oliver Cromwell	The Flying Hammond Trio	Cool Jazz and Funk
5pm	Floods Tavern	Lexie Green and The Indigo Blue	Americana, Blues R&B
7pm	Golden Lion Hotel	Mr Griffs Big Band	Funk & Soul
8.30pm	Royal Oak	The Lightwaves	A bit of everything
9.30pm	Ivy leaf Club	The Reavey Brothers Big Band	Soul, Rock, Blues, Funk & Ska

SUNDAY 15TH SEPTEMBER

11.30am	Golden Lion Hotel	Django's Tiger	Gypsy Jazz Manouche
12.30pm	Ivo Lounge	Split Whiskers	Chicago Blues
2pm	The Quayside	The Barefoot Doctors	Electric Blues
3pm	Bandstand	St Neots Big Band	Big Band dance music
4pm	Nelson's Head	Shufflepack	Shuffling Blues
6pm	The Lounge	Mola Mola Jambalaya	Rock & Roll, Soul & Blues

Programme may be subject to change www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk

A brief history of the of The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival

It began in 2015 with 16 concerts, a Town Team initiative to bring visitors to St Ives. The first Festival took a while to get off the ground as it required the venues to help pay for the bands. But thankfully eleven businesses took the plunge and it was a success. It brought many people to the town and above all every business gained financially, even those not involved noticed more people shopping. Even music fans eat and drink!

Over the years it has evolved. It expanded to Fenstanton and Hemingford as more businesses wanted to take part and the number of concerts rose steadily, peaking at 28 in 2018. Key to its success has been the undoubted quality of the music. Unlike BIG Festivals it is sustainable with low overheads and yet the quality of the musicianship is extraordinary.

We are so lucky that we have some of the finest musicians living nearby, who are happy to play for a reasonable fee. The Festivals reputation among them is that it is great to play because the audience are always appreciative and in return the audience love the bands for their quality and range of music. The two go hand in hand and it is a delight to see everyone having such a good time. This year's Festival will cost around £13,000 to stage and will attract about 5,000 extra people (according to 2023 footfall figures). Everything is funded by the Town Team and the businesses involved, with just £1,000 coming from a Town Council grant. Not a bad return on investment.

There are 14 issues of *The Riverporter* between now and 12th September, the start of the Festival, in which we will feature the excellent bands you can see this year. Here's a taster with a picture of *The Houndogs* the best Rockabilly band around.



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

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DIARY OF EVENTS

The Diary is filling up nicely as events are announced. Here are some the events to look forward to this year.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 17th - Hunts Philatelic Society Stamp and Postcard Fair at St Ives Corn Exchange 10am-3pm. Free admission. 01480 468037 for info.

Saturday 24th - St Ives Repair Café at St Ives Methodist Church 1pm - 4pm. To book a slot email stivesrepaircafe@gmail.com or call 07377 014401.

Friday 23rd - Stella Hensley's Musical Amigos - Chapel Arts Concert. 7.30pm - Riverport Café Bar. Tickets: £10 www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents from St Ives Corn Exchange.

MARCH

Saturday 2nd - Soul & Motown Night with live band **Madison Avenue.** Tickets: £18.50 from Corn Exchange or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents

Saturday 9th - Rotary club Spring Concert in aid of Young Carers. Burgess Hall. The Concert will be performed by The Chamber Orchestra of St Ives String Quartet, Rotary Voices Choir and Karen England accompanied by Mark Burton.

Saturday 23rd - St Ives Choral Society Concert. Free Church, St Ives, 7.30pm. Songs of Farewell by Parry, together with St John Passion by Bob Chilcott. Tickets £18 and £15 (concessions) accompanied children U12 Free from www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society.

Good Friday 29th - The Clare Hayes Band - Chapel Arts Concert. 7.30pm St Ives Corn Exchange. Smooth Country and Folk band. **A FREE event.**

Saturday 30th - Day of Morris Dancing. Come and join in or just watch.

APRIL

Easter Monday 1st - The Elusive Black Dog Ceilidh Band. St Ives Corn Exchange from 7.30pm. This experienced band, with caller will help you through a selection of well-known Ceilidh dances. **A FREE event.**

JUNE

Sunday 23rd - Picnic in The Park. Warners Park from noon. A FREE event.



St Ives & Music - Friday 23rd February Stella Hensley's Musical Amigos



Three of our finest local musicians who will entertain you with an evening of blues and jazz numbers, some well known and some original compositions.

7.30pm in the Riverport Café Bar.

Tickets: £10 from the Bar or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents

Best Young Blues Artist of the Year to Play in St Ives



Connor Selby, one of the brightest talents on the UK blues scene, wanted to play at this year's Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival but was already booked to play abroad. However he is playing a fundraiser for the event in May. Voted 'Young Artist of the Year' at the UK Blues Awards for three consecutive years (2020-22) he has an impressive venue checklist, including Wembley Stadium, where he opened for *The Who* in 2019 and Hyde Park with *Pearl Jam*, the *Stereophonics* and *Johnny Marr* in 2022.

Nominated for the Blues Artist of the year at the UK Blues Awards, this should be an evening not to be missed by blues fans.

The concert starts at 7.30 pm with Stella Hensley and Chris Newman providing support for the stunning Connor Selby 4-piece band playing from 8.30pm.

Saturday 4th May, St Ives Corn Exchange. Doors 6:30pm. Tickets: £10 from the Corn Exchange or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Volunteering on the River Ouse can make you healthier and happier

Would you like to spend your spring and summer weekends helping boaters to safely use the locks on the River Ouse? Anlian Waterways Volunteers do just this at the nearby locks in St Ives, Houghton and Godmanchester.

From April to September the volunteers work in pairs to assist boaters through the locks. They can choose how often they go locking and no previous experience of boating or locks is needed as training and safety equipment are all provided by the Environment Agency.

A recent survey asked the volunteers what they enjoyed most about their role and the top answers were:

Being outside in beautiful settings, getting gentle exercise, meeting new people and time spent in the company of their fellow volunteers.

Roger Green, a volunteer of 5 years said:

Being able to volunteer outside in some of our most environmentally precious and picturesque locations is a real bonus for us. Meeting and helping boaters is rewarding, sometimes the conversation delays the locking!

To find out more about how to become an Anlian Waterways Volunteer, contact Rachael Brown (scheme co-ordinator) at: rachael.brown@cambsacre.org.uk or 01353 865037.



Great Ouse Valley Trust Workshop held

Trustees report a well-attended second workshop last month designed to gather local feedback on the T section of the river landscape between St Ives and Earith.

Able led by Dr Jade Gunnell, around 30 delegates – stakeholders from landowners to user groups, councillors and professionals - gathered in Bluntisham Community Centre, and pooled their views on what could be done to improve this section. A common vision was sought and it is

hoped the beginnings of a plan of action to include doable prioritised projects. Attendees certainly seized the opportunity to express opinions and to network and build partnerships, which is what the Trust is all about. The photographs show some of the delegates in action, and the inevitable shout of approval at the finale!



St Ives in Bloom tidy busway entrance



St Ives in Bloom volunteers gave the Station Road garden its January makeover. It's looking good and there are plans to make it even better. It definitely improves the entrance to our town from the Guided Busway. Thank you - it was chilly in that wind!

Going for a record

Pictured below, in Bridge Street, is Laura Bird from St Ives who is training for the Guinness World Record to be the first woman in the world to run the London marathon carrying a 25kg fridge on her back in under 6 hours.

Men have completed before but never a woman!

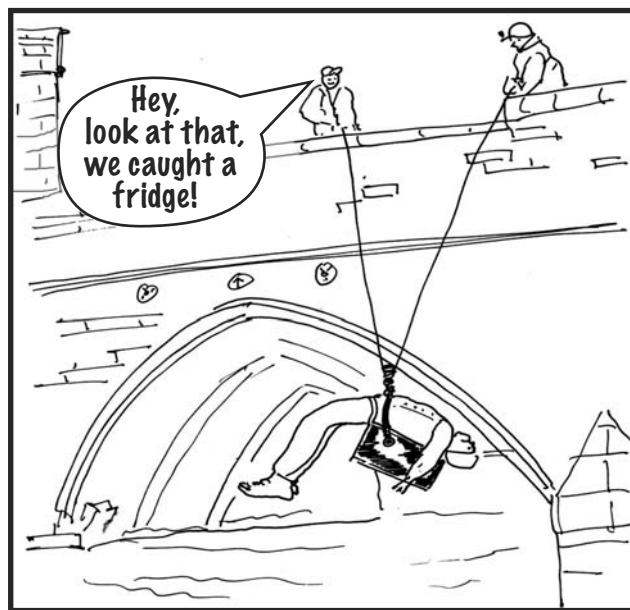
She is running for the charity Rays of Sunshine, who grant wishes to seriously ill children. Laura will be running the Cambridge half marathon with the fridge on Sunday 3rd March 2024.



Raising money for children's charity Rays of Sunshine to sponsor Laura, visit her JustGiving page [JustGiving.com/fundraising/laura-bird27](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/laura-bird27) Or scan the QR code with your phone camera



Combining the news stories





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

Thorndown win Primary Schools Cup

Last Friday Thorndown Primary School won the Pokemon Primary Schools County Cup in fine style beating Alconbury School 6-0. Pictured are the winning team with the cup.



New date set for Annual Town Meeting

The date of the annual Town Meeting has been changed to Thursday 28th March 2024 and is due to be held in St Ives Corn Exchange at 6pm. The St Ives Community Day, which is usually held on the same day, will now be held on Friday 19th April in St Ives Corn Exchange from 10am to 2pm.

St Ives teenager jailed for 7½ years

Aidan Bird (18) formerly of Pettis Road, St Ives, was jailed for two counts of aggravated burglary and kidnap. He had also pleaded guilty to two counts of assault, occasioning actual bodily harm and disclosure of private images.

The curse of FOI and redaction

When Freedom of Information (FOI) became law it was assumed that information on most matters would be easier to get. Has this been the case? I'm not sure. More authorities are using claims to delay or not give out information. They can refuse to deal with an FOI if it takes too long for instance. The other method, now frequently used, is redaction. A reporter, some time ago, having made an official complaint of a councillor, was told the complaint wasn't upheld but was not allowed to see the reasons why. He asked the local authority to send every bit of information they held about himself, thinking it would include the complaint and details about it. You guessed it. It was almost entirely redacted. The complaint was dismissed on the word of a witness, whose name was kept secret and whose evidence could have been a pack of lies.

**Good evening Erik,
Subject: Dangerous drain**
Below is a reply I have had today from CCC. following my report of a dangerous drain/manhole cover that has been damaged since at least last September. I had reported the issue on more than one occasion at St Ives Town Hall where I was assured my verbal report would be passed on to the department that dealt with these things. It is down to CCC Highways department so I emailed them and left it at that. Soon after someone did come out to look at the drain and a white cross had been spray painted on it, and I foolishly expected it to be followed up quickly with either a repair or replacement. On walking into town earlier this month I noticed it is still in bad repair so photographed it and sent the pics along with another report to CCC. and this is the reply from them -

*Hello,
Thank you for contacting Cambridgeshire County Council.
At this time we do not feel that any action is necessary.*

I add photos for your reference and wonder if you, *The Riverporter*, agree with myself and several local residents that this certainly does need action, unlike CCC who I hope are well prepared for what could be a costly lawsuit should someone trip or fall.



Dear Erik,
Your correspondent Doberman complains about Booze in the Pews as a 'defilement of this sacred place', seemingly unaware of the centuries old tradition of ale in churches. In the Middle Ages minstrels and ale in church were a key part of social life and 'the only reliable source of parish funding' according to Prof. Eamon Duffy in his book 'the voices of Morebath'. Plus ça change!

Nic Wells
Dear Erik,
Thank you for the public service announcement warning people to steer clear of the town on Easter Saturday, 30th March and avoid the abomination that is Morris Dancing. **John Lee**

Dear Erik,
In issue 150 *The Riverporter* described the recent flooding as the highest ever recorded. The maximum river level was 6.54m above sea level. There was much worse river flooding in 1998 and 1947. The recording method was changed more recently but previous flood levels were certainly recorded. The level in 1998 was 7.51m and in 1947 was 7.62m.
Yours sincerely
Nic Wells

Dear Erik
Have you or your readers any idea when the Solar power works that have been going on for what seems like several years on the St Ives park & ride site. The fencing still surrounds the site which I use 4/5 times a week but I have yet to see men working on site. Who will benefit from the electricity it will generate? Will another summers weather go to waste? If and when it does open I am sure that parking under the solar panels will protect peoples cars from the rain and adverse weather conditions. Nobody at the Town Hall seems to know. Can you tell me who owns the site or who is responsible for its running
Regards
Barrie Sullivan
Dear Barrie, It is a County Council project and details can be found on their website. The delay was cause by waiting for a transformer and connection to the grid, a national problem.
ED.

Dear Erik,
Does anyone else think it ironic, that the weekend following the closure of Wadsworths, the parish church once again opens its doors for booze, in competition with the likes of Floods and The Seven Wives? Perhaps a consideration should be given to reordering Wadsworths (formerly The Unicorn), as a foodbank, or more normally known, express/mini supermarket to provide a much needed convenience food outlet at the West end of the town. Just a simple thought by a 90 year old elderly widow neighbour!


Philip Noble
Dear Erik
I sit in my lounge watching the children from Wheatfields School being taught how to cycle so that they are safer and aware of other users. But then the terrors of Wheatfields appear, two St Ivo schoolboys in black blazers riding very fast and recklessly down the pavements of Wheatfields. Coming up very fast and close to pedestrians, children, dog walkers. They need to undergo training with the Wheatfields School children before they hurt someone.
Caroline

Dear Erik,
Subject GUYS AND DOLLS
Following on from their very successful recent production of Jack and the Beanstalk, the Centre Theatre Players are delighted to announce that they will performing, for their Spring production, one of the greatest musicals of all time **GUYS AND DOLLS**. This will be staged in the Burgess Hall of One Leisure on May 9th - 11th Tickets go on sale March 1st and can be purchased on line from www.ticketsource.com/burgesshall or from the Centre reception.
Thanks
Dick Chalkley

Civic Society need you!

The Civic Society are hoping to hold a forum the purpose of which would be to steer the town's regeneration and help monitor its development. An initial meeting was held recently and a further meeting is due to agree terms of reference for the Forum and finalise its aims. The Society hope that membership of the group should be representative of the different sectors of the town (eg schools/ youth groups, mosques, businesses etc). Christine Phillpotts, Chair of the Civic Society would like to hear from any groups who wishes to be involved to contact her at Chair@stivescivic.org.uk.

CIVIC SOCIETY OF ST. IVES



MONTHLY MEETING
St Ives Free Church
7.30 pm Friday 16th February
"The Future of The West Antarctic Ice Sheet And Implications For Sea Level Rise in East Anglia"
A talk by Dr Rob Larter
Marine Geophysicist, British Antarctic Survey.
Visitors welcome: suggested donation £3
<http://www.stivescivic.org.uk>
Reg. Charity No. 257286



Dear Erik,
Thanks for the tribute to Margaret Taylor who will be sadly missed by her husband John, son Gary and family and also her brother Jim. Margaret enjoyed meeting old and new friends and would talk to everyone. She was well known in St Ives for her friendly outlook to life and was a popular member of the local community. Please could you correct the date of her death which was the 18 January. Margaret's funeral is at Huntingdon Crematorium on Tuesday 20th February at 1.15pm. Family flowers only and please wear something of colour.
John Taylor

SATURDAY 24TH FEBRUARY 2024

ST IVES Repair Café

ST IVES METHODIST CHURCH
THE WAITS, PE27 5BY
1PM - 4PM

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(Formally P R Masala)



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Screen St Ives Community Cinema

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The Old Oak

Thursday 7 March 2024 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Dave Turner, 113m, Cert: 15

Synopsis

Pub landlord TJ Ballantyne (Dave Turner), living in a previously thriving mining community in County Durham, struggles to hold on to his pub and keep as the one remaining public space where people can meet in the town. Meanwhile, tensions rise when Syrian refugees are placed there, but Ballantyne strikes up a friendship with one of the refugees, Yara (Ebla Mari).

The Lesson

Thursday 18 April 2024 at 7:30pm
(Note, this is the 3rd Thursday of April)
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Alice Troughton, 106m, Cert: 15

Synopsis

As an aspiring novelist, Liam Sommers (Richard E Grant) looks up to Hélène Sinclair (Julie Delpy). Being hired to tutor Sinclair's son and to spend the summer living on this author's estate, must have been akin to winning the lottery for a talented young writer yet to land a publishing deal. Liam's work, however, extends beyond tutoring. He's tasked by Sinclair to help him with his IT troubles, whenever his printer or computer acts up. That's when Liam begins to see Sinclair's true face.



Ticket at screenstives.org.uk or in the Corn Exchange

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BUBBLES
BY

Bubbly
Bandits

FEATURING ARTISTS
WORKING WITH
RECYCLED &
RECYCLABLE MATERIALS



SATURDAY 9 MARCH 2024

10AM - 6PM

VK GALLERY

18A BRIDGE STREET, ST IVES, PE27 5EG