

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Town precept raised by 21%

In an open letter to residents (below) the Town Council explains why it has had to increase its council tax. The letter says that the Council takes seriously its responsibility to ensure St Ives remains a thriving and vibrant community while delivering essential services.

After careful consideration and deliberation, the Town Council has made the difficult decision to increase the precept by 21%.

In practical terms, this increase amounts to an additional £31.84 annually for a Band D property, an additional cost of approximately £2.65 per month.

We understand that any increase in living costs can be challenging, particularly in the current economic climate. Therefore, we want to be transparent about why this increase is necessary and how it will benefit our community.

Why is this increase necessary?
Several factors have made this step unavoidable:

1. Increased Costs of Essential Services: Rising inflation and energy costs have significantly impacted the cost of delivering local services and running community programs.

2. St Ives' historic listed buildings owned by the Town Council are integral to the town's character and require significant funding to preserve for future generations.

3. The recent rise in Employer National Insurance, has added to the financial pressure, increasing the cost of employing staff.

How will the funds be used?
The additional revenue generated from this increase will:

- Ensure that public spaces are maintained by the Council and remain clean, safe and welcoming.
- Enhance the delivery of the St Ives Cares project.
- Support projects such as applying for improvements on the Highway, refurbishment of the Warner's Park Pavilion and supporting infrastructure to help support local businesses to remain in the town.
- Strengthen our preparedness for

potential emergencies, including adverse weather events.

Our commitment to transparency
We are committed to using these additional funds responsibly and effectively. Detailed financial plans and updates will be made available on the Town Council's website, and we welcome any feedback or questions you may have.

We deeply appreciate your understanding and continued support as we work to ensure that St Ives remains a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

Likely increase for all bands.

Band	Monthly increase	Annual increase
Band A-	£1.47	£17.64
Band A	£1.77	£21.24
Band B	£2.06	£24.72
Band C	£2.36	£28.32
Band D	£2.65	£31.80
Band E	£3.24	£38.88
Band F	£3.83	£45.96
Band G	£4.42	£53.04
Band H	£5.31	£63.72

Here is a handy guide about the precept increase from the Town Council



St Ives Town Council Precept 2025-26

What does St Ives Town Council provide for its community, and how is the precept spent?



67% is spent on employment of staff, health and safety, insurance, Civic and community events, working with other tiers of government and local organisations, running of charities, strategic planning and meetings, provision of CCTV and other legal duties



19% is spent on maintenance of outdoor spaces including parks, play areas, the hanging basket displays, cemeteries, assisting St Ives in Bloom, etc. and services including Farmers' Market, public toilets, bandstand, cemeteries and allotments



6% is provided in the way of grants to community organisations. This year this totals £73,117.



8% of the budget is used on the upkeep of the Town Hall, Corn Exchange, Burleigh Hill Community Centre and other buildings owned and maintained by the Town Council

St Ives Town Council's precept has been set at £1,129,514 for the 2025-26 financial year. This is an increase of £197,965 on the 2024-25 precept which in real terms is an annual increase of £31.84 on a Band D Property or £2.65 per month.

What does £2.65 buy you?



12 Free Range Welsh eggs from Aldi

The increase has been necessary to continue effective management of the town's assets, ensure excellent governance of council business and provide the services our residents expect. With budget constraints on higher tiered authorities, there is a greater pressure on St Ives Town Council to take on additional services. More information can be found on our website www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk



Cold spell brings out revellers

Following a cold snap a fortnight ago, lots of people came out to enjoy the frozen meadow, as the picture below, by Ian Jackson shows. Ian said that as he photographed the crowds 'a slippin' and slidin' some hot air appeared to complete the scene. It's nice to know that St Ives folk still take every opportunity to enjoy the ice, just as they did 135 years ago in 1890/91 (see left). Even the river iced over as temperatures had averaged -1°C from November to January that winter.



Langley Bread distributed



Mayor Pascoe Hussain is seen distributing the annual St Ives tradition of the Langley Bread which took place on Wednesday 8th January 2025, at St Ives Corn Exchange. Over 100 bags comprising bread, butter, jam, teabags, sugar and biscuits were distributed.

In 1656 Robert Langley, a prominent and philanthropic St Ives man, left money in his will so that 40 Shillings could be distributed each year on a day in January to the poor widows and fatherless children of St Ives. After 1860 parcels of bread instead of money were distributed and to widowers as well as to widows. Since 1990 the parcels of bread were replaced by a grocery bag of bread, butter, jam, teabags and sugar and in 2005 biscuits were added. The bags are handed to widows and widowers attending the event but also to relatives and friends of qualifying residents who are unable to attend in person.

The event is organised by the St Ives United Charities Trust. They also provide the money for the Bibles at the annual Bible Dicing ceremony that is held in the Parish Church on the first Tuesday of Whitsuntide. Robert Langley also left money in his will for the bell ringers of the Parish Church to ring a peel each January. Legend has it that he became lost in a snowstorm on Hemingford Meadow, while walking to St Ives and the bells of the Parish Church guided him to safety.

Screen St Ives
Community Cinema

Supported by
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La Chimera
Thursday 6 February 2025 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Alice Rohrwacher, 132m, Cert: 15

Synopsis: In 1980s rural Italy, English archaeologist Arthur aids a ragtag group of local grave robbers to find ancient tombs filled with valuable artefacts. But Arthur, who mourns the loss of his love, Beniamina, uses the digs to search for the door to the afterlife, where he imagines reuniting with her. Met with exuberant critical acclaim, *Alice Rohrwacher's* fourth feature is abundant with the treasures of a bygone Tuscany. With a handsome *Josh O'Connor* and the iconic *Isabella Rossellini* leading a charming troupe of grave robbers and rascals, this mythic yet earthy romance casts a beguiling spell.

The Miracle Club
Thursday 6 March 2025 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Thaddeus O'Sullivan, 90m, Cert: 12

Synopsis: Set in 1967, THE MIRACLE CLUB follows the story of three generations of close friends, Lily (*Maggie Smith*), Eileen (*Kathy Bates*), and Dolly (*Agnes O'Casey*) of Ballygar, outside Dublin, who win a pilgrimage to the sacred French town of Lourdes, that place of miracles that draws millions of visitors each year. Just before their trip, their old friend Chrissie (*Laura Linney*) arrives in Ballygar for her mother's funeral. The women set out on the journey that they hope will change their lives, with Chrissie, a skeptical traveller, joining in place of her mother. Along the way, old wounds are reopened, forcing the women to confront their pasts even as they travel in search of a miracle.

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

Great support for 600 celebrations

The Town Team were delighted that forty people attended a meeting last Tuesday to show their support for the celebrations of the 600th anniversary of our bridge. The meeting heard about some of the plans, which should create a year to remember.

Sixteen community groups, including the Town and District Councils and a number of individuals were represented.

This is the first meeting about the celebrations, which discussed some of the events being planned and it is hoped the full programme will be agreed and publicised soon.

As *The Riverporter* has mentioned before the celebrations will include a re-enactment of the bridge being blown up during the British Civil War and a pitch battle between 450 Royalist and Roundhead forces.

But there will be much more over the year, including concerts in the Chapel representing the music of the past 600

years. A Ceilidh, a competition for children, School visits and other events all themed around the last 600 years of the bridge. It is not too late to be involved and the team would love to hear from you. Just email us at: townteam@sivescambridgeshire.co.uk

this year, for the UkeFest, is *Are you a Roundhead or Cavalier*, so we hope to see some fabulous costumes again.

Morris men return

On Easter Saturday 19th April the Town will ring to the sound of tinkling bells as several Morris Men sides will dance their way around the Town Centre.

Don't Forget

To book your tickets for The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival fundraising concerts with **Toby Lee** on **10 May** and the **Quo Experience** on **14th June** as tickets are selling fast. Tickets can be obtained from the venue or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Riverport Radio Podcast

To hear what the principal of St Ivo said about the school listen to edition 3 of the Riverport Radio Podcast. You can see the link on our website at: www.riverporter.co.uk or go to <https://riverportradiopodcast.buzzsprout.com/>

Finally there is a fabulous concert on the last Friday of each month as part of the Chapel Arts programme. For details and tickets visit: www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Other Entertainment News
On **Friday 31st January** there are two concerts. The first at lunchtime in the

Free Church (see advert left, and **The Lightwaves** at 7.30pm in the Riverport Café Bar

New Ukulele Festival
Following the popularity of The Old Riverport Ukulele Festival, held each October in St Ives Corn Exchange, the Team are holding another day on **22nd March** this year to allow some of the groups we haven't been able to accommodate before to attend. Of course the theme

Chamber Orchestra of St Ives
In collaboration with the Free Church of St Ives presents:

A little R&R

Friday January 31st at 1PM

TICKETS | FREE

At Free Church St Ives

Retiring collection for Free Church Charities

WITH SPECIAL GUESTS
Richard Roper: Violin &
Richard Ellis: Piano
Performing music by:
Mozart
Dvorak
Kreisler

DIARY OF EVENTS

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

JANUARY 2025

Friday 31st - COSI Lunchtime Concert - 'A Little R&R'
St Ives Free Church 1pm featuring music by Mozart, Dvorak and Kreisler. Donations.

Friday 31st - Chapel Arts Concert with The Lightwaves
Corn Exchange 7.30pm. There are just a few tickets left so book now @ www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents or from the venue.

FEBRUARY 2025

Saturday 1st - St Ives Eco Café - 10am, St Ives Corn Exchange - A town discussion about St Ives Green Week in June. If you are part of a community group, church, school, club, uniformed organisation or an individual with an idea for a green activity, please come with your ideas - everyone welcome!

Wednesday 5th - Engage Talk - The Muddy Hoard
A local metal detector discovery - 2pm, St Ives Library - free.

Sunday 9th - Tea Dance hosted by Lesley's Social Dancing
St Ives Corn Exchange 2pm Tickets www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents or from the venue.

Saturday 15th - Huntingdonshire Philatelic Society Stamp and Post Card Fair at the Corn Exchange Free admission 10am-3pm. Information. 01480 468037.

Friday 28th - Chapel Arts Concert with Kim & Lee of Katrina & The Waves fame - at the Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents or from the venue.

MARCH 2025

Saturday 1st - Repair Café - at the Methodist church. To book a repair slot please email stivesrepaircafe@gmail.com. No email? Leave a message on 07377 014401. Pre-booking is recommended.

Saturday 1st - Craft Fair. Saints Crafters at the Free Church. Doors 9:30am. FREE ENTRY. Also on the 1st Saturday of month.

Wednesday 5th - Engage Talk - Tales from the Riverbank 2pm, St Ives Library - Donations welcome.

Thursday 20th - Annual Town Meeting details to follow.

28th March - Chapel Arts Concert with Soloman Smith and friends at the Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents or from the venue.

The Riverporter

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



having your say . . .

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



Erik is very excited about the Riverport Radio Podcast.

OTHER NEWS

Eco Café next meeting

The next meeting of the Eco Café will be on Saturday 1 February, between 10am and 12 noon, in the **Riverport café and bar** at the St Ives Corn Exchange.



We will be discussing the St Ives Green Week, from 7th to 15th June 2025. If you are part of a community group, church, school, club, uniformed organisation or an individual with an idea for a great green activity, please come with your ideas - everyone welcome! If you can't make Saturday 1st, but would like to get involved or to come to future eco café events, please email: stivesecocafe@gmail.com

Lock volunteers wanted . . .

Great news The Environment Agency is recruiting lock volunteers again.

Are you looking to give back to your local community while enjoying the beauty of the waterways? The Environment Agency is seeking enthusiastic volunteers to help boaters navigate the locks at St Ives, Houghton and Godmanchester during weekends and bank holidays from April to September. As a volunteer, you'll work in pairs to operate the locks, providing vital support and guidance to waterway users in a peaceful, scenic setting. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, develop practical skills, and make a real difference by creating a welcoming atmosphere for boaters. Full training, a uniform, safety equipment, and travel expenses are all provided - so all you need to bring is a positive attitude and a passion for the waterways. Be part of something special this boating season! To find out more contact Rachael Brown (scheme co-ordinator) at: rachael.brown@cambasacre.org.uk, 01353 865037 or 07483 990211.



Brothers raise £2,767.36 for Papworth

Brethren of the Cambridge & District Provincial Grand Lodge, of the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes banded together to raise funds for the Royal Papworth Charity. The Province currently has around 45 active members. To find out more about the Order and get contact details for the Lodge in your area email: cambpgsec@gmail.com.



The photograph shows Zoe Noyes, from the Charity, being presented the cheque by Bro Roger Kemp ROH, Provincial Grand Primo 2024, supported by Bro David Plummer ROH, Provincial Grand Primo 2025 (right) and Bro Grant Harper ROH, Provincial Grand Treasurer (left).

Plans opposed by Anglia Water

Plans submitted by Mick George Property to build 25-30 homes off Old Houghton Road in Hartford, that caused concerns for residents about a 'dangerous access', were also opposed by Anglia Water, as they said there was 'No capacity in the sewage network'.

Despite this the planning committee at HDC approved the application. In essence this puts the onus on Anglia Water to increase capacity, although they say there are no funds allocated to it.

The Developers stated that a drainage improvement scheme would be taken on by a management company that would cost the home owners around £300 per annum. Although the development will not start until detailed plans are submitted, the question remains - will the lack of sewage capacity lead to sewage entering our river?



Huntingdon Town Council Precept up 20%

Most local councils are likely to raise their precept following the Government's decision to raise Employer National Insurance. It will be interesting to see what might happen if some of our local authorities are called or amalgamated, following Labour's Devolution White paper.

Also what will happen in the USA if Musk manages to cut \$trillions from the US Government's spending. Will everything fall apart more? Will they even notice?

New bus service between St Ives and St Neots

The 67 service via Hilton and Papworth is operated by Central Connect that also run the local town service in St Neots. There are 5 buses each way every day (every 2 hours) plus a shorter service to Papworth. The service runs 7 days a week. Journey time to St Neots is 30 minutes and the fare is just £2, so cheaper than driving and paying for parking in St Neots. The timetable can be found on the Central Connect website: <https://www.central-connect.co.uk/timetables>.

Dear Erik,

Subject E-Scooter

I was very nearly knocked over this morning (21 January) by a paper boy on an e-scooter on the pavement at the corner of Abbots Crescent and Burstellars, where he came round at great speed. He neither stopped nor apologised for dangerous riding of an illegal vehicle. Who lets their child have such a thing?

Similarly a young man rides an e-scooter down Ramsey Road every day - I see him when I am coming up Kings Hedges at about 6.20am. Not only is it illegal but very fast.

Safety First!

Carrie

Hey Erik,

Had any post recently?

No, nor have we. Not for two weeks actually until, funnily enough, a bumper batch arrived on Saturday last. This was the very day we had trekked over to the Huntingdon sorting office (ours is closed of course) to find out what was going on. We had tried ringing but decided to not wait in the 30-caller queue.

What we discovered there was scary. Over 30 staff off sick and no overtime allowed for the few left standing and willing to help tackle the backlog. What a pavlova!

But it's not a joke.

Among our mail was an already out of date hospital appointment letter. This could have been serious. So serious in fact that we've written to Ben, our new MP, to see if he can take up the issue with Royal Mail. We shall see.

We wondered how many others in the town had been affected.

In the meantime Erik - don't bite the postie - we need them!

Luka



Always pleased to see you Erik!

Ramblers step into 51st year

Hunts Ramblers have another full programme of walks planned for the next few months. We vary the location and length of the walk, to offer something for everyone, and even freezing temperatures don't put us off. We have a comprehensive website, and would suggest you check at <https://www.huntsramblers.org.uk> for any last minute changes before coming along to any walk.



Walks in February

Saturday 1st Wansford and surround - 8 miles

Sunday 9th Waresley Wood - 8 miles

Sunday 16th Silsoe - 6 miles

Sunday 23rd Three Churches Walk, Moulton - 6.5 miles



Fawlty warns of Orks

Our favourite signwriter has been at it again. Drivers travelling along St Audrey Lane towards Harrison Way bypass last week, were warned to watch out for temporary tights and Road Orks, which is something you don't see every day!



Darn it's those ORC windscreen cleaners again!



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Upcoming Auction 25th January



**Antiques & Interiors Sale to include Ceramics, Collectables,
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Come along to our auction this Saturday to watch the auction!



When? Sat 25th Jan 2025 from 10am
Where? Station Road, St Ives, Cambs, PE27 5BH



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