

# The Riverporter

**A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION**

**W**e have been delighted with the response to the first issue of *The Riverporter*. There is clearly a demand for more frequent news about our town.

So here it is, the second issue with more up-to-date news for your perusal. Please get in-touch by emailing [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk) if you want to give us your view on any of the issues we have highlighted.

Comments such as 'Enjoyed your first edition of The Riverporter by the way: provides a useful insight into town related matters not mentioned in other free publications!' is exactly the reason why we are publishing it.

We do not aim to make a profit but we do have to cover the cost of printing, so we

are grateful, therefore, to the advertisers for their support.

We hope you will support them, if you can, so that we can continue to bring you St Ives news free of charge.

Below you will see that the Town Council is trying to make the Town Meeting more

interesting to encourage residents to attend. *The Riverporter* supports these efforts as we believe it is important for all of us to be able to engage with our elected representatives. After all, Town Councillors give up their time free and they deserve to know that we are interested in what they do.

Once a year residents get the opportunity to have their say on the work of the Council and in this year of Town and District Council elections it is an opportunity to see Councillors in action. So, if you can, please get to the **Corn Exchange on Saturday afternoon, early evening 3rd March** and show the Councillors you care.

## Boxing Day Hobby Horse Hunt helps the Free Church Spire Appeal exceed £40,000

What started out as a fun idea over a pint ended on Friday 19th January with Sheila Stones, Chair of the Town Team, presenting a cheque for £220 to Neville Runham, Chair of the Free Church 'SOS' Fundraising Team.

The money was raised at the Boxing Day Hobby Horse Hunt, when over 40 people completed a demanding course around the hostelrys of St Ives Old Riverport. The organisers are grateful to the Oliver Cromwell, Nelson's Head, Floods, the Royal Oak and the Golden Lion and all the riders and spectators for their support.

The Spire Fund has now raised over £40,000, showing just how much the Church is appreciated by St Iviens.

*Pictured, left to right - Sandy Souter, Chris Morgan, Sally Runham, Sheila Stones, Neville Runham, Mavis Williams, John Williams, Gilly Jackson and Ian Jackson.*



## St Ives RFC make history

St Ives Bulls are just two games away from playing at Twickenham after reaching the Midland Senior Vase final. They currently lead their league with a perfect record, but to play at 'Twickers' in a national competition final would crown an amazing season. *The Riverporter* wishes St Ives Bulls the best of luck for the rest of the season.

## Question Time format at Town Meeting

In an attempt to increase public participation at the Annual Town Meeting St Ives residents will have the opportunity to question Councillors, the Police and even the Police & Crime Commissioner. Councillors have been concerned for some time that few town's people attend these statutory meetings and they hope the new format will attract more interest.

Prior to the meeting a Community Fair will be held, which will begin at 4 pm on Saturday 3rd March in the Corn Exchange and feature stands manned by local groups. As well as being interesting and informative it should give residents an opportunity to find out about the work of the many community groups which make St Ives such a lively town and to find out how to get involved.

The Town Meeting will start at 6 pm, also in the Corn Exchange and will have a different format. Instead of the usual presentations, the meeting will be in a question and answer format similar to the 'Question Time' or 'Any

Questions' programmes on BBC TV and radio. Town Clerk, Alison Benfield said: 'This is a great opportunity to quiz your Councillors and representatives from other community bodies including the Police and the Police & Crime Commissioner.'

Questions can be sent in advance, allowing research to be conducted in order to provide a comprehensive answer. You can email [clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk) with your questions or drop them into the Town Hall. There is also a Survey Monkey page for you to submit online at: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/atmquestions>.

Alternatively, turn up and ask your question during the meeting. At the current time those who have confirmed their attendance at the Fair are:

The St Ives Town Team  
Festival Events St Ives (FEST)  
St Ives Town Initiative  
Holt Island Nature Reserve  
The Civic Society of St Ives  
Police Crime Prevention Team  
Police & Crime Commissioner.

Other groups are also expected to attend.

## Diary of events 2018

### MARCH

**Saturday 3** - Town Meeting - Corn Exchange  
**Saturday 10** - Italia in Piazza - Sheep Market  
**Saturday 10** - Miles Jeffrey Day Centenary Celebration - The Corn Exchange 7.30pm  
**Saturday 24** - World Village Market - Sheepmarket

**From March to October** - Chapel Arts Season - The Bridge Chapel

### APRIL

**Fri 13 to Sun 15** - Centre Theatre Players (CTP) Treasure Island & Pirates of The Caribbean - Burgess Hall

### MAY

**Thursday 3** - Town and District Council elections  
**Monday 7** - Fun Dog Show - Warners Park  
**Wednesday 16** - Mayor Making - Corn Exchange  
**Sunday 20** - Morris Dancing - The Old Riverport

### JUNE

**Sunday 10** - Civic Sunday - The Parish Church  
**Sunday 17** - Picnic in The Park - Warners Park  
**Saturday 30** - Freedom Parade - Market Hill

### JULY

**Sunday 1** - Festival of Motorcycles - Market Hill  
**All Sundays in July** - Music on The Waits  
**Sat 14/Sun 15** - St Ives Carnival & Musical Festival - Hill Rise Park  
**Sat 28/Sun 29** - Craft Beer Festival - Sheepmarket

### AUGUST

**All Sundays in August** - Music on The Waits

### SEPTEMBER

**Saturday 8** - Illuminated Boat Parade - on the river at dusk  
**Fr 14/Sat 15** - Centre Theatre Players Charity Cabaret - Burgess Hall  
**Thur 20 to Sun 23** - The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival - various venues  
**Sat 29/Sun 30** - Food & Drink Fest. Sheepmarket

### OCTOBER

**Mon 8 to Wed 10** - Michaelmas Fair - Town Centre

### NOVEMBER

**Sunday 11** - Remembrance Sunday - Market Hill  
**Monday 12** - Snowman Festival Trail - throughout The Old Riverport  
**Sunday 25** - Snowman Festival Snow Day - The Corn Exchange  
**Sunday 25** - Christmas Lights Switch-on & Market - Market Hill

### DECEMBER

**Saturday 1st** - Santa and Snowman arrival - The Quay

**Santa's Grotto is in The Corn Exchange for three weekends before Christmas**

**Sat 1/Sun 2** - ARTSFEST - Corn Exchange

**Friday 7** - Mayor's Charity Christmas Concert - The Free Church

**Wednesday 26** - Boxing Day Hobby Horse Hunt - The Old Riverport

### AND IN 2019 . . .

**Wed 9 to Sun 13** - CTP Panto - Burgess Hall

**Diary subject to change.**

You can find out What's On in St Ives at: [www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk](http://www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk)

To contact The Riverporter email: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)

# Fun in St Ives at Christmas

Residents and visitors really enjoyed St Ives over Christmas, thanks to all the groups who put on so many great events.

There was something happening every weekend from November through to Boxing Day, starting with the arrival of the Giant Snowman on the 25th November, named Chill Bill by 4-year-old Sam Chapman. Chill, as he became known, happily looked out from his home on Holt Island and glowed in the dark each evening, even when the flood levels brought water up to his knees.

The following day in the Corn Exchange the Snowman Festival Craft Day and Christmas Craft Fair was held before thousands of people packed Market Hill to see the Christmas Lights Switch-on with live entertainment and the popular firework display.

Crafts again proved very popular as children and parents made a range of snowmen, some of which later lined the railings along The Waits. The Snowman Festival is the brainchild of Corrine Harwood of La Muse and The Old Riverport Retail Group. Although well established a great effort was put in this year to ensure it not only makes St Ives a fun place to visit but also encourages more people to shop here. Lots of snowmen, large and small, appeared throughout the town, on lampposts, railings and inside and outside shops, many made by pupils from Thorndown School. It did indeed help create a Christmassy atmosphere and attracted lots of shoppers as whole families took part in the Snowman Trail. The prizes, including a £200 John Lewis gift voucher, a voucher for toys at Toys at No.9 in The Broadway and ticket for a family trip on the river, courtesy of St Ives Electric Riverboat Company, proved very popular.

Around 300 children and their parents visited the 25 shops in the Trail and 178 completed trail maps were submitted. Three lucky winners were drawn from the hat in The Corn Exchange on Friday 22 Dec. The first prize went to

cousins, Samuel Gildersleeve age 6 from Haddenham and Harry Wells age 7 from St Ives, the second prize to Madeleine Pearson from St Ives and the third prize went to Christopher Harper from Farcet near Peterborough. The winner of The Best Snowmen were: under 3 feet - Star Dancewear, over 3 feet - ItSo Travel with the cup for the Best Snowman Themed Window Display going to Petzone with a special mention to Barclays Bank and Optimum Beauty for their excellent displays.

## 'Grotto is so popular

Festival Events St Ives (FEST) provided a free Santa's Grotto in the Corn Exchange over three weekends. It started with Santa's arrival by boat with Frosty the Snowman and his entourage of reindeers and elves in canoes, courtesy of the 2nd St Ives Sea Scouts. (See pic below left)

FEST also put on the popular two-day ARTS FEST giving local artists a platform to exhibit and sell art.

There is no doubt that St Ives is a popular Christmas destination with so much for families to enjoy. HCRFM local radio featured the 'goings-on' in St Ives and BBC Radio Cambridgeshire sent reporter Glenn Jones-Derby in a full blow-up Snowman costume to interview some of the snowmen. Sadly for him none would speak a word!



The Old Riverport Retail Group would like to thank all the businesses who support the Snowman Festival. The Group are already planning next year and would like to hear from any traders who want to take part. Please contact Corrine Harwood of La Muse, who will be delighted to hear from anyone wanting to help with the 2018 Festival, which is designed to help all businesses by encouraging people to shop in St Ives.



Santa arrives in town



The 'Hardiman' Boys - snowman trail winners

## Have you seen the new mural in Free Church Passage?



The painting, which depicts local river scenes, has created a great deal of interest from pedestrians and is especially popular with children.

A collaborative effort by artist Denny Gaudin, resident Ron Westrip, St Ives Town Team and the owner of the wall, Dr George Smerdon, has created a new mural in Free Church Passage.

This mural replaces the original illustrations of swans by artist 'Ethan' that had been on the wall for the past 30 years. It had however deteriorated to such an extent it either

needed restoring or replacing.

Further inspection revealed the wall also needed to be re-rendered and so it was decided to make a new image, although the position of the swans was retained.

In December, St Ives Mayor, Cllr Philip Pope, 'unveiled' the painting and presented Denny with an Artist Brush inscribed to recognise her work. Warm mince pies and refreshing drinks were on-hand to help the celebrations.



having your say ...



## Dear Erik PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Get it off your chest, email *Erik* at: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)

Dear Erik,  
Not only is it great news to have a dog as a reporter but your presence has clearly had a beneficial effect already on the social life of us canines. Lizzie Roberts of Canine Central Dog Grooming Salon was given permission at last week's Town Council Amenities Committee meeting to organise the St Ives Fun Dog Show on Bank holiday Monday 7th May in Warners Park. Can't wait to see the details of Fun Dogs of St Ives. Love Ruby

### Foul Play is spoiling the streets

Dear Erik,  
It's good to see that *The Riverporter* includes a range of reporters from different ethnicities. I am sure our furry colleagues will appreciate you representing them and it is for that reason I am writing to you. I have been concerned for some time about an increasing number of incidences, resulting in 'fouled' pavements. I try to keep fit by going for a run along The Thicket several mornings a week and recently my guardian and I have had to 'pick' our way carefully up Westwood Road, which is no mean feat at 7.30am before sun up. I was wondering if you could put a call out to our friends, and their owners, to make a concerted effort to pick up any deposits before they have cooled down as it is giving us canines a bad name.

Kind regards and keep up the good work, sniffing out the hidden news. **Scruff**

### A Hiss for Erik ... Hot boy-dog Here's my early morning blog

Now it would make cats very happy  
If dogs were forced to wear a nappy.  
Birds as well poop everywhere  
Across The Quay and Market Square.  
I'm always slipping in their poop  
As I stroll down to sail my sloop.  
Humans rarely make a mess  
Go poop around your own address.

**Bradley the Quayside Cat**

### Still Waiting ...

Some say The Waits is so named as boats waited here to be unloaded. So it's not surprising that The Environment Agency is taking its time to repair the damage done by a police car some months ago.

We were wondering how long we will have to 'wait' to see The Waits restored to its former glory. Pull your finger out EA.

### Town Council News

Last week the Town Council discussed the new Local Plan which sets out where development can take place. Huntingdonshire District Council, responsible for the plan, have sought comments from local councils and residents. Some Town councillors questioned the level of consultation and also raised concerns about the number of houses planned to cover the period up to 2036 which may not be enough to allow young St Ivisians to find a home in the area now that Wyton airfield will not be developed.

You have until the deadline of 5th February to make comments on the plan at:

[http://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/portals/1/pp/hlp2036/lp2036\\_pro\\_sub](http://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/portals/1/pp/hlp2036/lp2036_pro_sub).

You don't have to read it all as you can go to the section on St Ives which makes interesting reading.

Afterwards, at the Amenities Committee, Colin Saunderson made a plea for the council to ensure that the town benches, which are around the town centre, are given a lick of paint, something St Ives in Bloom and Colin in particular have done in previous years. He went on to explain that the Anglia in Bloom Gold Award that St Ives in Bloom has won for the past two years will be hard to retain unless street furniture is maintained and weeds are cleared.

## CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

The *Riverporter* congratulates St Ives Town Initiative (SITI) on reaching its 20th birthday. It was formed when Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) appointed a Town Centre Manager to encourage business leaders to get together and look at ways of improving the economic vitality of the four district towns, Ramsey, St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives.

Each town used their *initiative* and approached their task differently. SITI developed events such as the classical firework concerts on the Meadow and the Dickensian Christmas Market. Both events drew people to the town but HDC gradually withdrew their funding and SITI became the independent limited company it is today.

# The Riverporter

## Website news

If you haven't seen it already *St Ives 100 Years Ago* is a truly fascinating website. If you like knowing about what life was like in the past and especially the social history of our beautiful town and its people, then this website is for you.

## St Ives 100 Years Ago



### A social history of St Ives, Cambridgeshire

You will see a number of topics including finding ancestors, old newspaper cuttings, listed buildings, St Ives history and local people of note. There is a fascinating article on Boot Scrapers which appeared in the 1700s. Of course St Ives needed them with cattle markets being held in the streets and the large amount of horse manure and mud that people had to walk through. There is a surprising number of boot scrapers left in the town which the website shows on a map.

The wonderful illustration used on the homepage showing the bridge and the original Dolphin Hotel comes from an 1895 painting *St Ives Bridge, St Ives, Huntingdonshire* by local artist William Fraser Garden which the site says is currently in store at The Met, New York.

*Since mentioning the St Ives Matters website/facebook page in the last issue it seems to have been shut down so we still don't know who posted it.*



*Some of the revellers and a fox??? at the Boxing Day Hobby Horse Hunt.*



*No hunt is complete without superheroes and a Viking!*

## And here's to you - Merry Christmas!

We understand that the Town Hall was contacted by several people concerned that a Hunt was being held in St Ives on Boxing Day. One email, sent late on Christmas Eve, was very vociferous and even demanded that the Councillors responsible should resign.

Of course St Ives Town Council was not responsible for the event but we understand the organisers have apologised if anyone was upset by it and have decided to include a prize at next year's event for the best-dressed sabateur, just in case they felt let down by the lack of demonstrations at this year's Hobby Horse Hunt.

# INSTRUCT EARLY AND SAVE TIME

Mike Ellis of Ellis Winters explains how you can save time on house buying.



**W**e know a thing or two about house buying and selling and it never ceases to amaze and frustrate us that it takes so long for a transaction to go through once solicitors are instructed.

In essence three things are required to be able to exchange contracts - an approved contract, finance and the local authority searches. These should, in theory, take 4-6 weeks to put into place, so why is the average transaction taking 12-14 weeks to go through? When it takes this long problems can arise with completion dates of buyers further down a purchase chain being ready, particularly if the person at the end of the chain has just started.

Inevitably tempers are frayed, people get upset and the whole experience becomes fraught with worry.

We have come up with a simple remedy, which, if everyone adopts, should cut this transaction time considerably and hopefully fewer sales would fall through. If sellers instruct a solicitor as soon as they go on the market to get all the pre-contract work ready, including instruction letters and formal ID, this should save 2-3 weeks. Their solicitor could then send a draft contract to the buyers' solicitor as soon as the sales details are confirmed by their estate agent. If the buyer also instructs a solicitor before they find their perfect home, sorting out ID's, formal instructions and depositing £200 for local authority searches, again this would save more time. What happens currently is that sellers and buyers wait until they've sold or bought a house before contacting a solicitor and then it takes 2-3 weeks to formerly instruct and get ID's together before a draft contract is sent out.

Everyone worries about spending needlessly and thinks that once they instruct a solicitor it will cost them money but this is not usually the case. The solicitor has a fixed fee which is agreed at the beginning - if you're a buyer they will not spend your £200 on the local searches until you've found a house and are ready to proceed and if for any reason the searches are not applied for, this money will be returned. For sellers, again the fees are agreed in advance and usually the solicitor will work on a "no sale-no fee" basis.

We know it sounds simple and it is! We can't understand why this isn't being suggested already, but, it has to start somewhere and why not .....right now. We recommend a number of different solicitors who are prepared to work the way we think it should be done so if you are thinking of selling or buying a house in the near future and would like a quote from one of these solicitors, please call us on 01480 388888 and we will be happy to put you in touch.

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## Tree Warden Coordinator Axed!

From our environmental correspondent . . . **Heidi N. D'Tries**

### Hands-up all those who love trees? Me Too!

Well, in the Town Council magazine *The Bridge* last May you will have seen a fascinating article about our District Council's Tree Warden Scheme. It contained a clarion call for volunteers to become Tree Wardens in their local patch and I understand at one time we had about 50. These wonderful people acted as our eyes and ears, keeping an eye on what few trees our county has left standing, and reporting their concerns to Bridget Halford, Landscape Officer and Tree Warden Co-ordinator within the Planning Department. With years of experience Bridget was perfectly qualified for this role and expertly dispensed advice when tree issues were spotted and reported by the wardens, or came up in planning issues.

Now, however, more cost-cutting has resulted in Bridget's Landscape Officer duties being absorbed, her Tree Warden Coordinator role discontinued and her departure from HDC. At a stroke, the District authority in its wisdom has turned its back on a national scheme organised by the Tree Council with over 118 local authorities participating and over 8,000 volunteer tree wardens. Will these invaluable 'friends of trees' in our parishes still get the

support, encouragement and advice they need over worries about our local trees - what do you think? The knowledge required to supply this has now gone. It is sad that the place of trees and the work of the wardens over the District is not considered of sufficient value to fund the post of Tree Warden Co-ordinator when trees are such a vital part of our natural environment and important for our health and well-being.

### Want to find out about becoming a Tree Warden anyway?

I do. A lovely glass of prosecco under a willow that's me. Visit [www.treecouncil.org.uk](http://www.treecouncil.org.uk).

In the meantime, do continue to call Tasmin Miles, Tree Officer at HDC, with your tree questions on 01480 388679

### Floating weed scare update . . .

Darlinks - it seems like you too are worried about the 'pesky Pennywort' - as George puts it! And dear Peggy is offering waders, nets and whiskey nips - we love you Peggy! The thing is the river is up and down like a yo-yo at the moment and the current too strong to venture out. As soon as we are able to do a recce and see how much weed is left after the floods we can finalise the plan. I will keep you all posted.

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