

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

What is going on at the Park & Ride?

Since the scheme to put solar panels above the park and ride car spaces was first given planning permission by the County Council (CCC) way back in 2017, the project seems to have inched forward, and has now come to a grinding halt.

Looking through the shuttering surrounding the site in mid-July, weeds are growing nicely. Although users of the rest of the site, and busway passengers, may not be impressed by the blank metal wall, we are assured that there is progress. The March 2022 announcement said that the project would take just about a year. Two years on, and we are still waiting. In *Riverporter* 152 in February 2024, we noted that delays were apparently due to transformer issues and connections to the national grid.

The £5.6 million project, has been part funded by what was the former 'Levelling Up' department, using EU Regional Development Fund money.

What is the to-be-completed site meant to provide? CCC says:

- 1MW solar photovoltaic system – equivalent of 250 average domestic solar installations
- 237kW of battery storage
- 10 x 22kW electric vehicle chargers
- Private wire to a local business to supply them with renewable energy
- 27GWh of clean energy forecast to be generated over 30 years

- 5.5GWh of clean energy forecast to be supplied to electric vehicles over 30 years – equivalent to 18-22 million miles
- Saving 15,025 tonnes of carbon emissions over 30 years, contributing to Cambridgeshire's goal of Net Zero by 2045.



In April 2024, an updated press release provided an opaque assurance:

'The microgrid infrastructure has been installed on the Park & Ride site. Our contractor, Equans, is currently undertaking comprehensive final checks to assure the quality and safety of the installation, prior to returning the area to public use.'

Our contractors have told us:

'Quality assurance has been performed throughout the design and installation of the Microgrid project and continues to be a key priority at this time. We are working as quickly as possible to complete this exercise. It is, however, possible that some remedial work may be necessary and, should such a scenario arise, it is likely that the

works will be undertaken prior to return to public use. This is to avoid any future need to close the site. We expect to be in a position to provide clarity on the timescales for reopening the site shortly. We recognise the impact the reduced area for parking is causing to users of the Park & Ride service. Rest assured, our focus is on safely returning the site as quickly as possible, to bring this ground-breaking project into full operation for the community's benefit.'

So that's alright then?

Although Equans proudly trumpets the car park as a successful project on its website, there is no mention there of a completion date for 2024.

Until there is, weeds will continue to grow nicely behind the sheeting, and we'll miss the chance to use all of the summer sunlight for generating much-needed green energy.

DIARY OF EVENTS

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

JULY

- Every Sunday in July and August - Music on The Waits** - 2.30pm.
- Saturday 20th - You Can't Put Us Down.** A NEW men's book group in a relaxed space to read and discuss books. 10:30am - Noon at St Ives Library.
- Friday 26th - Chapel Arts concert with COSI String Quartet** - See P2. Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

AUGUST

- Every Sunday in August - Music on The Waits.** The Bandstand 2.30pm
- Thursday 1st - Screen St Ives - Wicked Little Letters** with Olivia Colman. Doors open 6.30pm film at 7.30pm. Tickets £7 at screenstives.org.uk or from Riverport Café Bar. There is no film in September.
- Wednesday 7th - Engage Talk - The Riverporter. Why when and how with a special guest appearance of Erik.** St Ives Library. 2pm.
- Friday 30th - Chapel Arts concert with Huntingdonshire Guitar Ensemble** - Seven guitarists. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.
- Saturday 31st - St Ives Flower, Craft and Produce Show** - St Ives Corn Exchange. Doors open to public at 12.15. Website www.stivesshow.org.uk

SEPTEMBER

- Thursday 12th - Sunday 15th - The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival 2024** - 26 free concerts over four days see the full programme at www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk.
- Saturday 14th - Heritage Open Day.**
- Saturday 14th - RAFA charity band concert** at the Free Church. Tickets from ticketsource.co.uk/rafa-wings-concert or the Free Church office.
- Sunday 22nd - Civic Sunday** (TBC).
- Friday 27th - Chapel Arts concert with GetNotGot** - Contemporary jazz and funk. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.
- Saturday 28th - Repair café** - Methodist Church.

Can you help?

St Ives Town Team, organisers of The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival, are asking for volunteers to help during the Festival on 14th and 15th September. Chair of the Team, Sheila Stones told *The Riverporter*, 'We are a small group of volunteers and we need some help putting up gazebos and moving chairs for our outside concerts. We need people to volunteer to help us, so that we can continue to put on this popular FREE music event which brings so much joy to the many visitors and residents, and much needed income to businesses.'

Sheila went on to say that the Town Team also needs new members to continue its important work of promoting St Ives and supporting businesses. 'We meet just 10 times a year and our work includes putting on events, helping to improve facilities and providing information for visitors.'

'If you are interested in hearing more about our work we would be delighted to hear from you, or better still, why not come to our AGM which is at the Golden Lion, next Tuesday 23rd July at 7pm.'

Alternatively you can email: townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk

Another boost for those who enjoy eating out in St Ives

The Indian restaurant formally known as PR MASSALA and MONAL INDIAN CUISINE has relaunched under new management and is now named the BENGAL SPICE. Situated just behind the Town Hall and the Golden Lion it has an exciting addition on weekends with a lunchtime Thali menu, which is similar to Tapas or Meze. The spacious interior can accommodate 150 guests and the new team are planning not only great new menu ideas but also live entertainment with Elvis appearing there on the 14th September and a Bollywood Night soon after.



Above: Some of the audience enjoying the music at this year's Carnival & Music Festival at Hill Rise Park.

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

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Town Sparkles for Judges

The town was sparkling on a sunny Monday morning on 8th July for the visit of the judges from Anglia in Bloom. The Chair of St Ives in Bloom, Phil Davies, reported: 'The judges enjoyed the whole morning, and we look forward to doing it all again for the Britain in Bloom judges' visit on 31st July!'

If anyone would like to help the volunteers of St Ives in Bloom with preparations for Britain in Bloom at the end of the month, or to join them in their further gardening adventures, please make contact on siibinfo@gmail.com



Right: The judges on The Waits with volunteer Bunty (left) and the special postbox topper made by the St Ives Crafters.



The judges with many of the volunteers from St Ives in Bloom.

St Ives In Bloom local winners

While St Ives in Bloom volunteers have been preparing for the regional and national In Bloom competitions, local publicans have been working hard at their displays and the allotmenters of Hill Rise have been battling the difficult weather to make a success of their patch.

There were two fantastic Gold awards in the 2024 Public House Floral Display competition. One to the **Seven Wives** pub (below) who made such an effort with their planters and hanging baskets, along with their beautiful hydrangea cheering up motorists at the traffic lights.

And the other to **Floods Tavern** who have gone the extra



mile with a stumpery, bug hotel and herb baskets along with an amazing array of floral hanging baskets, making theirs the winning display.

The interesting planting in the **Nelson's Head** garden was awarded Silver gilt, with Silver awards to **The Haywain** and the **Swan and Angel**. **The Tap Room** received a Bronze award while the **Ivo Lounge** and the **White Hart** also took part in the competition, and received commendations for developing and greening the fronts of their buildings.

The allotments have now been judged and the certificates, showing all the individual efforts along with the fantastic produce of course, will be awarded at the 2024 St Ives Craft, Flower and Produce Show on Saturday 31st August at the Corn Exchange.

The main award this year, though, is not to an individual plot holder but to the 'Hill Rise Allotment Association' which has created brilliant welcoming displays at the entrance to the Allotments site, that together with information events and the demonstration beds at plot 92, help to attract more members and develop a special community spirit across the site.

THE OLD RIVERPORT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL 2024 Gravy Train Trio



The Gravy Train have played at the Festival on several occasions and are always popular. They are an instrumental funky organ trio hailing from Cambridge. The line-up consists of; Justin Dwyer, guitar; Hugh Birkenhead, organ and Ian Griffith, drums. They have featured on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire and have supported big acts such as The Average White Band. Their influences range from Booker T & the MGs to John Schofield and the Delvon Lamar Trio. The band have released two studio albums: 'The Gravy Train' and 'Home Cookin' and their set will feature some of their own original material from these releases.

You can see **The Gravy Train Trio** at this years Festival in Floods Tavern on Friday 13th September at 6pm.



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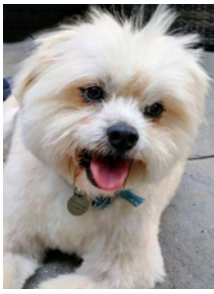
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Erik with new haircut will be appearing at St Ives Library on 7th August. (see Diary of Events)



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



Broadway upgrade

Work has now started on the new layout for The Broadway, which is designed to aid pedestrians with better pavements and a seated area. It is hoped this will attract more visitors and ultimately more shops.

A comment from new MP, Ben Obese-Jecty

'I was honoured to be elected as the new Member of Parliament for Huntingdon. I am hugely proud that so many people have placed their trust and faith in me to be their representative in Westminster. I am working to hire staff and setup my constituency office in order to ensure casework can be supported and regular surgeries can be held. As I pledged during my election campaign I am committed to putting my office in Huntingdon town centre in order to ensure that I have a physical presence within the community and I have already started that process. Ben told *The Riverporter* that he will be holding surgeries in St Ives.

PCC urges residents to have their say

Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston has launched a short online survey for residents to tell him their views on crime and disorder as he produces a new plan for the county. Residents are being urged to have their say, and share the online link with family and friends. The survey runs until 5pm on Friday, 16 August. You can visit <https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk> or email camb-spcc@cambs.police.uk.

Councils working hard to help

District and County councillors are working hard to try and keep Stepping Stones Nursery open after much media attention. The County Council seems to have changed its opinion by stating that more nursery places could be required in St Ives. New premises will need to be found by November when the current lease ends.



HLC celebrates 20 years

HLC Business Centre, situated in a prime location on the Quay by the River and Historic Bridge offers offices for smaller businesses. It has 10 offices and can arrange them to suit the size of most small businesses. To celebrate the occasion HLC has introduced a new website. So, if you wish to know more about their services log on and have a look. HLC can be found on: www.hlcoffices.com or just call Jim on 07860 521183. Many people will know Jim who managed the Corn Exchange after it's reopening and always felt very proud of the volunteers who gave their time to the successful re-launch of that Building.



Football pain fills Corn Exchange

The Corn Exchange, which is seeking donations via its Just Giving page, had a good crowd for Sunday's showing of England v Spain. Hopefully the pain of defeat was partly offset by the income the Corn Exchange received.

Erio's and other kitchens close

Riverporter readers needn't worry that this affects our Erik. Even though he is partial to fish & chips, he rarely visited his namesake as it was too far from town and perhaps this is a reason it had to close. However this seems to be a bit of a trend as several St Ives kitchens are not fully functioning. This includes the Oliver Cromwell pub which closed its kitchen on Monday. Happily we can say that two new food establishments, Rumpoles in Bridge street and Fifi's Cakery in The Broadway, will be opening their doors soon.



And now for the latest news ...

But don't quote us!

THE HOW. We understand that the administrators of The How development have asked Richard Rowland, the sites original developer, to continue the work. In January 2021 the High Court ruled that the whole site was classed as residential, which cost the developers over £200k more in stamp duty.

RYAN FULLER. Rumours suggest that local conservatives are seeking to re-admit Ryan Fuller to their ranks despite him becoming an independent councillor in January. Fuller, a St Ives county councillor, has been criticised for non-attendance at meetings and doing little or no work in St Ives but still collecting over £11,000 in allowances each year. **(Bad timing?! ED.)**



POLICE ISSUE STATEMENT. 'Huntingdonshire neighbourhood officers have removed an illegal traveller encampment from the Barley Close play area of St Ives. Police received reports of anti-social behaviour since the travellers arrived and acted swiftly using legislation under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act'. Reported Inspector Colin Norden.

A large number of officers met at the Indoor Recreation Centre car park (pictured) before going in convoy to the encampment. Witnesses said that after eviction some of the travellers helped clean up the area.

Fireworks over the Parish Church as posted on a St Ives Facebook page.



Dear Erik

UNACCEPTABLE DOLPHIN NOISE

Did you hear it? Did you stick your paws in your ears? I would have if I had any. Paws that is. On Saturday afternoon last, all residents near The Dolphin hotel - that's along The Quay, London Road, The Broadway and The Waits - were subjected, again, to noise levels, far beyond acceptable, from an outside 'private party'. Windows shook, watching TV was compromised, migraines were started. The volume was increased several times between 15.30 to 23.10 and became so unbearable that two residents were forced to abandon their home and garden for relief.

Not only that but the annual motorhome rally in the meadow of 35 vans from all over the country vowed they won't return next year if this problem is not fixed, impacting the local economy.

We don't have to put up with this. If your masters on The Quay were affected, and anybody else you know agree something should be done, visit HDC <https://forms.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENTALHEALTHCOMPLAINTS>. Download a log to record details, fill it in and send it to Melanie Draper, melanie.draper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk. We're counting on you Erik to spread the word. Please woof it about! **Luka That**

Dear Luka, *The Riverporter* has been informed that HDC are arranging a meeting about noise issues with the Dolphin.



It's a Friday morning thing, catching up on the news.



ST IVES TOWN COUNCIL NEWS. The Council's most important debate last week was about the money thrown by councillors for children to collect at the opening of the Michaelmas Fair. The good news for the children is that instead of using 2p pieces it will now be 10p pieces, a 500% increase, and on top of this the councillors decided to double the amount used to 320. It all began in 1934 with pennies and with inflation it should be around 25 pence now!

Hi Erik,

Good job the Hunts Post is impartial as you're obviously not. You must be over the moon with elections but gutted about local area still conservative. Maybe your articles will be more upbeat now you have the government you wanted. **Mike Smith**

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your comment, which I presume is ironic. Why do you think I am not impartial? I am a dog with no voting rights.

By the way, I counted 9 upbeat 'articles' in the last edition (RP162). Only one and a half articles were on the less positive side (about the kids nursery having to close and the closure of Lloyds, which also included the positive story of 4 new shops).

I report the news, whether that is upbeat or not. I do not care what the political angle is. You might be confused by the fact that in the past we wrote negative stories about councillors, who were in power, behaved badly, or worse, and just happened to be Conservatives.

The Riverporter will continue to criticise poor decisions or bias by those in power, regardless of their party (the District and County were criticised recently and they are run by coalitions). This will be the first time since *The Riverporter* started in 2018 that we might be criticising members of other parties, as they are now in control.

I asked several humans what they thought of the Hunts Post advertising Ben Obese-Jecty in the way they did, and all said that they were shocked. In previous years we offered all candidates space to give their opinions to our readers and without fail conservative candidates refused to contribute. That meant that their views were not represented. Any bias was on their side not ours. I have heard several good comments about Ben, who worked hard to engage with local groups. I wish him good luck and having spoken with him he has said he will regularly contribute articles to *The Riverporter*, something the previous MP would not do.

Regards Erik

Dear Erik,

On behalf of all of us St Ives in Bloom (SIIB) volunteers I feel I must put the record straight for Stewart and Ian who appear to be under the illusion or misapprehension that we rejoice in the plethora of vegetation (Grasses, Compositae and even tree seedlings) in the gutters, gullies and certain paved areas around St Ives. On the contrary we spend many hours improving the visual appearance of our town including removing such vegetation which might be in the vicinity of our designated projects. Of course, we applaud the growth of wild plants and the planting of trees in appropriate habitats - which drainage gullies are NOT. So, I politely ask on behalf of all SIIB volunteers that you desist from printing unsubstantiated comments. [?letters?]

As a footnote however, we in SIIB do support and congratulate the unknown grounds maintenance team who are alert to the presence of Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) and even a Pyramidal Orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) on an area of grassland within the town (see right).



Robin Bletsoe St Ives in Bloom volunteer



Wicked Little Letters

Thursday 1 August 2024 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Thea Sharrock,
100m, Cert: 15

Synopsis: A black comedy mystery film starring *Olivia Colman*, *Jessie Buckley* and *Timothy Spall*. When residents begin to receive wicked letters full of hilarious profanities, foul-mouthed Rose is charged with the crime. However, as the town's women investigate, they suspect that something is amiss, and that Rose may not be the culprit after all.

Screen St Ives will be taking a break in September



One Life

Thursday 3 October 2024 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: James Hawes, 105m, Cert: 12

Synopsis: Based on the true story of British humanitarian Nicholas "Nicky" Winton, the film alternates between following *Anthony Hopkins* as a 79-year old Winton reminiscing on his past, and *Johnny Flynn* as a 29-year old Winton attempting to help groups of Jewish children in German-occupied Czechoslovakia to hide and flee in 1938-39, just before the beginning of World War II. Fifty years later, he's still haunted by the fate of those he wasn't able to bring to safety.

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

Some superb concerts over the next 5 months

Each month the Town Team put on a Chapel Arts concert a relaxing way to enjoy live music from talented musicians in the St Ives Corn Exchange's Riverport Café Bar.

Over the next 5 months you can hear a String Quartet, a 7-piece guitar ensemble, a soulful jazz-funk quintet, a saxophone quartet and an evening of ragtime music.



NEXT FRIDAY

Friday 26th July - The COSI String Quartet

An evening of quiet moments and blissful classics with four of our most popular local players from the Chamber Orchestra of St Ives.

Friday 30th August - Huntingdon Guitar Ensemble

A mixed programme from early music through the classical and romantic era, to folk and modern written pieces. Something to suit all tastes.

Friday 27th Sept. - GetNotGot

This soulful jazz-funk quintet create musical landscapes that are fused in the Blue Note heritage with contemporary acid-jazz nuances and funk-fuelled musical.



Friday 11th Oct. - Upwood Ukuleles

The usual mayhem with a whole range of ukuleles from soprano to bass, kazoos, harmonicas, recorders, various percussion instruments and the unique brass trombolele.

Friday 25th Oct. - Four Winds Sax Quartet

Four exceptional saxophonists performing a range of music including classical, jazz, theatre, pop, rock and soul. They also do arrangements of songs from the likes of Ed Sheeran and Adele.

Friday 29th Nov. - Chris Newman & Humfry Finkel

An evening of improvised ragtime music in the tradition of thumb-picking, boom chicking and fingerstyle guitar. Expect solid bass lines, fat chords and even a little harmony.

Doors open at 6.45pm concert starts at 7.30pm.

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

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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.