

The Riverporter

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue 172: 22 November 2024

SAVE THE PLANET - READ AND PASS ON

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Council told that many St Ivo children have to leave to get the qualifications they need

At November's Town Council meeting, councillors heard from Matt Finch, ex Methodist Minister and Vice Chair of St Ivo Parents Forum, about the almost total collapse of St Ivo 6th form. Speaking to the full council Mr Finch blamed the Astrea Academy Trust for this rather than the school.

Up to 2018, entry to the 6th form averaged 177 pupils. Last year it was 77 and this year it is just 36.

Astrea have said that they have a plan for the future of the 6th Form but all of their school 6th forms are declining and Longsands, another Astrea Academy School which had a larger 6th Form than the Ivo, has similar problems with a 45 pupil intake this year.

Mr Finch warned that if this trend was to continue there could soon be no 6th Form at the Ivo. This could affect the schools income as the pupil premium of £7k per pupil would go with them, meaning a total loss of around £1m. With no languages offered at A level and subjects such as maths and computer science unavailable, many pupils cannot get the qualifications they need to study subjects at university. Despite being just a bus ride away from Cambridge, the Tech Centre of the UK, St Ivo pupils now have to move to other schools for these subjects.

This has also had a big effect on the Busway, which is now overloaded with pupils travelling to Swavesey,



Northstowe and Cambridge, resulting in some pupils leaving home at 6am and not getting home until 7pm.

On top of these matters Mr Finch mentioned the continued issues with bullying and the problems caused by school uniform changes.

The school's strict rules around uniforms sees pupils getting immediate detention for simply having their shirt untucked. All of which has impacted on the health and well being of pupils. Mr Finch mentioned that the St Ivo Parents Forum was considered to be an 'extreme group' that makes trouble, by the school and was therefore denied the opportunity to talk to Ofsted inspectors.

It was also suggested that the recent good rating from Ofsted was aided by teachers from Longsands being bussed in during the Ivo Ofsted inspection and that Ivo Staff attended Longsands during their Ofsted inspection.

Mr Finch went on to say that all the Parents Forum wanted was an honest conversation with the school to aid the education and wellbeing of students. To this end our MP, Ben Obese-Jecty, visited the school last Friday and met Principal, Tony Meneagh (pictured) and Astrea CEO Rowena Hackwood and his report featured on a local Facebook page. He was assured that the forthcoming strategy from the school and investment in the 6th Form centre would arrest the slide in numbers.

Ben also raised concerns regarding why the only secondary school in St Ives is under-subscribed, the poor culture that exists within the school and why parents are not feeling listened to.

The Riverporter first reported these concerns in September (RP167). Let's hope this situation can be resolved and the school return to its former status.

Next Friday 29th November
Chris Newman & Humfry Finkel



Enjoy an evening of improvised ragtime music from these exceptional 'duelling' guitarists. Join them on a musical journey in the tradition of thumb-picking, boom chicking, fingerstyle guitar with a mix of classics and originals.



Doors open at 7pm. Concert starts at 7.30pm.
Tickets £10 on the door or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents

A speed restriction road too far?

We all value road safety and efforts taken to improve it. But when it comes to the stretch of the old A14 from Fenstanton to Huntingdon, the jury is out. It is subject to a 40mph speed limit; one that seems to have been there for an awfully long time. **Why?** After the speed limit was imposed in early 2021, due to the need for speed barrier improvement, the road has seen a number of false dawns. Dates for the works have come and gone repeatedly. As recently as July 24, Cambs County Council (CCC) said there was need for a 4-week period of drainage works, due to finish in 4 weeks (by late August). Once successfully completed CCC said 'The 40mph speed limit on this section will be removed.' It wasn't.

CCC also said that 'Another key priority for us, is the Godmanchester to Huntingdon section, which is currently restricted to a temporary 40mph speed limit due to safety concerns with the barriers. We anticipate starting the barrier work on Sunday, September 15, this will also involve lane closures in both directions and the work is expected to take three months to complete. In the meantime, the 40mph speed limit will remain in place for safety reasons.'

Its now late November and there is no sign of those works. A month ago, the same CC spokesman said:

'The barrier replacement work, which will require lane closures, is expected to start in November and continue until at least February 2025'.

Hope springs eternal, but mark that date. What chance it runs into 2026?

Super Saturdays in St Ives

For the second Saturday in a row, crowds came to town. On November 9th, Hemingford Fireworks lit up the sky and last Saturday thousands enjoyed the Christmas Market during the day followed by The Mayor and Father Christmas switching on the lights.

Market stalls lined Bridge Street and Market Hill, where fairground rides provided a vibrant sight, especially as darkness descended (see below). The Switched on took place following an afternoon of song and dance on the stage. According to Cllr Pasco Hussain, Mayor of St Ives (see below with Father Christmas, Cllr Burke and the Macebearer), it was a brilliant day. He told *The Riverporter*, 'The town was full of happy smiling faces all day and praise must go to Cllr Michael Burke and the Christmas Lights Committee for organising such a great event'.



Pic by Lauren Rothwell

Some people were surprised that there was no firework display after the switch-on this year, although Erik was pleased as he hates the loud bangs.



DIARY OF EVENTS

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

NOVEMBER

Saturday 23rd - ArtsFEST - St Ives Corn Exchange 10 am to 4 pm.

Thursday 28th - The Haigh Trust Draw during the Darby and Joan Club Christmas lunch at the Corn Exchange, at 3.30pm.

Friday 29th - FREE LUNCHTIME concert Phoenix Players of St Ives 1.10pm at the Free Church. Mozart, Meybeer and Coleridge-Taylor.

Friday 29th - Chapel Arts concert with Chris Newman & Humfry Finkel Corn Ex/ 7.30pm. Tickets £10 w www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Saturday 30th - Craft Fair. Saints Crafters at St Ives Corn Exchange 9:30-3:30. FREE ENTRY.

DECEMBER

Sunday 1st - Sound Bath, Corn Exchange bookwhen.com/soulcentredsound

Wednesday 4th - Engage Talk - An Introduction to Leatherwork with Paul Smith - 2pm, St Ives Library

Saturday 7th - Craft Fair. Saints Crafters, Free Church 9:30am-FREE ENTRY.

Saturday 7th - 'On with the Show' St Ives Community Choir concert, Free Church at 7.30pm. Tickets at the door, £6 adult and £3 children or online at: <https://eastfield-school-association.sumupstore.com/products>. All proceeds to Eastfield and Westfield Schools.

Saturday 14th - Santa Arrives at the Quay by boat

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

JANUARY 2025

Saturday 18th - COSI Scottish Themed Winter Concert 7pm at the Free Church. Tickets £10, under 16s free, on the door or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/chamber-orchestra-of-st-ives.

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

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Ren wins award in Spain

Kate Madison, from the volunteer film group that brings a Fantasy World to Life in rural Cambridgeshire, has won the *Artemisa Woman Creators Award* at the Bilbao Seriesland awards in Spain. Pictured right with Showrunner Neil Oseman, Kate is the co-creator of the series with Christopher Dane.



The *Riverporter* visited Berleigh Hill Farm last Saturday to interview Neil and the cast about the group's success. Ren was created in 2011, a story about a woman marked by an ancient spirit that gives her strange powers and puts a series of dots on her face causing her to go on the run. Ren 1 was filmed in Caxton in 2014 and following its release in 2016 has had 10 million views on YouTube and has won 14 awards at web series festivals.

Due to Covid the second series was delayed but eventually in 2022 Ren 2 was started and was released earlier this year with more views on

Youtube and more awards. Neil, a professional cinematographer says that he really enjoys working with this group, many of whom also work in the business, but as volunteers the camaraderie and lack of pressure makes it more fun. The whole project is crowd funded and if you would like to get involved go to: <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/ren-the-girl-with-the-mark-season-three>.

You can also see Ren - The Girl with the Mark next Thursday 28th Nov. at Screen St Ives, in the Corn Exchange at 7.30pm, where there will be a Q&A session with the cast.

The Editor is at it again, finding links in several stories.

The article below by John Elworthy on the Cambsnews website caught his eye ...

'Uncivil' councillors breach code of conduct

Conservative opposition leader Steve Count (right) is to be asked to take internal disciplinary action after two of his county councillors were found by a conduct committee hearing to have made 'immensely discourteous and uncivil' remarks about Mayor Dr Nik Johnson.



Parish Councillor in Benwick (see RP139) was co-opted onto Fenland District Council's Standards Committee. YES the same standards committee that Cllr Count chairs.

One by Councillor Tierney, maliciously accused the Mayor of being 'a predator and a bully' and another from Cllr Sam Hoy suggested that the Mayor had 'stalked a female employee'.

[These claims were found to be untrue by the authorities solicitor in 2023.]

Both councillors (who are paid over £15k from Fenland District Council on top of their £11.5k from the County Council) were found to have breached the Council's Code of Conduct and brought the council into disrepute.

Neither would apologise and as sanctions were ineffective, their leader Cllr Steve Count was asked to take disciplinary action. Ironically Cllr Count is chair of the conduct committee of Fenland District Council, which has only held one meeting over the past 4 years, the one to appoint Cllr Count as chairman. The other 12 meetings were cancelled.

So what is the link here?

It turns out that ex Cambs Police & Crime Commissioner Jason Ablewhite, who became a

Cllrs Ablewhite and Martin Field, from March, were appointed, having been asked to complete a form with two questions on it. The first asked why they wanted to do it and the second asked why they are suitable for the role? Martin answered both questions fully but Jason answered neither question and left his form blank. His application was endorsed by non other than Councillor Tierney.

This does highlight why many people continue to be disappointed in councils and councillors. Incidentally Jason will receive £140 for the inconvenience of not attending any meetings! Oh, and Cllr Count takes home £32,472 for his council work from Fenland and Cambs CC.

It also has similarities with the 'work', or should I say 'lack of work' by St Ives County Councillor Ryan Fuller, who is paid over £15,000 having attended just four meetings so far this year.

The *Riverporter* asked our working County Councillor, Kevin Reynolds for a comment. He said he was surprised that the County didn't sanction Councillors Tierney and Hoy and that - 'Despite political differences, respect and courtesy should be shown by all councillors.'

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Slepe Hall Field ceremony this Tuesday

On Tuesday 26th November at 11am, on the Slepe Hall playing field the Mayor, Councillor Pasco Hussain and many of the town councillors will lead a ceremony to accept three gifts from the Civic Society to the town.

The gifts are:

1. An ornate commemorative bench to mark the Coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla.
2. A new Heritage Information board positioned alongside giving the history of the playing field, and its gifting by the school to the town
3. A pair of sapling rowan trees which will, in time, provide some welcome shade for anyone seeking to rest there.

The information board was funded by Peggy Seamark and a few of the 'old girls' from the Slepe Hall Girls School (now Slepe Hall Hotel), who were keen to mark that event.

Individually, these will be welcome additions to the playing field and as a collection they bring a nice touch to that end of town.

Very few of those 'old girls' are able to attend this installation but the Civic Society welcome anyone who would like to come to applaud and support their efforts on the day, so if you are free at 11am on Tuesday 26th, we'd love to see you there.

Christine Phillpotts Chair St Ives Civic Society

A new type of therapy in St Ives

I offer somatic therapy, coaching and yoga classes to women in St Ives who have experienced trauma, anxiety, and stress related conditions.

Somatic means working with the body to heal the mind. I support you to find peace and restore a sense of self.

Affordable pricing packages available.

Book a free consultation: clairelouisebuttrum@gmail.com

For more info go to www.harmonyhealingservices.co.uk or scan





Coming soon - the very first podcast on Youtube from Riverport Radio. Where you can hear the news and gossip with Ron, John, Paul and Erik of course. Plus a special guest.

Dear Erik,
I read your latest newspaper about the A141. The residents have done a good job logging trucks. As any student on data analysis will know. If you have bad data or traffic model, you can get any answer you want.

Would *The Riverporter* raise a freedom of information request to get this data and model released for better scrutiny? A reporter asking is likely to get an answer.

[I'm not sure they are! Ed]

The counsellor at the A141 meeting was asked to release the model and data, but refused to. Locals know that the A1123 often backs up past Needingworth and towards Huntingdon. Planning permission for Giffords farm has been refused many times as the road cannot take the current traffic let alone more traffic.

The council also refuse to discuss the problem of getting traffic past the guided bus and over the bridge, but gave planning permission for two supermarkets and several outlets some time ago. So I doubt this stretch can be made into a dual carriageway.

Which makes it pointless having a dual carriage way around the top of St Ives.

If none of these issues are shown by the councils model, then the model was probably written by the person in your last article,.

The 'Fawlty signwriter'. **Regards Chris**



having your say ...

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

Dear Erik,

The recent opening of the new 'Whisky Cafe' has revealed an astonishing transformation of the interior of the former Robin Hood pub. This ancient building, revitalized with a new and creative lease of life, is a very welcome addition to the Marker Hill landscape - and has been most definitely worth waiting for! Thanks and congratulations to Samuel Purchas and his Team. **Stewart and Liz Denham**

Car Trap strikes again

It started with the picture below and the usual sort of comment on-line, suggesting the driver ... must be a COMPLETE !!!!!



Then it emerged that it was a ...



The Riverporter

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

OTHER NEWS

£500 raised in a day in the Chapel

Thanks to the amazing generosity of the people of St Ives the BHF Fundraising Group raised £500 last Saturday for the British Heart Foundation.

This was their largest amount ever on an opening day of candlelighting in the St Leger Chapel on the Bridge. Your donations will fund lifesaving research into heart and circulatory diseases. The Chapel will be open again for the next three weekends up to Christmas, so you can light a candle in memory of a loved one.



Residents of Welland Close evacuated

The bomb squad was called to 'potentially suspicious items' found inside a property on Monday morning. Cambridgeshire Police said officers were carrying out a warrant at the Welland Close property when they came across the items. Specialist Explosive Ordnance Disposal officers were deployed and Paul Falder, 67, was arrested and charged with possession of ammunition without a certificate. He was due to appear at Huntingdon Magistrates' Court yesterday.



The first sign of anything untoward was when Callum Lufc posted this picture on a local facebook page with the comment. 'Bomb disposal going aldi direction don't see that often.'

M&Co gets the Snowman treatment

The good news is that the M&Co shop, so long an eyesore, has been improved with somersaulting santas thanks to members of the Snowman Festival. Soon the premises will become the new Mountain Warehouse shop and the old Mountain Warehouse, on the corner of Bridge Street, will become a Caffé Nero, even more choice for coffee lovers!



Meanwhile the Snowman Festival Trail is up and running with snowmen appearing throughout the town and a chance for children to win a £50 Townrow Voucher. To get your copy of the Snowman Trail Map and details of how to win go to: www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk

Campaign to shop local so important

Sadly there have been a number of closures again recently. Just four issues ago (RP168) we reported that the Merryland Bakery had opened, with Erik sampling their excellent sausages. Today they have closed even before their bread has gone stale! Also shut a while ago, and seemingly now permanent, is the Riverside Tearooms overlooking the Bridge and river, and of course we already reported that Dobbies in Houghton are shutting after Christmas. Most upsetting is that the Bentley Garage by the A1307 entrance/exit has shut. Could it be that not enough of us have been buying Bentleys lately? The FoRSIT group have just produced a poster to encourage people to support local business this Christmas. Let's hope we all do.

Police initiative on knife crime

A recent weapons amnesty has seen 370 items handed in, a record number for Cambridgeshire. Part of the initiative saw Police Cadets (presumably the youngest looking) trying to buy knives in St Ives. Shops visited included Townrow, Poundland, West End, Waitrose, Morrisons and Aldi and all passed the test asking each cadet for ID. This may not be the case with all online suppliers.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is given that **MR SHONKU CHOUDHURY** have on the 10/11/2024 applied to Huntingdonshire District Council for a Premise Licence for **BENGAL SPICE and 1 WELLINGTON STREET, ST IVES, CAMBRIDGE, PE27 5AZ UNITEDKINDOM**

For the following regulated activities - Monday To Sunday 12:00 TO 23:00, as well as indoor or outdoor, as applicable per activity

- a. **Provision of Live Music**, Monday To Sunday 12:00 TO 23:00
- b. **Provision Recorded Music** Monday To Sunday 12:00 TO 23:00
- c. **Provision of Performance of Dance** Monday To Sunday 12:00 TO 23:00
- d. **Anything of a similar description** Monday To Sunday 12:00 TO 23:00
- e. **Retail Sale of Alcohol for Consumption ON and OFF the Premises** - Monday To Sunday 12:00 TO 23:00 off or on sales only, or both Monday To Sunday 12:00 TO 23:00, as well as indoor or outdoor, as applicable per activity

Persons wishing to inspect the register or the record of this application may do so by visiting the public register online <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/licensing/public-registers/>

Anyone wishing to make representations concerning this application should do so in writing online via the public register above or by email to licensing@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or by post to Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

Representations in respect of this application must reach the Licensing Authority by 9/12/2024

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application, the maximum fine for which on summary conviction is unlimited.



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**Large party bookings still
available before Christmas**



Ren: The Girl with the Mark
Thursday 28 November 2024 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Kate Madison et al.
Duration: 114mins, Cert: 12
This screening will include an introduction followed by a Q&A session by members of the crew.

Synopsis: Made in St Ives and Caxton by volunteers, Ren: The Girl with the Mark is a fantasy-adventure web series with 14 international awards. Ren is a young woman whose life changes forever when she is Marked by an ancient spirit and becomes a feared Nu'Mahri. Forced to go on the run with a rogue named Hunter and pursued by the Kah'Nath army, she must discover the true meaning of the Mark she bears.

The Holdovers



The Holdovers
Thursday 5 December 2024 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Alexander Payne,
Duration: 133m, Cert: 15

Synopsis: A Christmas comedy-drama film directed by Alexander Payne and written by David Hemingson. Set in late 1970 and early 1971, the film stars Paul Giamatti as a strict classics teacher at a New England boarding school who is forced to chaperone a handful of students with nowhere to go on the Christmas break. Da'Vine Joy Randolph portrays the school cafeteria manager, and Dominic Sessa plays one of the students who stays on campus.

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

Advent Fair

Saturday 7th December
10am - 2pm

Sacred Heart Church Hall
Needingworth Road

- Refreshments
- Children's Craft table
- Splat the Rat!
- Guessing Games
- Homemade Cake Stall
- Tombolas
- Craft & Bric-a-Brac Stalls
- Handmade Christmas Cards

Merry Christmas



Entries invited for our Fine Art, Antique & Interiors Sales



Rolex Oyster Speedking with second sub dial and numeral face
Sold £1,000



Rare Olympics: Tokyo, 12th Olympics Games 1940, (cancelled) Sold £950

Rare Jérôme Thibouville-Lamy & Cie 19thC guitar Sold £650



A Violin by Francois Breton, Labelled: F. Breton Sold £900



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