

The Riverporter

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Fortnight of Fun and Games

Some issues regularly engage public concern. Councillors often flinch when matters of burials or neighbourhood disputes are raised and planning applications can be quite volatile, especially when one's lifestyle is affected. This seems to be the case with two current planning applications.

A bit like waiting for a bus (see Morrison's Bus Delay on page 3) - you wait ages and two come along at once. Last Monday HDC's Development Management Committee (DMC) - a fancy name for the planning committee, discussed an application for Aldi's new store and plans for the Cromwell Doctors Surgery.

Both were deferred (see below) partly because of poor guidance from the Planning Dept. Previous comments by developers and architects to *The Riverporter* have stated

that HDC have too few experienced officers following staff reductions and this seems to be true when considering these two planning applications. When *The Riverporter* launched last January we wondered if there would be sufficient news to interest readers every fortnight? We needn't have worried because since our last edition we've had lots to write about including the famous Fair, traffic gridlock, a poet laureate competition, and planning matters. What fun!



The Mayor reads out the declaration at the start of the Michaelmas Fair, a tradition going back hundreds of years. (see article page 2).

STORE WARS

It seemed a fairly straightforward application, bearing in mind the initial permissions to build were granted last August. But rivals Morrison's sent in their experts to sink Aldi's plans.

To be fair Aldi's presentation relied heavily on the public's current love of the store rather than dealing with the important planning issues the development would raise.

Aldi's representative, Roland Stanley, stated that 85% of residents wanted the store. A figure disputed by none other than Police & Crime Commissioner, Jason Ablewhite, in his role as a District Councillor. It turned out that the 85% represented those who responded, actually less than 3% of the town's population. With figures like these and Morrison's traffic 'Experts' stating that the store would add up to 199 vehicles to the already gridlocked roads, the application was on sticky ground. Literally, according to Mr Stanley, who stated that the land had remained vacant, as it was

contaminated, and only Aldi were prepared to pay the clean-up costs. Despite Aldi agreeing a last minute 106 funding of around £170,000 to allow a Pelican crossing to be built, it added more reasons for concern.

It was pointed out that although a crossing would make it easier for pedestrians to reach the store it would exacerbate the queue of cars. *The Riverporter* wonders how many people will walk or cycle to this store which will only have 8 cycle racks? County Council Transport Assessment Manager, David Allatt, accepted that there were already issues in this area and despite saying that their computer modelling showed little impact from an Aldi store it failed to convince councillors.

Earlier Cllr Dickinson had raised concerns over traffic impact and Cllr Ablewhite, critical of the transport assessment and HDC's planning department, pointed out that councillors made the decisions and if they needed more information to determine an application then it

should be supplied. He proposed the application be deferred for up-to-date traffic data, which was agreed with an additional proposal by Cllr Jon Neish from Holywell-cum-Needingworth who wanted current air pollution data.

Whilst the debate raised many issues *The Riverporter* is concerned about planning in St Ives. Planning officers proposed approval, despite the obvious problems that exist here and there seemed little concern for the overall effect on the town centre.

These developments, around our ring road, have not only made traffic matters worse they encourage shoppers away from the town centre which will radically change St Ives. The final word must go to Mr Stanley representing Aldi, who claimed Morrison's comments were anti-competitive as Morrison's do not want an Aldi next door.

So look out for the next round of **STORE WARS** that may result in great bargains for shoppers, assuming they can get there!

Surgery plans batted off

Plans to put a second floor above Cromwell Surgery failed to be approved on Monday due to the lack of an up-to-date ecology report, following a late submission about bats in the area.

As we reported in March, this application affects a very sensitive area, surrounded by listed buildings at the main entrance to the town centre. Following concerns raised about the lack of consultation, the poor design, the scale of the extension and the use of zinc cladding, more appropriate to a factory than a grade II listed building, planners said they had spent a lot of time with the architects to adjust the scheme.

It was extremely disappointing then that the plans still did not address many of these points. The District's own Conservation Officer who originally objected simply said that those objections remain - even after the alterations.

Neighbours Steven Mead and Chris Betts, whose mother lives directly behind the property put forward a well reasoned and concise argument, not about the extension in principal but about the poor design which would severely affect the listed buildings next door.

Sadly the Town Council, which approved the plans subject to minor details, simply said 'This will tidy up the look of the area'.

Whilst there is some truth in this statement, for the existing 60s building is awful, it showed that the Town Council hadn't consulted with residents and hadn't listened to the Civic Society who maintained that the design was still inappropriate.

(Everyone agrees almost anything will improve the area but that is not a reason to say yes to a poor design Ed.)

In response to a question from Cllr Fuller who asked what brief the architects had been given, Doctors Mendoza and Gayton, from the Surgery said that PIP Architects were given a budget to work to that the surgery could afford.

They also said that they needed approval urgently to secure the funding from NHS, thought to be up to 2/3 of the cost. This raises a quite important point which *The Riverporter* has posed to the Surgery but, as yet, we have received no reply. (See comment on page 3).

This application has been around for 8 months and whilst quite a lot of work may have been done it is clear that the planning department has failed to get to grips with it.

The applicants are not totally happy with the process, residents are unhappy with the plans, as are Historic England, the Civic Society, the Conservation Officer and even some councillors.

In the end the Development Management Committee deferred the decision to allow a proper ecology report to be done to see if the bats will be affected.

When contacted HDC said that there would be an opportunity to look at the design points raised when the application returns for consideration.



Left: the soft computer generated image, produced by PIP Architects, failed to illustrate the true nature of zinc cladding. Plans submitted excluded any view from the garden of 1 Cromwell Terrace, which will be severely affected by the new extension, as the simulated image (right) shows. Residents produced this image for councillors to assess the true impact on neighbours.

To contact The Riverporter email: editor@theriverporter.uk

All the Fun of the Fair

The Michaelmas Fair in the Town Centre is a familiar sight to everyone and there has been a fair here for centuries it seems. It is now run by the Scarrott family and John Scarrott is a familiar figure to many of us.

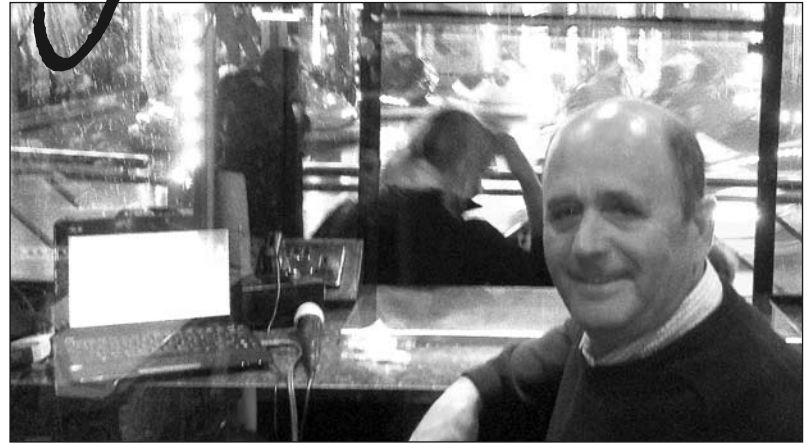
Their link to fairs started back in the late 1800s by John's great-grandfather, Jack Scarrott who ran a boxing booth in the South Wales Valley, which developed on to steam-driven rides. It has been passed down to my grandad, my father and myself.

The heyday of boxing was in 1920 and it was really how boxing started off. The boxing booth was a tented stage with a boxing ring inside it. The fighters would do displays there and the crowd would be invited in to see the fighters. In those early days, members of the crowd would even be allowed to challenge the fighters themselves.

When the sport of boxing became more popular, boxing booths at funfairs died away and were replaced with steam-driven rides. The first ride brought in to the Scarrott fair was known to have been a carousel of galloping horses. As technology progressed electric rides came in. If the rides that they used then were still around, in good condition, they would be worth a lot of money.

John's father (also called John) later took on the dodgems and the running of fairs which now travel around Northamptonshire, Milton Keynes and Cambridgeshire, coming every October to St Ives. The running of the fair has always been a family concern and now John's own children play an active role in the Scarrott business; an entertainment venue filled with modern rides ... as well as many of the traditional ones.

In the days of his grandfather and great-grandfather, before television funfairs would have been even more popular than they are today, according to John. But he believes the magnetism of a funfair will never really vanish - 'there is always a new generation of kids coming to the funfair and when you see the delight in their faces, you realise fairs will always be new to someone. I have seen the same families, three generations of people, using our fair. It is nice when you hear someone say - my dad used to take me to this when I was a kid and now I take my little lad.'



Above: John Scarrott at the Dodgems. Below: Councillors throw coins for the children to collect. Below left: Children enjoying the free rides with councillors?



SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS

Traffic grinds to a halt

I'm not a Facebook user but occasionally it can be useful. The other day I wanted to find out the reason for all the traffic in St Ives being gridlocked for most of the morning. I couldn't find the reason on local radio or traffic websites, so decided to look at our local social media pages.

It's fascinating, not just because it's so instant - someone usually posts a comment quickly - but because there is a mixture of humour, ranting, anger and sad to say completely biased and in some cases racist remarks.

I decided to highlight some of these comments (right). I have taken a snapshot of them but removed who said them and I think you will agree it highlights two things. Firstly it explains what was happening on the street and secondly the power that social media offers everyone to make a comment.

I had an appointment at Addenbrookes on Thursday, I stupidly decided it would make a stressful appointment less stressful if I took the bus.
My husband went with me, one bus would get me to Addenbrookes 20 minutes before my appointment but I decided that I would get the one before. We waited at the 7 wives stop and the A bus was listed as 11.58 which was slightly late, at 11.58 it changed to due. 5 minutes later I noticed that it had disappeared from the board. It never reappeared. A B appeared and we debated whether to get on or not and decided we would because we could get off and change if we could see the A on the board at another stop. At the park and ride we saw a D listed as arriving in 5 minutes. The B driver confirmed that D goes to Addenbrookes so we got off. After 10 minutes waiting For D vanished from the board. We got on the next B and got a Taxi from Drummer Street. ☹️
Got to my appointment with 5 minutes to spare (then waited 40 minutes!).
On the way back we waited 40 minutes for an A but almost partly full (we didn't get seats together) which quickly filled on the Addenbrookes site as it was just after 5pm. By the time we got to the station people were already standing. At the Science Park (where there was a long queue) it was full except for letting 2 off and 2 on and just passing stops unless someone was getting off.
When we asked the B bus driver earlier in the day why the A buses didn't arrive he said that there are not enough drivers.
While waiting for my appointment I was reading about the plans for the new Guided Bus route to Camborne.
Someone hasn't thought that one through, if there are not enough drivers for the current routes adding more is not going to improve anything if there are no drivers. Next time I have an appointment I will drive, it's cheaper than the £24 it cost on Thursday.

I've been sat on a bus for over an hour and that's been getting from copperbeach close in to town.

Burst water main by busway crossing and probably traffic avoiding the A14 Hemingford accidents coming through town. Abandoned car to walk children to school and turned around to go home after taking 40 minutes to go from st Audrey's lane to Westfield school!

I am still stuck in it coming from Huntingdon it's taken me an hour to get from the Texaco Hartford garage to Houghton turn off and then a further 15 minutes to get from Houghton turn off to the start of the Houghton Hill I work on the other side of St Ives something tells me I will not be getting to work before 10 a.m.

Must be because of Morrisons and McDonald's lol 😊👍👍👍

The above comment is, I think, intended to be humorous but I'm not sure about the one below!

Its due to out of control immigration. Walk down the queue and ask how many of those drivers were actually born in St Ives....

This comment was funnier ...

Stagecoach these days

There were many comments about Stagecoach, mostly unfavourable, although it should be said that satisfied customers rarely make comments. I thought this post amusing but not the post from a lady who decided to use public transport to go to Addenbrookes.

It highlights the problems of public transport that offer a proper alternative to the car.



having your say ...

The Riverporter



Dear Erik PAWS FOR THOUGHT

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

Dear Erik,

I feel I must write to express my disappointment that a tradition which allowed the fair families to park their caravans on the Waits has suddenly stopped. For years the fair people have enjoyed staying on the Waits and been welcomed by local people.

I spoke today to a couple of Fair people who express their unhappiness at being forced to relocate to a field on the edge of town, without the usual facilities and special location that they have enjoyed for years.

He spoke of the children enjoying feeding the ducks but now feeling pushed out and unwelcome. I want the fair people to feel welcome and to enjoy their brief stays in St Ives and don't want to lose their and our traditions. Why and who sought to interfere with this tradition?

Anne Strong long time St Ivian.

Editor - we have asked the council and are awaiting a response. See the next issue.

Dear Erik,

To whoever left a 'My First Scooter' out on Bridge Street near the rubbish bin recently with a note 'Please take me, free'

I would like them to know it has gone to a really good home, with appreciative toddlers.

Thank you for your generosity. Name withheld.

Comment about Surgery plans

The NHS are contributing a significant sum of public money to aid the expansion of Cromwell Surgery, a building in private ownership. It raises some issues. Namely is this a loan or a grant and who will benefit from the improvements and the increased value of the property?

Interesting development

The fact that our UK high streets are under threat and going through massive change is well documented and change is inevitable.

St Ives is not immune from this and the recent loss of New Look (now closed) makes the point. (as I write shopfitters are working as this will open as a Mountain Warehouse).

Interestingly HDC planning dept have received a planning application to combine the floor area of two existing shops on Sheepmarket giving a large sales area of over 3,700 sq ft.

The two shops are No's 7 and 8, The British Heart Foundation and Nationwide Building Society. The application contains plans to merge the two sales floors and construct a two-story extension to the rear and also requests a change of business use from A2 to A1. This classification is for general retail and specifically excludes hot food sales, banking and office services so it could mean that the Nationwide Building Society is going, and we're not getting another restaurant.

What's going on there is anyone's guess, but to add to the intrigue the only company name that can be found on the application is a dormant company that has registered accounts for many years with a capital of just £1 . . . which some may say indicates a secret being kept. . . Fascinating! (The expiration of the planning application is 31st October)

The Riverporter will be keeping watch.

TOWN COUNCIL NEWS

MORRISONS BUS DELAYED

With £240,000 in the bank from Morrisons for a bus service, it could be months before a service is available. Paul Nelson from the County Council told the Town Council and representatives from Needingworth, Hemingford and Fenstanton that a proper service may be delayed until after March 2019. That's because the New Mayor of Cambridgeshire will take over the responsibility for bus services in March. Current proposals seem inadequate and with services being cut throughout the area it needs a coordinated approach to make the most of this money. The Riverporter will be following developments.

As reported in the last issue the council's Promotion and Publicity Committee will be no more. The full council agreed to this without any debate which is surprising considering the councils record on promoting the town and its events. The Bridge will continue to be delivered to every house for the time being however discussions about an on-line version only are being had.

The council agreed to buy one electric speed sign to go on Marley Road to deter speeding and to spend up to £2,000 on a new website for the council. Councillors also agreed to support a competition to find a Poet Laureate for the Town - so look out budding poets!

The County Council report mentioned that £20 million needs to be cut from their budget however the District had only £1.6 million to save. Cllr Fuller said that it was likely the government would be helping shire counties with additional funding and that HDC were well placed to find the cuts without any services being stopped. *The Riverporter* has been told by another District Councillor that it could mean more staff reductions, which may affect services.

He also mentioned that a meeting had been arranged between the Mayor, himself and Jo Lancaster (MD of HDC) to discuss collaborative working between HDC and the Town Council.

A new police sergeant for St Ives has been appointed to replace Sgt Street, who retired in the summer, but they will not take up the post until November.

Following a question to the Council from the Snowman Festival organisers, the Town Clerk said that there will be new Christmas lights along The Waits, but not on The Quay.

THE OLD RIVERPORT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL T-SHIRTS GO FAR



Above: Sue Chan, from Sydney wearing her 2017 T-shirt on a trip to Alice Springs, hence the flies!

Left: John Boland, cousin of Festival organiser Chris Lewis, wearing this years T-shirt in Auckland.

Zak and his Sack

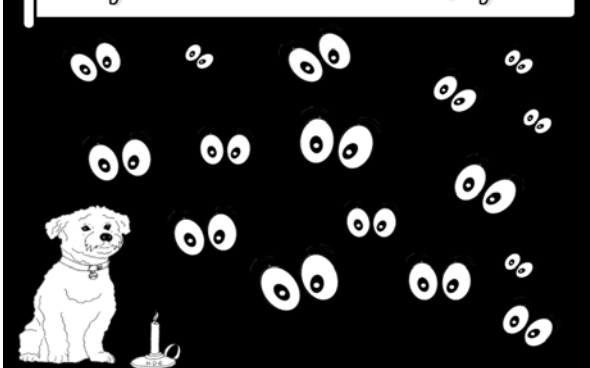


It was 9am Sunday morning 7 October and this young man, Zak, was carrying a sack of gravel to John o' Groats from Land's End to raise £2m for charity. Sadly he didn't send us details of his efforts, but hopefully he's still on track.

Tales from the Darkside!

Last year the St Ives Quayside was omitted completely from the Christmas Lights Committee's plans and we are told that this year there are no changes. This is surely a major omission! Our lovely Quay and the view of the bridge are major attractions to town visitors and the home of many of the town's events. While it would be wonderful to light the bridge itself we can understand that this may be a difficult job but The Quay has enjoyed many years of Christmas lights, so which Bah Humbug killjoy decided that this should be no more?

Merry Christmas from the St Ives Quayside



REASONS TO BE SHUT PART 14



I understand the owner isn't Merry anymore

Why's that then?

He's moved to Nottingham

Is he the Sheriff's man?

Screen St Ives

Doors open at 7.30pm and films start at 8pm. Refreshments are available before the screening. All tickets cost only £5, and are available online or in person at the Corn Exchange, St Ives.

Thursday 1st Nov 2018 (12)
A TASTE OF HONEY

Screen 2 Director: Tony Richardson UK 1961 1h 41m



Rita Tushingham's first starring film role as Jo in the film of Shelagh Delaney's groundbreaking play. Salford was a tough place for a young woman

but Jo builds her new life despite her hopeless mother (apeerless Dora Bryan). This gorgeous restored version, with its crisp cinematography, is a treat for the eyes and heart.



Creative sessions for those living with dementia and their carers

Lead by Graham Adley and Sandra Souter

2pm on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoon of each month.

For information call Sandra on 07913 346845

Flea on the Quay



The St Ives Old Riverport

The Town Team would like to thank those people who took stalls at the two markets we held this autumn.

As the weather is now unpredictable we have decided to not hold anymore 'Fleas' this year.

However the Team have been pleased with the response and will be holding fortnightly Fleas on the Quay from Sunday 31st March 2019, which happens to be Mothers day!

Prime Brass to Perform in Parish Church



Prime Brass, a 10 piece brass ensemble with added percussion, will be performing at **All Saints Church, Church Street, St Ives on 27th October at 7pm.**

Tickets for adults £8 (children free) can be bought on the door and include refreshments.

ADVERTORIAL

There's no time to waste in today's rental market

Mike Ellis of Ellis Winters suggests landlords need to take advantage of new developments



According to industry data, an additional 1.8 million households will come to rely on the UK's private rental sector by 2025.

As a consequence of the country's growing population and rising property prices, the rental market is really starting to gather pace.

In an effort to meet the demands of increasingly time poor tenants, many agents are now exploring the best Proptech solutions to integrate into their listing and property management procedures.

Whereas previously tenants would have to manage the entire process in person and over the phone - filling in and posting various forms and photocopying proof of income and personal identification - this can now all be managed from anywhere in the

world from a laptop, smartphone or tablet.

Forward thinking agents are reacting to this trend by ensuring tenants are not forced to use unregulated sites out of sheer speed and convenience. In addition, for landlords seeking to secure verified and reliable tenants willing to care for their property and able to make timely rental payments, agents with tailored Proptech solutions are a much more attractive proposition.

Over the next few years, UK landlords and estate agents will face considerable pressure to make securing a rental property more convenient, reducing the bureaucratic burden and making it easier for all parties to communicate. In today's fast-

moving society with tech-savvy consumers expecting products and services to be delivered quickly and efficiently, the time is ripe for landlords and intermediaries to embrace the future of property rentals and help drive the lettings industry forward.

At Ellis Winters we already meet this demand with our innovative software solution for both Landlords and Tenants - for more information, please call our team on 01480 388888



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Ellis Winters (St Ives) Ltd 15-17 White Hart Court, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 5EA Tel: 01480 388 888 | Email: info@elliswinters.co.uk | www.elliswinters.co.uk

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