

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Environment Agency meeting, St Ives Corn Exchange, Monday 12th August

## Uproar from the outset!

The Environment Agency's (EA) public meeting held in the Corn Exchange last Monday failed to pacify residents, boaters and councillors as EA officials bluntly refused to acknowledge the questions and concerns of those attending.

The Environment Agency offered a public event at the Corn Exchange in response to complaints from residents over flooding issues, and from boaters unhappy about restricted navigation.

The EA wanted to explain the current situation with the Brownhill and St Ives locks sluice gates. But there was concern from the start, as the meeting was being held in a room which was too small with inadequate seating and no microphone.

From the moment that EA's Area Director, Sadia Moeed and Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, Philippa Hulme spoke there was uproar. They insisted the meeting would follow their presentation script, bluntly refusing to acknowledge the questions and concerns of the large turnout of interested parties.

This included County Councillor, Kevin Reynolds, District Councillor, Julie Kerr and St Neots Councillor Stephen Ferguson. The EA refused access to some of their team who were present, arguing that direct questions would put them on the spot. A quite extraordinary approach that outraged many of the attendees even before the meeting had started, as of course being put on the spot was exactly what the room wanted.

The EA argued that cost/benefit analysis of the effect of reduced flood water discharge due to sluice gate failures did not warrant expensive repairs. They argued that available budgets were not sufficient for maintenance in any case and many of the audience could be seen angrily disagreeing in the loud and disorganised melee that ensued.

Boaters too were forcefully arguing that the failure of Brownhill Lock at Earith for many weeks this year had denied them access to and from St Ives preventing boats coming to our town, therefore denying St Ives tourist income. Riverboat trips from The Quay were not possible in April due to high water levels and to add insult to injury the EA is currently proposing another 9 per cent increase in boat licence fees.

### EA behaving like Canute?

Now there is no denying this is a



complicated issue, mainly due to the conditions and lack of funding imposed on the EA by government. However the EA's 'No can do' attitude doesn't help. Like Canute a 1,000 years ago... are they hoping that will power will be enough to prevent flooding?

John Hesp, a chartered water engineer, whose professional career was spent working for the EA or its predecessors in East Anglia was able to comment. Speaking on behalf of several parish councils, the Swavesey, Over and Bluntisham Internal Drainage Boards, local farmers and Enderby's Wharf directors, he made important points. Lack of space doesn't allow us to put these points in full so we list the issues that the EA need to deal with.

- It is contested that the St Ives and Brownhill staunches are only there for navigation purposes. River level management is required to meet all the environmental needs, water supply, flood risk management and navigation needs
- It was a condition of the GIA Flood Alleviation Scheme 2006/7 (FAS) that all river control structures should be maintained throughout its lifetime
- The General Drainage Charge paid for by land owners, of £943k in 23/24, should be used for maintenance of control structures
- The fact that only 3 of the 7 gates at St Ives Stauch and 1 of 3 gates at Brownhill are working has contributed to this years flooding getting to within 3 inches of breaching the defences.

- EA has used different criteria from that used for the 2006/7 FAS scheme and their current data is unreliable and underestimates flood risk
- There are alternative sources of funding, such as a local levy that can cover projects up to £3m

The Riverporter has spoken with several people concerned with these matters and there has been a general consensus that the EA is short of funds and the way it operates is not fit for purpose. Key to this is the *Regional Flood and Coastal Committee* (RFCC) designed in 2010 to bring together local flood authorities and the EA to mitigate flood risk and ensure money spent represents value for money and benefits local communities.

### Decisions made in ignorance?

The RFCC is the body that decides which projects are funded and they agreed not to fund the St Ives repairs based on the evidence submitted by the EA.

As the EA were the only group able to speak at the meeting, councillors attending were only able to hear one view of the matter and a flood report submitted by St Ives was not heard. The committee were told by the EA that the repairs to St Ives and Brownhill were not urgent and didn't need funding allocated to it.

The EA said at Monday's meeting they had sought £70,000 of funding for St Ives but only received £7,000, which by any standard was a very poor result and begs the question if the funding application was good enough.

See Page 2 for the EA's response.

## DIARY OF EVENTS

If you wish to inform us of your events please email: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)

### AUGUST

**Every Sunday in August** - Music on The Waits. The Bandstand 2.30pm  
**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 - see below.

**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](http://www.stivesshow.org.uk)

### SEPTEMBER

**Friday 6th** The Mayor of St Ives Summer Ball at The Out Out Club, The Broadway, St Ives. Tickets from the Town Hall. £19.50 per person, including a welcome drink, professional photographer and a raffle.

**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](http://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](http://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](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Saturday 28th** - Repair café - Methodist Church.

**Saturday 28th** - IT'S A KIND OF MAGIC' - The Centre Theatre Players Burgess Hall of One Leisure starting at 7.30pm. Tickets for the show are £12 and can be obtained online from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/starliteroadshow](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/starliteroadshow).

### OCTOBER

**Friday 11th** - Chapel Arts concert with Upwood Ukuleles - St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents) or from the Bar.

**Saturday 12th** - The Old Riverport Ukulele Festival - St Ives Corn Exchange from 9.30am until 8pm. SOLD OUT

**Saturday 12th** - Illuminated Boat Parade - The Quay. A FREE event.

**Monday 14th - Wednesday 16th** - Michaelmas Fair - Town Centre.

**Friday 25th** - Chapel Arts concert with 4 Winds Sax Quartet - Four exceptional saxophonists. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

### NOVEMBER

**Sunday 10th** - Remembrance Parade.

**Sunday 24th** - ArtsFest - St Ives Corn Exchange 10 am to 4 pm.

**Friday 29th** - Chapel Arts concert with Chris Newman & Humfry Finkel - Ragtime. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

### DECEMBER

**Saturday 14th** - Santa Arrives at the Quay by boat

**Saturday 14th/Sunday 15th** - Santas Snow FESt St Ives Corn Exchange.

Live music from seven guitarists

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.



Doors open at 6.45pm concert starts at 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the Bar or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents)



## Music on The Waits welcomes . . .

FESt, the organisers of Music on The Waits are looking forward to welcoming Caroline Foster this Sunday singing Songs from the Shows! Caroline is a popular musical theatre singer so it'll be another great afternoon concert!

**Sunday 18th August from 2.30-4pm. No charge, donations welcome.**

The weekly series of concerts ends on August 25th with the appearance of Acoustics Anonymous, a well-known and popular local band.



## EA respond to the meeting at St Ives Corn Exchange. Continued from Page 1.

**A spokesperson for the EA told The Riverporter:**

'Following incredibly wet weather over the last year, we understand that communities in the St Ives area are concerned about the St Ives Staunch and Brownhill Staunch sluices. Both sluices contain internal gates which are in a poor condition. These are currently closed to help ensure that levels remain high enough for water users to navigate through whilst reducing flood risk as much as possible for the community.

'We held a meeting on Monday to provide an opportunity for members of the public to talk to us, ask any questions they may have and gain a better understanding of the situation. We wanted to make sure as many people as possible were able to ask questions to our colleagues. We felt that

the best way was to make sure there was time for all attendees to have one on one time with EA staff to ask questions.

'As shared at the event, the EA are actively trying to secure funding to repair the structure and continue to inspect the structures in the meantime to ensure they are safe.

We have also launched a website through which we will keep members of the public up to date.'

**Asked why the St Ives fund bid for £70k resulted in such a low offer of just £7k, the EA said:**

Our annual maintenance programme includes a range of activities that are prioritised and timetabled using information from inspections, maintenance standards, levels of flood

risk and from legal and statutory obligations.

EA teams bid for funding each year to carry out maintenance activities across our assets and river systems.

The EA will generally not receive the full amount of funding that is applied for.

At the event we shared the example that last year, the EA bid for around £70,000 of DEFRA Grant in-aid for maintenance activities in St Ives specifically but received around £7,000.

However, with the funding available, which includes an amount from other local funding streams, we continue to undertake routine maintenance works. This includes weed and grass control, safety and structural operational checks, as well as general site inspections and maintenance in the area.

## DIARY DATE Sunday 8th September Civic Sunday Parade and Service



One of the many long-held traditions of St Ives Town Council is the annual Civic Sunday Parade and service, which this year will take place on Sunday 8th September.

The parade serves as a symbol of unity, community spirit and pride in local government, culture and our town, will be led by the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force,

Corps of Drums, The 42 Engineer Regiment (Geographic), The Royal British Legion, along with a number of our youth groups.

Setting off at about 11am, from near Waitrose on Station Road, the parade enters Market Hill and arrives at the Town Hall, where the Town Mayor, Councillors and dignitaries join the parade, led by the town Mace Bearer.

They then march along The Pavement, Crown Street and The Broadway, up to All Saints Parish Church, for a short church service.

The parade then re-forms and marches back to Market Hill at about 12.15pm, where the Town Mayor inspects the parade and thanks all of those who have participated. All are welcome.

## St Ives Show marks 15th year in CEx

**The St Ives Flower, Produce and Craft Show returns once more, on Saturday the 31st August to the town's Corn Exchange, and the organisers are seeking entries.**

The team are now ready to receive entries for those wishing to participate, and it is open to anyone in the town, and the surrounding villages. As usual there are over 100 different classes to enter, across nine different sections (Vegetables and Herbs, Fruit, Flowers and Plants, Flower Arranging, Preserves and Produce, Baking, Home Brewing Wine and Liqueur, Art and Craft and Photography). There is no charge for exhibiting.

Team member Richard Weightman said, 'We always wait with bated breath to see who will bring the largest marrow, the fanciest bread or the most impressive dahlias. There are many prizes to be won, including medals, trophies and cash prizes. Overall it's a really fun day, and everyone who enters enjoys the banter with their fellow exhibitors.'

The Schedule can be downloaded from the Show web site at [www.stivesshow.org.uk](http://www.stivesshow.org.uk) and the electronic entry form is available at <https://tinyurl.com/sisentryform24>

For those who just wish to come along and view the exhibits on the day, the entry is free. This year the show will be opened by the Mayor, Cllr Pascoe Hussain, and will be open to the public from 12.15, with prize giving at 15.00.

Richard added, 'It's fantastic that we have been able to hold the Show in the St Ives Corn Exchange since it reopened in 2010, as it is such a great venue with plenty of space to meet friends and fellow competitors, and discuss the years trials and tribulations. We hope as many people will participate on this our 15th Show, and look forward to seeing everyone on the 31st.

Right: Cllr Pascoe Hussain and Show team member Richard Weightman, at the 2021 Show.

## THE OLD RIVERPORT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL 2024 Please note this is a change to the original programme.

Sadly the Spiral G's have had to cancel their performance due to their drummer, Tom, having a heart attack. We understand he is recovering and we wish him well but he has been told to take things easy so the Spiral G's will not be playing, but don't worry we have a good replacement with GETNOTGOT who are also a jazz Funk 5 piece band.

## GETNOTGOT



Rapidly establishing themselves as one of the must see live bands in the region. GETNOTGOT create musical landscapes that are fused in the Blue Note heritage with contemporary acid-jazz nuances and funk-fuelled musical energy.

Having released their first EP in January 2023, interest from music festivals and jazz clubs soon followed, and whilst they are busy performing live they are currently working on their first full-length album of original material.

Their sonic connection is formed from playing together in various ensembles for decades, and their intuitive musical union can be felt at a deep level, with well-received support slots for some of the UK's top RnB recording artists, including Smoove & Turrell and Izo Fitzroy.

Prior to the Festival GETNOTGOT are appearing in Soho and Shoreditch.

**You can see GETNOTGOT at the Golden Lion Hotel on Friday 13th September at 8pm.**



St Ives and the Brownhill Staunch sluices



Erik slept through most of Ron's talk. (Library 7 August) He'd heard it all before!



having your say ...

# The Riverporter

Voted Best local newspaper of the year 2019/20 in the Cambridge Building Society's Community Magazine Awards

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

## OTHER NEWS

### Noble's Field Trust seek expertise

Noble's Field is a four-acre river meadow along the Thicket Path, not far from Holt Island. It is managed for the recreational use of local people and is regularly used by the Rowing Club, the Scouts, and the Great Ouse Boating Association, in addition to being used informally by walkers, dog exercisers picnickers etc. We are seeking individuals in St Ives who have the expertise or desire to get more organisations using the Field so that the hire charges can help with the upkeep of this beautiful location. Anybody interested in helping out or in hiring the Field should contact the secretary Tim at: tbthomas10@hotmail.com.



### FOR SIT - St Ives Regeneration Forum

Spearheaded by the Civic Society's Chairman, Christine Phillpotts, a number of community groups, councillors and individuals have come together to discuss how St Ives Town Centre might be improved and regenerated. It is hoped that the Forum will create a regeneration plan for St Ives for the next 10 years raising its profile and boosting the town's economy. The members are currently looking at the Bridge Street area and talking with shop owners about measures that could be done to improve trade. The Forum chose Bridge Street to start on, realising that although it is not the area with most need of improvement it is the area that connects to the river, which is one of the town's main attractions and may allow some relatively easy improvements to be made quickly. The Forum ultimately intend to consider the whole town centre over the coming months. One such facility, The Octagon, by the Bus Station is also being considered for more appropriate use than just a bin store.

### Can you believe it? From the Guardian's letters page.

Your report on deaf people struggling to access healthcare in the NHS (26 May) reminded me of an incident that my profoundly deaf uncle said occurred when he turned up for an 11am appointment at an NHS audiology clinic. He still hadn't been seen by midday, and when he asked what was going on, a nurse said: 'Oh, we called out your name several times.' *K Sabbagh.*

### Heritage open day venues on Saturday 14th September the following buildings will be open.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| All Saints Parish Church, Church Street.                            | Sacred Heart Church, Needingworth Road.  |
| Faizane E Madina Jamia Masjid St Ives Mosque, 22 Needingworth Road. | St Ives Bridge and Chapel, London Road.  |
| Holt Island Nature Reserve, Church Street.                          | St Ives Masonic Hall, Wellington Street. |
| Prayer & Education Centre of St Ives & Hunts, 38 Broadway.          | St Ives Methodist Church, 4 The Waits.   |
|   | St Ives Town Hall, Market Hill.          |
|   | The Free Church, Market Hill.            |
|   | The Norris Museum, The Broadway.         |

**Good Morning Erik**  
Would it be possible to insert the following information into a copy of *The Riverporter*?  
**NHS Retirement Fellowship**  
Have you worked in the NHS?  
Yes. Then why not join us?  
**For more information, please call Angie On 01480 300726.**  
Thank You and Best wishes **Angie**

**Dear Erik,**  
Please accept my continual appreciation of your [and the Editors] hard work in producing the only true local news publication. Always enjoyable and informative.  
May I suggest an enquiry into the lack of swallows in Bridge street? The overhangs used to teem with nests but hardly any now.  
☹️

**Dear Erik,**  
Why are the new rubbish bins at the new bus stops on Marley Road still not uncovered for use after many weeks?  
Also  
Why do Huntingdon commuter cars still stream through St Ives even though the old A14 provides a fast way to Cambridge?  
Like the attraction of the car trap is there a supernatural draw for them to clog up the route that must take them three times as long?  
**Name withheld.**

**Dear Erik,**  
I was wondering if you could find out when the Chapel is going to be open to the public again. I am a regular volunteer and understand there are repair issues which seem to be taking forever. It really should be open at this time of year. Thank you. T  
**Dear T,** We are aware that the Town Team are anxious to use the Chapel during the Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival and that it should be open on 14th September as part of the Heritage Open Day itinerary. The Norris Museum, which looks after the building, have been unable to give us a date when it will be open. There is a problem on the lower floor, which Cambs County Council, who are responsible for the building maintenance, is supposedly arranging for the repair work to be done. But it would appear that there is no reason why the upper floor cannot be used.

**COPE in St Ives**  
Meetings are held on third Thursday of each month in St Ives Corn Exchange. Contact Angie 01480 300726. COPE membership is free and members are encouraged to bring friends, carers and partners. Everyone is welcome.  
**19th September** Where have all the Characters gone?  
**17th October** Fire Safety in the Home  
**24th November** Ramsey Rural Museum  
**19th December** Christmas Lunch in St Ives Corn Exchange

**The Editor sees a link between different stories in the news and ask some questions.**

**Regarding the recent civil disorder**  
Some of us were deeply shocked by the violence committed by so many 'ordinary' citizens and young people in particular. Over 1,000 people have been arrested so far with 372, adults charged, plus 65 under 18 including two 12 year olds. (80% under 40 years old). Prison sentences are being handed out. The longest so far being 3 years and 4 months (by comparison some stop oil protesters have been jailed for over 4 years for non-violent protests).  
**Will their parents will be held responsible?**  
It would seem that parents are not held directly responsible although Parenting Orders could see parents attend counselling sessions.  
**Heartening response from the majority**  
The other side of this story is the magnificent response by the 'silent majority' that helped quell the riots. Anti-racism protesters turned out to protect immigration centres, mosques and hotels housing immigrants from anti-immigration protesters and far right extremists.  
**Is this an opportunity for unity?**  
Whilst the Police have been under verbal attack recently, most law abiding citizens were shocked by the physical violence against officers trying to keep the peace.  
Perhaps the combined force of the non-violent anti-racism protesters working with the Police could see some trust return for the Police.

**9.4 million not working**  
The new government is grappling with making the UK more productive, which most agree is the only way out of our financial problems. For local authorities and government departments to have the right level of investment (see EA report on page 1) the UK must be more productive. One of the main reasons it isn't, is the lack of staff for many businesses and with 1/5th of the working population not working and reductions in immigration a core issue that is a problem.  
**An ageing society**  
According to Age UK's 'State of Health and Care Report', last year there were 11 million people aged over 65 in England. By 2028, it will be 12.1 million and by 2043, 14.5 million. The same report also found that:  
• 80% of people over 85 in England live with at least one long term health condition.  
• 1.6 million over 65 have unmet care needs.  
• The number of vacant adult social sector posts increased 52% from 2021 to 2022.  
• 20% of unpaid carers are aged 65 plus.  
These trends are not new, they have been apparent for many years. Yet our society remains woefully unprepared for the reality of an increasingly aged and work-shy population.  
**This burden will undoubtedly mostly fall on today's under 40s, and many are revolting.**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE CONCERT BAND PRESENTS

**ROYAL AIR FORCES Association**  
The charity that supports the RAF family

# An Evening of Patriotic & Popular Music

In aid of the RAF Association's Battle of Britain "Wings Appeal"

Musical Director: David McClintock

Making music accessible to everyone as our members are Dementia Friends

**See Diary for details**

**SATURDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER AT ST IVES FREE CHURCH**



St Ives Electric Riverboat Co



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**opening circles**  
connecting people through creativity

**No.1**  
POP-UP EVENT

Join us for our first opening circle event to create a

## GIANT NATURE MANDALA

Under the Band Stand on the Waits, in St Ives

**PLEASE BRING**  
A PICNIC & A BLANKET  
SOME NATURAL MATERIALS

- sticks, leaves, flowers, berries, stones -
- scissors, secateurs would be useful

Enjoy a bit of impromptu music played by friends...

**ON SUNDAY 1 SEPTEMBER - 10AM TO 2PM**

Please check on our facebook page on the day in case of bad weather  
[www.facebook.com/OpeningCircles](http://www.facebook.com/OpeningCircles)




**HYPERION**

For those wishing to sell or bid at our popular auctions here are the remaining dates for 2024 . . .



Sold recently



George Best 1967/8 match worn Manchester United home jersey.

**Sold £13,300**



Ladies continental charm bracelet.

**Sold £750**

**31st August**  
**21st September**  
**12th October**  
**2nd November**

**9th November - FINE ART AUCTION**  
**23rd November**  
**14th December**



Case of 9 bottles of Warre's Vintage Port.  
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