

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Council appoint new Clerk and make apology

**Locum Clerk Libby White's appointment for the post of Town Clerk was confirmed by councillors at this month's Full Council meeting, which also had a rather unusual item on the agenda relating to the Burleigh Hill Community Centre.**

The appointment of Libby White was recommended by the recruitment panel, consisting of the Mayor, Councillor Pope, and Councillors Gleadow and Cantwell, following an interview process held the previous Friday when two candidates were interviewed.

Prior to this appointment Libby was Parish Clerk for Great Shelford. Although Libby's appointment wasn't confirmed until the meeting it appears that questions were already being asked as to why Great Shelford were advertising for a new clerk a few days earlier.

Indeed *The Riverporter* had received a letter before the Council meeting informing us of the advert and suggesting that the appointment could have already been made.

This point was raised with the Council by a member of the public, who was told that it was probably because Great Shelford had jumped the gun when references were sought and before any appointment was confirmed. The Council has also reassured *The Riverporter* that at no point was Libby involved in the selection process, other than being one of the candidates. Because Libby

was acting Locum Clerk, and a potential candidate, the Council had employed another person from CAPLC (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils) to be involved in all recruitment matters.



Libby (above) is very experienced having worked in local government for many years and achieving a First Class Honours Degree in Community Governance.

She was born and grew up in Guernsey before moving to the mainland in 1999 to be with her husband. They moved to Cambridgeshire in 2006.

She was awarded a BEM for services to the communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### Council propose apology

Councillors also discussed the following motions.

1. To propose that the Council agree to send a formal apology to the former trustees of the Burleigh Hill Community Centre Charity concerning the mishandling and subsequent consequence of the Councils actions since June 2023.
2. The Council to agree a meeting with the former trustees to enable the future of the Burleigh Hill Centre.

Now it's rare for councils to apologise and it wasn't clear what the Council were apologising for. It seems that the Council were at fault concerning the Burleigh Hill motions passed last June (see RP137). The council did not follow the correct procedure and was not entitled to pass the motions it did about the Burleigh Hill Charity. Currently the Council cannot run the Centre without the support of former Trustees Michael Burke and Angela Dickinson who want an apology because of the abuse they received.

All of this might have been avoided had Councillor Burke chosen to attend last June's meeting.



St Ives & Music -

**TONIGHT - Stella Hensley's Musical Amigos**

7.30pm in the Riverport Café Bar.

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

**Chapel Arts Programme 2024**



**Friday 29th March**  
**The Clare Hayes Band**  
 Smooth country-blues sound, three-part harmonies and rip-roaring solos.  
 7.30pm in the Charter Hall, St Ives Corn Exchange.  
**A FREE event.**

**Saturday 30th - Day of Morris Dancing** throughout the Town centre.

**Easter Monday 1st - The Elusive Black Dog Ceilidh Band** with caller.  
 A **FREE** event at 7.30pm in the Charter Hall, St Ives Corn Exchange.

**Friday 19th April - Federico Pecchia** - Argentinian Guitarist.  
 A **FREE** concert in the Bridge Chapel. As space is limited please book tickets at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives) to reserve a seat.

**Friday 31st May - The Lightwaves** - Playing well known numbers.

**Friday 28th June - Lexie Green and Johnny Wright** - Americana.

**Friday 30th August - Huntingdonshire Guitar Ensemble** - 7 guitarists.

**Friday 27th September - GetNotGot** - contemporary jazz and funk.

**Friday 11th October - Upwood Ukuleles** - having fun with Ukuleles.

**Friday 25th October - 4 Winds Sax Quartet** - Four exceptional players.

**Friday 29th November - Chris Newman & Humfry Finkel** - Ragtime.

Unless otherwise stated all concerts 7.30pm in the Riverport Café Bar.

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



## GROW MORE in 2024

**St Ives in Bloom** volunteers have been planning their work parties for the spring with an extra focus this year, as there will be two sets of judges visiting the town in the summer.

The Committee heard in November that St Ives was selected to represent the whole of the Anglia Region in the large town category in Britain in Bloom. This national competition was launched on Tuesday 20th February and it means that, as well as the usual Anglia in Bloom visit during July, the judges from Britain in Bloom will come during August to see what the town has achieved in three main areas: horticulture, environment and community.

It is a special year not only for St Ives, but for the whole of Britain in Bloom, as it is the 60th year that the Royal Horticultural Society have run the competition. The winner in 1964 was Bath – so no pressure there!!

If you have any ideas as to how St Ives in Bloom can make even more impact, or would like to be part of the team preparing the town for its exceptional year, please get in touch on [sibinfo@gmail.com](mailto:sibinfo@gmail.com) or visit the St Ives in Bloom website homepage, [www.stivesinbloom.co.uk](http://www.stivesinbloom.co.uk) for details of the upcoming work parties. Also, a new fundraising team will be in action from March. If you would like to contribute, please go to the donations page on our website: [www.stivesinbloom.co.uk/donate](http://www.stivesinbloom.co.uk/donate).

Meanwhile enjoy the daffodils – over 20,000 bulbs have been planted in the verges and cemeteries over the last 10 years by expert gardener Robin Bletsoe and the St Ives in Bloom team – and their blooms are now welcoming in the spring all around the town.



# A message from Helen

St Ives EcoAction is now into its fourth year, and while we may still have some way to go on both individual and collective levels to reduce our negative impact on the planet, at a community level we are definitely benefiting from greater awareness of the need to adapt our lifestyles.

Across our community we've some cracking activities coming up over the next year, here are just a few:



In preparation for our first planned 'Swish' (that's a clothes swap party) in 'Second-hand' September later this year, members are invited to join an online 'How to Run a Swish' event on Tuesday 13th March, online from 7:00pm - 7:45pm.

These events are intended to be fun whilst also helping to raise awareness of and tackle the very serious impact that the clothing and textile industries have on climate, waste and pollution.

To join this training please email: [nicole@cambridgecarbonfootprint.org](mailto:nicole@cambridgecarbonfootprint.org) with your name and email address.

On the theme of **Sustainable Fashion**, to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of VK Gallery, on Bridge Street, St Ives, Trash Chic and the Bubbly Bandits have been invited by owner Gallery owner, Victoria Mudge, to help celebrate by bringing curated rails of preloved clothing and delicious Italian sparkling wine to the gallery on **Saturday 9th March, 10am to 6pm.**

In keeping with the 're-use and recycle' theme, there'll also be work by artists Jeni Cairns, Pot it by PJ and Keeley Traae who specialise in recycled and recyclable materials:



For anyone who would like to get active with boosting nature, there are opportunities to help out with tree-planting at Huntingdon Racecourse on Friday 22nd March.



We can all do more to encourage nature and wildlife to thrive in our own gardens, and with Spring just around the corner we will be supporting St Ives in Bloom who are working with local business Cranbrook Nurseries of Somersham towards a fun, practical and informative 'Biodiversity in the Garden' event on Saturday 6th April at St Ives Methodist Church. There will be information about peat-free compost, and stalls are available for any groups that wish to be involved.



Working together with St Ives Town Council and Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), the St Ives Against Rubbish Campaign last year started to tackle cigarette litter around the town - you may have seen the posters and cigarette disposal units in the town centre.



Cigarette litter is not only unsightly but also contaminates our water system with toxic chemicals. HDC have written to the hospitality businesses in town asking them to be responsible for the litter outside their shop front, and StAR will be promoting the 'No Butts' campaign on Saturday 4th May at the Farmers Market to educate smokers in the proper disposal of cigarette litter. In 2023 local volunteers picked over 80 bags of litter from the environment. One of the aims of StAR is to not only tackle the symptoms of littering, but also to understand the causes of litter and littering behaviours. So, if you're out on a pick, we please ask you to post a photograph of your pick on the St Ives Against Rubbish Facebook page, saying where you picked and what you found. A big thank you to everyone who helps to keep our town litter free. StAR litter picks are on the fourth Saturday of every month from the Co-op, and the dates of SIB picks can be found on their webpage.

If you wish to become more involved with litter picking activities please email Beccy and ask to join the StAR email list: [star.stivesecoaction@gmail.com](mailto:star.stivesecoaction@gmail.com).



We will be showcasing the range of St Ives EcoAction's activities and seeking your continued support for the development of our Local Climate Action Plan at our AGM in early May. We've only begun to scratch the surface of transition, and we'll need more volunteers to become actively involved if we are to ensure that our communities in this lovely stretch of the Great Ouse Valley are to be fit for the future.



The EcoFaiths Group continues to meet approximately every six weeks to discuss climate issues. If anyone would like more information about the next meeting, please contact [stivesecoaction@gmail.com](mailto:stivesecoaction@gmail.com) and I will put you in touch with the Group's secretary.

# Ladybird - prepared to welcome passengers

The primary role of 'The Ladybird Boat' is to give the disadvantaged, disabled or vulnerable people in our community a trip on our beautiful River Great Ouse, where there is an abundance of wildlife and fauna.

During last season we made 140 trips and carried 2,325 passengers from our local community. We think if we asked our passengers, what happens to the crew and Ladybird during winter, most would reply 'It's time for them all to have a well, earned rest'. However, the crew know differently, as this is the time when Ladybird's maintenance and crew training kicks-in.

The Ladybird is licensed by the Maritime Coastal Agency (MCA) prior to the start of each season. Without this licence we are unable to operate. Inspectors carry out detailed inspection of the hull, engine, in fact every part of the boat, together with a thorough examination of the record of training for all crew.

We ended the season slightly earlier, because the Ladybird needed to go to the marina in Earith where the 23 tonne boat was removed from the water with ease in a couple of minutes by a monster vehicle.

The Ladybird is getting older (17 Years) and we expect that things will start to fail but this year has been exceptionally costly. There was a new

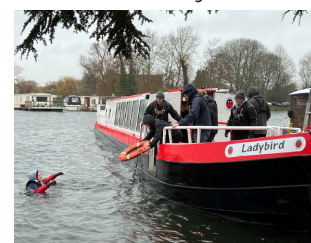


main propeller, bow thruster gear box, the hull repainted and other repairs done while out of the water. Since then the boat has returned to our base at Hartford Marina where we have had to remove the engine, put in a new fuel pump, replace piping and so much more. We still have to spruce up the cabin and repaint the outside.



Where possible, the crew do as much themselves. Everyone is a volunteer and gets no payment for time or travel expenses and we are reliant on the generosity of passengers to fund our continuing operation.

We are hoping that over the next two months we can continue to practice boat handling skills and dealing with emergencies including 'man overboard training'.



We have first aid refresher training for all crew in February.

Our volunteer booking team have already taken well over one hundred bookings and we are all looking forward to a warm and dry season. Please give us a wave if you see us in 2024.

For more information visit: [Ladybirdboat.org.uk](http://Ladybirdboat.org.uk)

## THE OLD RIVERPORT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL 2024

### Introducing Mr Griff and The Grifters

Mr Griff appeared at our Festival in 2022, to much applause and this year he returns with his full band, The Grifters at 7.30pm in The Golden Lion, Saturday 14th September. Mr Griff and The Grifters are an original 8 piece funk, soul, fusion extravaganza, specialising in dynamic, high energy and engaging performances guaranteed to keep the audience hooked.

They have supported Jessie Ware, Melanie C, Natasha Beddingfield, Alabama 3, Smoove & Turrell, Cut Capers and The Edwin Starr Band. The band have two albums already under their belts, sell out local shows and a host of electrifying festival performances including The Cambridge Club Festival main stage, Secret Garden Party, Festival in the Gardens, Strawberry Fair, The Willow Fest and The Lazy Crow Winter Festival. The band also got 'track of the week' on BBC Introducing, who describe it as 'Moody, cool as hell, sunglasses on, jazz funk driven beauty'. After spending 20 years as a session drummer, bandleader Ian Griffith, has established one of the freshest and exciting new sounds to emerge from Cambridge in recent years.

#### Supporting the Festival . . .

Remember every one of the 26 concerts is free to attend thanks to the Town Team. Your can help us keep it free by coming to our fundraising concert with the best Blues artist around - see right. Only £10 a ticket.

Also you can buy one of our popular T-shirts, which has all the bands printed on the back. This year we are also issuing a Festival CD with a track from every band.

Why not order yours now by emailing: [townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](mailto:townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk).

Simply send your name, address, phone number and t-shirt size (small to 3XL) and whether you want just the t-shirt or the CD, or both.



**Nominated for Blues Artist of the year Saturday 4th May - St Ives Corn Exchange Tickets: £10 from the Corn Exchange or from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cxevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cxevents)**  
A TOWN TEAM EVENT





# 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



Erik is looking forward to the Morris Dancing.

## OTHER NEWS

### Car Wash visits to combat modern slavery

Earlier last week, our neighbourhood officers visited ten car wash venues across Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. During the visits, officers engaged with workers, checking their well-being and providing essential advice on workers' rights. Thankfully, no victims were found at any of the sites. It is crucial to recognise that, despite the majority of hand car washes being legitimate businesses, the industry has witnessed cases of modern slavery nationally, making it a focal point for our attention.

Signs of modern slavery relevant to car washes include:

- Individuals appearing overly tired
- Showing signs of physical abuse
- Seeming intimidated by employers
- Lacking protective equipment
- Being unpaid or paid very little
- Working excessively long hours
- Not having the freedom to come and go as they wish.

Inspector Colin Norden, who led the initiative highlighted: *'Ensuring the welfare of our community is paramount, and our visits underscore our commitment to combat modern slavery. Our engagement sends a clear message that we are vigilant in protecting people against exploitation.'* Interestingly *The Riverporter* enquired if those interviewed were asked to provide information on their status, such as entitlement to work or live here. The answer given by the police was: *This wasn't a joint visit with other agencies, so some checks were made, but this was more of an intelligence gathering exercise.*

For info on recognising signs of modern slavery or to make a report, visit <https://bit.ly/3ZuXNQv>.

### Civic Society needs you!

As we reported in our last issue, 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. Many people have raised concerns about our Town Centre. The idea behind this Forum is to put forward ideas to make improvements and halt the decline in shops and appearance. It is hoped that working with the local authorities and securing funding will allow the Forum to initiate their ideas on improvements. So if you wish to help and put forward your ideas on what can or should be done please contact Christine Phillpotts, Chair of the Civic Society at [Chair@stivescivic.org.uk](mailto:Chair@stivescivic.org.uk). The Society hope that membership of the group should be representative of all sectors of the town (eg schools, youth groups, mosques, businesses etc).

### Broadway improvements split community

Cambridgeshire County Council's consultation on the proposed public realm improvements to The Broadway has been questioned by businesses. During the consultation period, the Hunts Walking & Cycling Group carried out a Facebook poll to seek people's views of these proposals and 265 responded. Not surprisingly, from such a group, 80%, 213 people, broadly supported the plans and just 7%, 19 people, opposed the plans with 12%, 33 people, having no view. The scheme was promoted as improving the appearance and putting cycling and walking at the heart of the proposals with an area to sit and relax. All ideas that have shown, in some locations, to improve the numbers of people visiting after the improvements. What the proposals, when first consulted on, failed to point out was the loss of 14 parking spaces. This only became apparent when actual plans were sent to residents and businesses. Corrine Harwood of La Muse has spent a great deal of time 'consulting' with businesses and over 44 of them have raised concerns.

According to Corrine the CC consulted 58 businesses in the Broadway and Bridge Street. Of those 11 are no longer trading and just 3 businesses objected. 18 were marked as neutral BUT most made no response. 26 of the businesses still trading were in favour of the scheme in 2022, however 19 of these have now signed the petition objecting. That leaves only 7 businesses in favour and one of those is adamant that they were never told about removing parking.

Vanessa Kelly from Cambs CC met with business owners on 12 February and has taken on-board some of the concerns. We are expecting that the plans will be altered to reflect some of the concerns raised, although it is expected that there will still be a loss of some parking.

### The St Ives Community Day 19 April

Organised by St Ives Town Council, the St Ives Community Day will take place on Friday 19th April this year at St Ives Corn Exchange from 10am to 2pm. This is a day for all community groups across the town to network and find out about what other groups do, as well as a day for local residents to come along and find out more about the various activities and social support groups they can connect with. The Annual Town meeting will take place at 6pm on Thursday 28th March in the Corn Exchange. Your chance to quiz Councillors about Town issues.

### Latest from the County Council

An eight-day public inquiry into plans to build an incinerator at Woodhurst opened at the County Council headquarters on Tuesday. The County rejected Envar's plans, who are now appealing the decision. The meeting will be live streamed on the County Council's website. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Michael Gove MP, will make the final decision.

Also a maximum council tax increase of 4.99% has been agreed by Cambs CC of its share of the council tax bill, with a promise made to spend more money on improving the county's roads.

Dear Erik,

Subject: Civic Society talk -

The Future of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet  
Excellent speaker, a packed house, riveting subject. A mass of science, graphs and tables, but a clear message.



Pretty scary stuff but a rare opportunity to hear the science from someone who helped gather the data. Well done Civic Soc. **Luka**

Dear Erik

I had to crane to see the top of this! Have you sniffed it out yet? **Luka**



If your (un named) correspondent who was highlighting the issue of the damaged drain cover was referring to the one on Needingworth Rd, their efforts have been rewarded and it has been repaired (see picture).



If they are referring to another damaged drain cover elsewhere which remains in a state of disrepair, perhaps they can take heart that things do occasionally still get fixed.

We are delighted to see the line up for the tenth Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival, and the accompanying 'brief history' article made for interesting reading; St Ives really has an enhanced buzz about it over those few days. Thanks are due to the organisers, and put me down for a t shirt (XL)...

Yours **Paul Higham**

Dear Paul, Sorry we missed off David Dentons name on his letter. We will send your T-shirt order to the Town Team, see article on page 2.

At The Riverporter we were curious why the authorities refer to Modern Slavery rather than just Slavery? According to one definition modern slavery differs from historical slavery in several ways ... there are more slaves than ever, but they are a smaller proportion of the human race. No-one seriously defends slavery anymore, it's illegal everywhere and requires corruption and crime to continue.

That's clear then! We are not quite sure if a slave can tell the difference or not?

Below is an example of 'historical' slavery.







**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](http://screenstives.org.uk) or in the Corn Exchange

**DIARY OF EVENTS**

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

**MARCH**

**Saturday 2nd - Soul & Motown Night** with live band **Madison Avenue**.

Tickets: £18.50 from Corn Exchange or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Saturday 9th - Rotary club Spring Concert in aid of Young Carers**. Burgess Hall. COSI String Quartet, Rotary Voices Choir and Karen England with Mark Burton.

**Saturday 23rd - Songs from the Musicals** by St Ives Musical Theatre Choir and St Ives Youth Theatre. St Ives Corn Exchange. Two performances 2.30pm and 7.30pm. Tickets: £15 (£10 Students NHS) from Corn Exchange or online at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**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](http://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**.

**MAY**

**Saturday 4th - UK's Blues Artist of Year nominee - Connor Selby**. St Ives Corn Exchange from 7.30pm. Supported by Stella Hensley & Chris Newman. Tickets: £10 from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or the Corn Exchange.

**Saturday 11th - Cabaret Rhumba - A Night of Burlesque**. St Ives Corn Exchange from 7pm. Tickets: £16 from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents)

**JUNE**

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

**THE COURTYARD, a hidden gem in the heart of St Ives.**

An eclectic mix of traders and pods. Situated between St Ives Bus Station and Hyperion Auctions on Station Road.



A unique mini high street in the heart of St Ives. Small businesses showcasing their talents.

Fantastic and vibrant selection of traders selling baby and toddler clothes, candles, Curios, handmade glass art, clothes, furniture, collectibles, unique jewellery, refills and eco products, watches and clocks plus repairs, artwork, books, gift ideas and St Ives' only pet shop.

Whilst you are browsing enjoy a cup of freshly made coffee and a tasty bacon roll from Kate's Coffee Pod.

**Open 7 days a week Monday to Saturday 9-5 and Sunday 10-4.**

Here at The Courtyard, we feel incredibly proud of our work and supportive local community. Thank you so much to you all for your kind words and continued support.