

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Use it or Lose it!

That is the message from the management of St Ives Corn Exchange (CIC), which urgently needs to raise income to get through the next two months.

Although a community facility, the Corn Exchange is also a business and like every other business in St Ives it is suffering from the economic downturn.

Following Brexit, the Pandemic, the energy crisis caused by the Ukraine war and the crashing of the economy, trading is very difficult for most businesses. However the Corn Exchange has also had the extra burden of having to close due to asbestos removal on the roof.

According to the CIC, the Riverport Café was closed for six months for this work, meaning a loss of about £17,500 income. Issues with the air conditioning also exacerbated the problem and this was on top of the extra cost of energy, at £16,289 over the past 13 months. The shortfall is likely to be £50,000 this year.

The CIC are looking into several measures to put the finances back on track, including raising charges to users and writing to the owners, St Ives Town Council, requesting immediate help with a loan.

Opened in 1864 it was paid for by local businesses and used by corn merchants. It was also used for concerts and meetings and was eventually sold to St Ives Borough Council in 1947. Following Local Government reorganisation in 1974 it passed to St Ives Town Council.

It has always been at the heart of the community as early pictures show. The Editor recalls the Chamber of Commerce organising exhibitions for local businesses in the 1970s during the three days of the Michaelmas Fair. A really bustling event.

He also booked the hall for a Ceilidh to celebrate his silver wedding



One of the earliest pictures of the inside of the Corn Exchange, the public luncheon before the unveiling of the Cromwell Statue on Wednesday 23rd October 1901.

anniversary in the 1990s, when the hall had been allowed to deteriorate and bookings were made with the 'caretaker' employed by the Council.

At the start of this century, the building's future was in doubt as the Council was informed that it wasn't safe. The Council was split on what to do with it. A large group of Town councillors wanted to sell it, Wetherspoons was a potential buyer. A campaign to save it was launched and the building was not only saved but enhanced and is now an impressive community facility.

The Council handed the running of the building to the CIC and quite recently the finances were on course.

Emergency Meeting

The Town Council held an emergency meeting, behind closed doors, last week to discuss the request from the CIC and while it's deliberations are secret *The Riverporter* understands that although councillors considered it at some length they failed to come to any firm decision.

We understand the Council would like to see a Business Plan to show how the Corn Exchange will become financially viable for the long-term.

The Council would also like to be given a definite figure for a one-off loan, and a repayment schedule, all sensible requests to ensure a loan will do the trick. Sadly time is not on the CIC's side as we understand funds will be required before the end of June.

What you can do to help?

There is no doubt the the Corn Exchange is a really important facility in the town. It is used by lots of town groups and with so many shops closed the town centre would be even more depressed, should the Corn Exchange close. And lets face it it has the best toilets in town!

You can help by using the facilities, particularly the coffee bar and attending events or even offering to help as a volunteer.

You will also be able to make a donation when a Crowd Funding page has been set up.

DIARY OF EVENTS

If you wish to inform us of your events please email: editor@theriverporter.uk

MAY

Wednesday 29th - Jack and the Beanstalk Craft Session (for children) St Ives Library. 10am-12pm

Friday 31st - Chapel Arts concert with **The Lightwaves** - Playing well known numbers. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

JUNE

Saturday 1st - **Saturday Art Club** (for children) St Ives Library. 10am-12pm (£1)

Tuesday 4th - **Bible Dicing** - All Saints Parish Church.

Wednesday 5th - **Engage Talk - Wood Green Animal Shelter** at St Ives Library. 2pm

Saturday 22nd - **Love songs for a June evening** - St Ives Choral Society. Free Church, 7.30pm Tickets-www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society.

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

Friday 28th - **Chapel Arts concert with Lexie Green and Johnny 'Magic Boy' Wright** - Play Americana. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

JULY

Every Sunday in July and August - **Music on The Waits** - 2.30pm.

Saturday 6th - **Sebastian Pompilio and Justin Hyer** St Leger Chapel at 7.30pm. **Please Note:** This is a free concert. We are unable to charge for concerts in the Chapel. However space is limited so please book at www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives

Friday 12th - Sunday 14th - **Carnival and Music Festival** - Hill Rise Park.

Saturday 13th - **COSI Summer Concert** 7.30pm Saturday. Free Church. Tickets £10 (U16s Free) on the door or via [ticketsource](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/chamber-orchestra-of-st-ives) <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/chamber-orchestra-of-st-ives>.

Friday 26th - **Chapel Arts concert with COSI String Quartet** - Playing a range of classics. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Superb, intimate concerts in The Corn Exchange

- Friday 28th June** **Lexie Green and Johnny Wright** - Americana.
- Friday 26th July** **COSI String Quartet** - Playing a range of classics.
- Friday 30th August** **Huntingdonshire Guitar Ensemble** - 7 guitarists.
- Friday 27th September** **GetNotGot** - Contemporary Jazz and Funk.
- Friday 11th October** **Upwinds Ukuleles** - Having fun with Ukuleles.
- Friday 25th October** **4 Winds Sax Quartet** - Four exceptional saxophone players.
- Friday 29th November** **Chris Newman & Humfry Finkel** - Ragtime improvisation.

All start at 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents



A Riverporter Exclusive MAGNIFICENT 7 AT HDC?



There are some 'strange goings on' at HDC with seven councillors forming a new group called Cambs Independents. There are 52 seats in total. The coalition which was in control of the Council consisted of 15 HDC Independents, 12 Lib Dems, 4 Labour and 1 Green councillor.

Following this week's Council meeting the groups are now: 20 Tories, 11 Lib Dems, 9 HDC Independents, 7 **Cambs Independents**, 4 Labour and 1 Green.

The clrs involved are: (above left to right) Stephen Ferguson, St Neots (Leader); Sally Howell, Yaxley (Dep Leader); Michael

Burke, St Ives; Martin Hassell, Lib Dem Buckden; Richard Slade, Ben Pitt and Dr Marcus Pickering, all from St Neots.

The Riverporter spoke with Stephen Ferguson to find out why they had done this and was reassured that they would still continue to support the coalition. Cllr Ferguson said he wanted to 'Make a group which was welcoming to people [from all political persuasions]'. The 'Seven', in effect, hold the balance of power. They could work with the Tories to take control, although Cllr Ferguson ruled that out, but never-the-less it will give the seven more 'clout' in general. Councillor Ferguson has a high profile, especially in St Neots where he is also a County Councillor and has been Mayor and he may stand in it's new Parliamentary seat, on 4th July. This could affect the result by splitting the vote four ways.

An early morning greeting

With the water running fast today, Mummy Swan brought her new family out onto the Quay for safety and gave us early dog walkers a chance for a close up meeting. Please take care when out with your dog.





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St Ives Electric Riverboat Co. awarded The Visit England Rose

St Ives Electric Riverboat Co., run by Francis Mizuro and his family (right), is delighted to have been awarded The Visit England Rose, after being accredited as part of the Quality Accredited Boat Scheme.

The Visit England Rose is awarded as a recognition of 'Service Excellence' and will be proudly displayed by the company in the future.

St Ives Electric Riverboats offers passenger trips and self-drive hire, departing hourly from The Quay in St Ives. This year the company has also introduced a number of events to appeal to everyone.

In addition to their ever-popular Early Bird and Mindfulness trips, St Ives Electric Riverboats has teamed up with both the National Trust and Diana Boston to offer weekly trips through the summer to Houghton Mill and The Manor in Hemingford Grey. The opportunity to visit these wonderful attractions by river is a unique and special experience.



For a fun and informative evening, you can also join The St Ives Electric Riverboat Co. on a Crafty Cruise with The Snug Micropub, also based in the town, for a specialist craft beer tasting session whilst cruising the River Great Ouse.
Tel. 07906 257308
www.electricriverboats.co.uk
info@electricriverboats.co.uk

East Anglia Energy Academy opens in St Ives

The academy, a joint venture between Reed Environment and Oxford Energy Academies (OEA), is a leading provider of energy training courses.

The aim is to create new jobs and bring skills and investment to the district and give young people an avenue into trade skills as well as encouraging tradespeople to learn new skills.

HDC's Invest in Huntingdonshire team has worked with Reed Environment over the last six months to identify a suitable site for their second national academy.

Located in St Ives, with easy access to the M11 corridor and to Suffolk and Norwich, the state-of-the-art new skills centre will offer a wide range of training courses, assessments, and qualifications across gas, electrical, plumbing, oil, and renewable energy skills.

Cllr Sam Wakeford, Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing at HDC, said: 'We are delighted to welcome Oxford Energy Academies to Huntingdonshire – here in a highly accessible location, central to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough region.'

'This will help give local people a route into high quality jobs and provide the skills our economy needs for our houses and businesses to make the transition to net zero.'

Cllr Lara Davenport-Ray, Executive Councillor for Climate and Environment, said: 'Many local people tell me they want to upgrade the heating



and electricity in their home, but without trained local tradespeople in retrofit technology, progress stalls.

With accessible training academies, like this Energy Academy, we bridge the gap between demand and expertise.'

Nykki Rogers, HDC's Economic Development Manager said: 'This is a phenomenal investment success, not just for Huntingdonshire but for the entire East of England.'

The council's joint administration has been clear that their team focuses on delivering the strategic priorities of the green economy and carbon reduction.

The Riverporter did wonder why none of the five St Ives District Councillors featured in the opening celebrations?

LOCAL SLIMMING WORLD GROUPS CAST OFF THEIR CLOTHES FOR CHARITY

They are used to losing pounds but now local big-hearted slimmers have turned their attention to raising them.

Proud members of the five Slimming World groups covering Fenstanton & St Ives have been encouraged to recycle clothes, shoes and accessories they no longer need and donate them to branches of Cancer Research UK to raise money for the cancer charity.

This year's effort has resulted in the collection of 110 bags and, at an average of £25 per bag, has raised approximately £2,700 for the charity as part of the national fundraising campaign the 'Big Slimming World Clothes Throw'.

Kathie Reilly, one of the consultants in St Ives, said 'Most people have been touched by cancer at one time or another so when members know they are helping it is added motivation for them. 'This year's event has been a fantastic success and we've been overwhelmed by the amount of bags our members have managed to collect for Cancer Research UK. They really are amazing.'



THE OLD RIVERPORT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL 2024 Max De Bernardi & Veronica Sbergia

Max and Veronica are truly something special. With just their voices and a few acoustic instruments, this delightful duo has assembled an extraordinary repertoire of American Roots music from Country and Folk, to Ragtime and Swing, plus Gospel, Blues, hokum, jug band and rural music from the 20's and 30's.

An irresistible blend played using strictly acoustic instruments such ukuleles, washboard, kazoo, double bass and guitars. They love entertaining the audience and keeping this precious musical heritage alive, faithfully reproducing its original sound whilst playing it with a modern twist. They continue to play and record their music, travelling and touring everywhere the music will lead them.

Max and Veronica will open this year's Festival at **The Oliver Cromwell on Thursday 12th September at 6pm.**



St Ives Rotary Club fundraised for boardwalk

St Ives Rotary Club has successfully fundraised £2,000 for crucial boardwalk renovations on Holt Island.

The club initially managed to gather £1,000, before obtaining a matching grant from the Rotary Foundation.



The ageing, deteriorated timber will be replaced with a durable fibre grid plastic system, ensuring longer-lasting utility', said Fiona Stocker from the club.

Club members have also started assisting the replacement works in progress, showing their continued support for the preservation of this local asset.



Erik plays ball!



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

New council grant scheme launched

A new council grant scheme for Huntingdonshire organisations has been launched by the District Council. It will support nearby groups and the advancement of the Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy. The award offered will range between £500 to £2,500, aimed to drive initiatives that benefit the community in line with the vision set out in the Futures Place Strategy. Beneficiaries are likely to be projects that enhance physical and mental health, environmental endeavours, and those that promote Huntingdonshire heritage. Cllr Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council, said: 'As we celebrate our 50th anniversary as a council, we are excited to announce that we will be providing additional funding that will support our Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy. 'We are committed to actively supporting community initiatives that enrich the lives of residents.' For grant-related queries, visit Huntingdonshire District Council's official website.

St Ives Library presents more . . .

St Ives Library runs a weekly Story and Craft Session for under 5s on Tuesdays, 10am-11am, and Rhymetime for the same age group on Wednesdays, 10am and 11am, during Term-Time Only. On Thursday 13th June at 7:00pm there is a performance of 'Havisham' by Emul8 Theatre. It's a part of *The Library Presents* series of events going on across Cambridgeshire Libraries.



Miss Havisham is in town! Come meet her in the flesh. Find out why she waits forever at her wedding feast for a husband who will never arrive. Delve into the dark psyche of Miss Havisham's fractured world and live the experiences that drove her to the brink and over the edge of insanity. For more information and tickets go to: www.library.live/the-library-presents-events/havisham - or you can come into the library to book in person. Standard Adult admission is £8.

GOVT to Screen New British Documentary

The Great Ouse Valley Trust is announcing a screening of the eagerly anticipated documentary film, *Six Inches of Soil*. The film tells the inspiring story of young British farmers standing up against the industrial food system, and transforming the way they produce food - to heal the soil, our health and provide for local communities. The screening will include a short introduction and conclude with a panel discussion with Q & A session and refreshments. A bar will be available.



MP seeks to remove St Ivo from Astrea Trust

At a meeting with the St Ivo Parents Forum (below) current MP (well until 4 July) Jonathan Djanogly agreed to write to the Minister for Education to request that St Ivo is removed from the Astria Trust, and place in a more suitable one, an action called rebrokering. His colleague Anthony Browne, MP, is also doing the same with regard to the Astrea School in St Neots.



Free support if TV interference occurs

Mobile network services are being upgraded in St Ives - boosting speed, performance and coverage. There is a small chance these improvements may cause interference to TV received through an aerial such as Freeview, BT, TalkTalk and YouView. For residents who are affected by the upgrades, free support is available from Restore TV an independent programme created by Digital Mobile Spectrum Limited (DMSL), an organisation owned by the UK's four mobile network operators: EE, Virgin Media O2, Three and Vodafone. Any viewers who experience new interference to free to view TV should contact Restore TV on: 0808 13 13 800 (free from landlines and mobiles) For more info visit <https://restoretv.uk/>

Riverport Books opens

There was a great turn out, for a wet Wednesday evening this week, for the opening of a new bookshop. Riverport Books of St Ives (Cambridgeshire) is at 23A The Broadway. Proprietor Michael Sumner was on hand to welcome guests with a glass of wine. Tel: 01480 230690, Email: riverportbooks@gmail.com



Two exciting trips coming

- Two trips will be coming up in July and October. 1. A day-trip to Sandringham Estate, House and Gardens 2. A Dolly Parton musical at Norwich Theatre.

For details contact Angie Walters on 01480 300726 or email: CopeStIves@gmail.com

Dear Erik,
Subject: Site for sore eyes
Police have 'filed a crime' having investigated what they said was arson at The How development in St Ives where new-build homes were destroyed. After the blaze last October, Cambridgeshire Police arrested a man on suspicion of arson, conspiracy to commit fraud and possession of an offensive weapon. To date, no charges have been brought in the case.



Picture: Media Imaging Solutions.

Aftermath of the fire. When police 'file a crime', however, says the Police and Crime Commissioner, the case is not closed. Next Building Control declared the burned-out shells 'not subject to a Dangerous Structure Notice', asserting they are well fenced-in and so present no danger to the public.



The current view from Houghton Road.

Such a statutory measure, were it to apply, would require the owner of a property, which has declined to the point where it cannot be restored, or has been rendered unsafe by serious fire damage, to be demolished and cleared, in the interest of public safety. Finally local planners, who gave permission for the new homes, say they would like the development to be finished as soon as possible. But, they have no control over how long it takes. And so . . . more than six months on, and nothing happens. **Name withheld.**

Dear Erik,
Subject: Bus changes
Good to see results from Mayor Dr Nik Johnson on buses. Especially the proposal for a limited stop/faster Cambridge-Huntingdon service. **AB.**



Dear Erik,
Subject: No Butts
I just want to thank all the volunteers that came along to litter pick the toxic butts from the gutters in town. They picked at least 1,000 butts which is great news for the wildlife of the Ouse Valley and tourism in the town. Farthing Hedgehog (right) even dressed up as a cigarette to help raise awareness. **Beccy.**



Dear Erik,
Subject: Strange Smell
Has anyone else reported strange burning smells around the Hemmingford Road, Limes Park, Victoria Terrace areas? Is it me? It's not all the time but I'm not the only one to notice? **Dominic Angus**

Dear Erik,
Subject: Broadway improvements
The recent rain has washed away all the extensive colour coded messages on the pavements in The Broadway. Has this negated all the hard work done on the night of 1 May? **Luka That.**

Dear Erik,
Subject: Where did the warblers go?
For years the top of Meadow Lane in St Ives has been a reliable place to hear warblers - including nightingales. Standing on the pavement near the roundabout, it was possible to hear, and see, a wide range of birds in spring, and across the year. Walking along the road showed how important the trees and scrub were: summer and winter.

In late winter, a series of red crosses appeared on mature trees in an area controlled by St Ives Anglers. One day in early spring, it was obvious that the red crosses weren't a good sign. Almost all of the trees, and unmarked young ones, and the scrub, were cut down and removed, leaving just a thin hedge line flanking Meadow Lane. Beyond is a now a zeroed wasteland.

A previously muddy track to the water's edge has been hardcored. Without the former tree and scrub cover, there is a clear view of the sailing lake. That doesn't seem to have been appreciated by the birds. Single chiffchaffs, and a garden warbler are left along the hedge. Every other warbler normally there has gone, as the scrub and trees are no more. There is no obvious planning permission application on the HDC planning website. So, what is going on? As for the birds? Nightingales haven't suddenly appeared nearby, nor are other warblers stacking up in the vicinity. It looks like a very non-green action by the anglers. Why is uncertain. **Name withheld.**

ED. I recall seeing a drawing showing buildings on the land by the lake quite a while ago. Could it be that the land is being prepared for a development yet to reach planning?



Two exciting trips coming in July and October. 1. A day-trip to Sandringham Estate, House and Gardens 2. A Dolly Parton musical at Norwich Theatre. For details contact Angie Walters on 01480 300726 or email: CopeStIves@gmail.com

St Ives Electric Riverboat Co



Great Ouse RIVER TRIPS

PASSENGER TRIPS FROM THE QUAY

Mindfulness Cruise

Join us for an evening of relaxing contemplation along the River Great Ouse. Experience the calming effect of an evening cruise whilst travelling in one of our Electric Riverboats. Poetry and meditation will be provided by Dee, Mindfulness Coach and we may even get to see a sunset . . .



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