

# The Riverporter

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Santas Arrived

Saturday 2nd December was a damp miserable day but that all changed when cheering crowds turned out on our Quay-side to greet Santa Clause back into St. Ives.

Santa and his happy team of Frosty the snowman and his many floating Elves glided up to the quay and were greeted by town Mayor Tim Drye and our St Ives own Town crier, They then paraded through town to a great turn out of waving children before arriving at the Corn Exchange where Santa quickly took up residence in his magnificent grotto especially prepared for him by his amazing Elf volunteers. Throughout the past two weekends Santa has made the day for countless Corn Exchange visitors. If you haven't made your visit yet he will be there for the last time this Saturday and Sunday before he has to hurry off to load his sleigh ready for Christmas eve.... **Ho Ho Ho.**

Sami and Anisa meet Santa



## St Ives Animal rights protest group complain of tourist attraction cruelty

Animal rights activists held a peaceful protest outside Tui travel agents in St Ives today (Saturday 8th December) for Peta's Day of Action as part of their campaign to get Tui to stop selling tickets to Seaworld.

Similar protests were taking place today outside Tui stores up and down the country.

Seaworld keep orcas in captivity. The orcas are torn away from their families and forced to live in incompatible groups. They suffer from illnesses, stress and depression from having no choice but to swim in endless circles in cramped concrete tanks. In nature, orcas can live for more than 100 years. 41 orcas have died on SeaWorld's watch at an average age of only 13. Hundreds of leaflets were handed out and lots of positive conversations were had with the people of St Ives.



## What's going wrong at St Ivo?

In recent weeks the Riverporter desk has been made aware of an increasing number of social media comments referring to alleged serious bullying within the school leading to a number of parents removing or threatening to remove their children. Reports appear to suggest that this has been an issue for sometime and that the school's approach to the problem has been to either ignore the issue or as one letter suggests, to put blame on the victim for bringing attention on themselves. Previous government education ministers have spoken out strongly for the need to deal with this and schools cannot simply put their head in the sand.

An extract from the **Gov.UK web site states...** *By law, all state (not private) schools must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy is decided by the school. All teachers, pupils and parents must be told what it is. Bullying by harassment or intimidation is illegal and the GOV.UK site says should be reported to police.* If any reader would like to comment, we'd like to hear from you.

# 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 20th December**



## Paddington 2 Screen 1

Director: Paul King UK | France | USA 2017 1h 43m

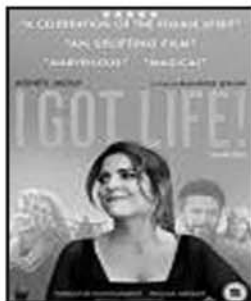
Celebrate Christmas at the movies with the nation's favourite bear. Aunt Lucy's 100th birthday is just around the corner and Paddington wants to celebrate with her in his unique way. Multi-award winning and simply loads of fun, Paddington 2 is a real charmer for people of all ages.



**Thursday 3rd January**  
**I Got Life Screen 2**

Director: Blandine Lenoir France 2017 1h 29m

A genuinely life-affirming, funny and uplifting film about Aurore, a menopausal woman who bumbles through life, work, new partner, impending grandparenthood and another daughter flying the nest. It's a welcome and refreshing approach to storytelling, made even more engaging by the charismatic star Agnès Jaoui.



## HANG YOUR MEMORY STARS ON OUR TREES!

The St Ives Dementia Friendly Community and Shades of White Bridal Boutique invite you to help decorate the two Christmas trees in Manor Mews (off Bridge Street). It's at this time of year we really miss those in our family we have lost. You may also want to show your appreciation for someone close to you who is unwell, and perhaps their carer too.

Well, now you can make your special person a 'star'! Simply pick up a Memory Star from Oanas, Riverside Terrace Café, Little Acre Kitchen, Crossways Centre or the Dementia Café at the Free Church, and write your message on the blank side. Hang your star on the trees now waiting for your dedication, memory or Christmas message.

The trees have been donated by Shades of White (who suggested the idea and contributed the Memory Stars) and the St Ives Dementia Friendly Community group. Jo Taylor of Shades of White and Ian Jackson of St Ives DFC group said, 'We have been pleased to cooperate in this way to enable those affected by dementia in our community to express their feelings at a special time of year'.



## The Octagon- A Brief History

Regular readers will know that The Riverporter has been featuring the Octagon in its 'REASONS TO BE SHUT' series of cartoons. Residents concern about why this significant building is not being used other than to store bins, prompted the editor to raise the issue with readers in this light-hearted way. What The Riverporter has discovered is that plans, submitted to HDC over a year ago to use the Octagon as an auction room as part of a scheme to create one of the largest antiques centres in the area, have been rebuffed, despite their obvious benefit to the town.



Visuals show how the Octagon may have looked under the business proposals

The recent history of the Octagon illustrates a comment made recently that our District Councillors are 'Not doing their best for the town' may be true.

Built in the 1940s the Octagon was the auction ring for the famous Cattle Market until 1970. Since then it has been used as a store by the owners HDC, but in 2014 they deemed it 'Surplus to requirements' and HDC's then leader, Jason Ablewhite, offered the freehold to the Town Council for it to be used as the Town's maintenance depot. Having just decided on a new depot off Hill Rise the Town Council turned the offer down.

### Available for rent?

The building was then put up for rent and some businesses showed interest, including Toms Cakes and Carl Boreman who wanted to knock it down and run a club/bar. Residents were concerned and decided to form a group to Save the Octagon (STO). After a while, commercial interest declined, largely because of HDC's lethargy in dealing with the matter and STO, which had raised £50,000 in grants and sponsorship became the only interested party.

## Snowman competition heats up

Vicci Godbold, Head of Thorndown School with some of the many snowmen her pupils helped make and are now on lampposts and buildings around the town. Vicci, The Mayor and pupils from Thorndown have been judging the winner in the Snowman Best Window Display competition. The winner who will receive £200, courtesy of Ellis Winters, will be announced on Friday 21 Dec at noon in the Corn Exchange, along with the winners in the Snowman Trail competition. The first prize is a £200 Townrow voucher which can be used to buy anything in their store, including toys from their large Toy Department



Following praise from HDC officers for STO's proposals to run the Octagon as a daily 'farmers style' market with tourist information and events and community use, on 6 July 2015 Cllr Ablewhite proposed HDC repair the outside of the building if STO could do the inside work. STO confirmed that this was possible as long as a lease was granted within 12 months, a condition required for the £35k Grantscape funds.

Nothing more was forthcoming until September 2015 when Cllr Ablewhite informed STO that HDC were no longer pursuing any commercial activity for the building and that STO should change its name as 'it is not relevant now that it (the building) is protected'.

Following a request for clarification of the lease process from STO, Cllr. Ablewhite replied 'There is no need to ask this extremely long plethora of questions . . . We will be in touch in due course' and the following month he said 'Please get the message, We will get back to you in due course'.

### So who saved the Octagon?

In March 2016 posters appeared stating that Cllrs Davis and Dickinson had 'Saved The Octagon' and were looking 'to find a sustainable outcome that isn't going to cost the taxpayers of St Ives hundreds of thousand of pounds'.

With the grant deadline fast approaching, STO made one more attempt to get a lease and approached HDC's new leader. At first HDC's Corporate Director, Nigel McCurdy, seemed keen to arrange one in time but after returning from his holiday this was later rescinded and STO were told that HDC thought their plans, once considered very good, were now not good enough.

So STO's grants were returned and the group disbanded while HDC spent £50,000 of taxpayers money on repairing the outside of the building.

A year later in July 2017, Hyperion put forward plans to use the Octagon for auctions and develop their existing site next door into one of the areas largest antiques centres. HDC's response this time came from Cllr Angela Dickinson who was less than encouraging. She wrote 'After serious consideration it was felt that your proposal did not meet the criteria HDC is looking for.'

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...** This Saturday 1 December on a cold and wet day a group of People's Vote Group conducted a poll in the centre of St Ives. During 6 hours we had a stall with a Brexitometer and literature. We asked people to vote on 2 questions

**Brexit, what's the best deal for the U.K?**

- a) Theresa May's Deal (10)
- b) Leaving with No Deal(21)
- c) Staying in the EU (146)

**Brexit, who should decide our future?**

- A. Theresa May's Cabinet (6)
- B. MP's in Westminster(14)
- C. A People's Vote(149)

It can clearly be seen that staying in the EU and a People's Vote had the highest scores



In our last edition we suggested that if you had an opinion on how you wanted our MP to vote on the BREXIT bill that you should write and let him know.... Well one reader did this and Mr Djanogly MP. replied saying that he believed any deal was always going to be a compromise and so he was preparing to vote in favour of Mrs May's proposal ... We just thought you'd like to know

**Dear Erik...** So The St.Ives Quay is now lit up for Christmas. That is good. Just a thought, who is paying for the electricity that is powering the lights?

I doubt that it is the person who moaned about the lack of lights. May be Erik is pedalling a generator now that he does not need his candles.

Enjoy  
best wishes  
Jean Palmer  
St.Ives



## Operation Christmas Child.

Burleigh Hill Farm is the Processing Centre for thousands of gift filled boxes that are donated and sent on their way from UK at Christmas time. They will join the 600,000 from UK and part of 11,000,000 sent to over 100 countries world wide by 9 donating countries. St Ives Mayor Tim Dyre visited the Farm and met with Sue Shorter and Brenda Horden All year round Volunteers.



# The Riverporter

## We need a plan and action

The fate of the high street and of St Ives town centre in particular, has been of concern to many, not least our local traders who see a declining footfall. The Town Team have recently conducted a survey to establish what can be done.

It is a 'hot topic' for the Government and it is clear that there is no single or simple solution. Just last week Mike Ashley, the owner of Sports Direct and House of Fraser, claimed to a Parliament Select Committee that the high street is already dead. It seems inevitable that there will be many changes in the coming years, which may need to be quite radical if today's high streets are to survive.

The very nature of town centres is being discussed and for some towns this could result in a total loss of shops. Smaller retailers are clearly under threat from the internet and the big national corporations which can afford the changes necessary to survive. Some towns are considering making their centres a place of entertainment and socialising, accepting that shopping is a thing of the past. St Ives is in a better position than many similar towns as it is a popular visitor destination. Our famous Bridge, its river, meadows, museum and attractive Victorian buildings and streets are a significant draw. This will help the town centre to survive but a lot needs to be done if it is to have more than hairdressers, takeaways and cafes. It is therefore alarming and saddening that plans to invigorate the town centre have been thwarted by our local council (see page 2) and there seems little progress on the 'Town's Master Plan. Good news is that the Mountain Warehouse store has opened in this important central location.

Pictured are left to right; Robin Doe, Juliette Fulcher, Caroline Bates and



## Community ceramic art project at the Norris Museum

Readers are recommended to take a look at a recently completed ceramic art installation at the Norris museum. The high quality work is mounted along the inner courtyard wall of the museum opposite the main entrance doors and is the work of many local community groups. The ceramic components are prepared and fired by Sarah Wilkinson from Bourn Pottery in Cambridge.



The impressive display forms a 'Timevine' that represents the many exhibits contained within the Norris right from the earliest fossil remains, the Romans then through our St Ives medieval period and our civil war connections.

## REASONS TO BE SHUT PART 18

EXCITING PLANS FOR OCTAGON



Who wouldn't want to see this happen? It will attract lots of people to St Ives ...

Plans to use the Octagon for Auctions again will make St Ives one of the largest antique centres in the region

**After serious consideration it was felt that your proposal did not include a bin store and therefore did not meet the criteria HDC is looking for.**

# The Hobby Horse Hunt Returns

NOON • BOXING DAY • MARKET HILL



Chase the fox around the streets and hostelrys of this beautiful market town and old riverport. Each venue has a riddle to solve and prizes will be awarded to the team that completes the course with the most correct answers.

There is a small charge to enter and all funds collected will go to a local charity.

**Prize for the best-dressed Rider and best Hobby Horse**  
**Come and join in the fun ...**

For details of this event and what else is happening in St Ives go to:  
[www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk](http://www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk)

# The world of Travel is coming to Over High Street

Ponders Travel is opening a new Travel Agency on the 7th January 2019.

Opening hours

Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 5.30pm

Saturday, 9.30am – 4.00pm

Pop in and see our brand new shop at The Gallery, 25 High Street, Over

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## TECH IS ONLY PART OF THE SOLUTION ...

Mike Ellis of Ellis Winters says it's all about human interaction



With the advent of new technology an estate agents job has changed considerably over the last few years, but the use of a 'tech only' solution poses problems. Tech speeds up processes, communication, marketing, offers, viewings etc. etc. but there is one vital part missing, human-interaction. What happens when the computer says "NO"? Who's there to help? Who's there to make things happen and ease the sale through? In short, US!

At Ellis Winters we've taken a different approach and have found success in a smarter more consumer friendly way; use all the latest technology combined with first class customer service and charge only when we sell your house. We've found this has two results:

- a) you will get a sale on your house quicker and
- b) you are more likely to end up with more money in your pocket.

If you are considering a cheaper, pay up-front solution, remember, where's the incentive to sell your house once they have your money?

Why train staff, update processes, call you back, invest in people, have offices or market locally, when they have your money already? why would they care if you sell or not, **THEY'VE BEEN PAID!**

We've recently updated our website with functions that enable you to quickly get an instant on-line valuation, to book viewings directly from our site and watch video's of houses we have for sale and to let.

We've integrated our website with a superb, smart management system that lets sellers, landlords, buyers and tenants have access to the back of our system to be instantly updated with all the latest news on viewings, offers, your Rightmove viewing stats and a new module that tracks the progress of your sale.

For a smarter, high tech yet customer focused approach, call us on 01480 388888



**ellis winters &co**

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