

# The Riverporter

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## A Happy New Year to you all

**T**his issue sees *The Riverporter* reach our first birthday and we really must say a huge thank you to all our readers for your continuing support and the great feedback.

There never seems to be a quiet moment in our town, there's always something of interest and it has been great fun finding out and publishing the details. (Especially as our bigger and grander local publication doesn't seem to notice us!).

It's been a great Christmas season with the hugely successful Snowman trail, The Hobby Horse Hunt (see right: Mayor Tim Drye and some of the riders and horses before the off) and not to mention the great fun that Santa gave us this year, what a treat that was!!!

We are grateful to those local businesses who support The Riverporter by advertising in the paper, without their contribution we wouldn't be able to print it, so we hope you will support them when you can. Although we only produce 4 pages in each edition we do try to fit in the news and attempt to let you know all of the events that our wonderful community groups are putting on, and we are always grateful to hear what they are doing.

So we're really looking forward to our second year and we want to encourage you our readers to send in your news, views or ideas. You can reach us anytime at: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)



## Well ermm, you have to laugh, don't you?

**O**h what fun. It appears our directly elected Cambridgeshire Mayor, James Palmer, a Conservative, is perhaps not a favourite of bank managers. During his election campaign Mr Palmer pledged to run his department as a tight ship with a budget of £850,000 on minimum staff and overheads.

Turns out he made a minor miscalculation and overspent by **£6.75 million**. (So only a small slip then!) When asked what went wrong Mayor Palmer replied... 'I can only apologise'. So that's alright then.



Labour's Lewis Herbert, leader of Cambridge City Council and board member of the combined authority, said costs were 'spiralling out of control. Every £1 of unnecessary operating costs overspend is £1 lost from the new rail, road and housing projects.'

At a meeting of the combined authority's overview and scrutiny committee, Mr Palmer said: 'I can only apologise. I think, realistically, we were never going to be able to function on £850,000 a year.'

The Combined authority is made up of the mayor and representatives from the seven local councils and has powers over housing, infrastructure and business development.

Mr Lewis and fellow board member Bridget Smith, Liberal Democrat leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council, will call for cost-cutting measures at the next board meeting, according to the Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Ms Smith said 'the public's perception of the new authority was one of escalating running costs with no real difference being made to residents'.

*The Riverporter* recently highlighted the controversial comments made by Mr Palmer following his approval of a severance payment of over £94,000 to his Chief Executive, Martin Whiteley, who suddenly resigned from the Authority. Claims have also been made that the Authority has appointed more councillors from East Cambs where Palmer had been leader of the district council.

Further concern was raised about the level of pay agreed to the combined authority staff, with seven employees earning more than £100,000 each and some of these roles duplicating those of senior officers at other Cambridgeshire authorities. Bodies that the Combined Authority should be working with, not competing with.

Mr Palmer's notoriety has blossomed and his actions have featured in the Rotten Boroughs column in the current Private Eye Magazine. It remains to be seen if a review, commissioned by Mr Palmer, will be worth the cost and suggest any worthwhile changes.



Pictured is Lucas Goldsmith and Harry The Dog receiving a £200 Townrow voucher from Townrow store manager Vanda Coulson for winning The Snowman Festival Trail. Behind Lucas are his happy parents Billy and Victoria (see report inside).

# Snowman Festival Winners announced

St Ives unique Snowman Festival once again brought shoppers to St Ives as around 385 children, and their parents, followed the Snowman Trail. With 29 shops taking part it took some effort to collect all the stickers but 125 determined souls completed the Trail. On hand was St Ives Mayor, Tim Drye to draw the winning entry which was from Lucas Goldsmith who is pictured on the cover.



Tim (right) also had the pleasure, along with Anne Dellar of Ellis Winters (left) of presenting the £200 cash prize for the Best Window Display to Paula Ewing of Optimum Health & Beauty (centre). Optimums window (see below) was chosen by Tim with the aid of Thorndown School Head Teacher, Vicci Godbold and some of her pupils. Three runners up were chosen who were Forget Me Not Florists, the Old Exchange Surgery and Escape & Create who all received chocolate and champagne.

The Old Riverport Retail Group and the Town Team, who run the seven week long Festival, would like to thank all the shops who took part and in particular Ellis Winters and Townrow for sponsoring the event.

**FOOTNOTE:** after receiving the £200 cash prize Paula announced she was donating the money to the Friends of Malezi Charity working with vulnerable children in Tanzania.



Optimum  
Health & Beauty



## £10 off

individual retail products if you book a Guinot/Elemis Facial to commence in January 2019



Choose a relaxing Elemis or Guinot facial from our extensive selection.

**Tired skin after the Christmas period?**

Try the Guinot Hydra Peeling treatment.

**Skin looking a big dull?**

Why not book the Elemis Superfood Pro-Radiance facial.

**EXCLUSIVE OFFER**

If you book & pre-pay a facial to commence in January 2019 you will receive £10 off any retail product (this does not include gift boxes)

Offer T&C: Treatment to commence in January 2019. Not valid for online bookings. Booking must be pre-paid. One £10 off voucher per customer. Subject to availability.

**TEMPTED? WE DON'T BLAME YOU!**

**Call 01480 466346 to book.**

## 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.

**Friday 18th Jan 2019** (PG)  
**THE GREATEST SHOWMAN**

Director: Michael Gracey USA 2017 1hr 45m

A barn-storming musical that tells the story of PT Barnum, legendary innovator of modern show business, with his circus of curiosities and spectacle. In his quest to bring high-brow entertainment to everyone he stakes everything on Jenny Lind, the 'Swedish Nightingale'. Will they succeed?



## SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

A little while ago someone removed/stole the central bollard in Crown Street which is there to stop vehicles from driving into or out of Market Hill. Fortunately the Council staff were soon on the case and rectified the problem. Can you spot the difference?

**BEFORE**

**AFTER**



## If you are in pain this may help

A new rehabilitation programme, called **Escape Pain**, has been launched by HDC which aims to help people with osteoarthritis and chronic joint pain self-manage their condition. Participants will need to be referred into the programme by a Health Professional and meet certain criteria. The first two courses will be starting in the New Year and each will be charged at a £30 one-off fee. For full details contact darren.lander@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or telephone 01480 388857.

having your say ...

# The Riverporter



## Dear Erik PAWS FOR THOUGHT

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

### Dear Erik,

Your banner (Issue 22) states '...read and pass on'. 'Passing on' being a euphemism for popping ones clogs, shuffling off this mortal coil, etc. - surely not your intention? Maybe 'read and share' would be better.

Yours pedantically,

Michael Davies OBE, Fenstanton

*Dear Michael - you are pawfectly right and I have asked the Editor to change it! (see cover).*

**Erik.**

### All new sound & vision

Great news for fans of Screen St Ives, the Corn Exchange has a superb new 6.5 metre-wide screen on order and are hoping to have it installed by the end of January. The screen will greatly add to the enjoyment of movie presentations at the Corn Exchange and soon after movie goes and music lovers will benefit from new acoustic panels being installed that will improve the sound quality of all kinds of live and filmed performances held at there.

## British Hearts helped by Hangover Party

For many residents the new year began in earnest with a giant sing-a-long in the Nelson's Head in the afternoon of New Year's day. Organised by Paul Dodson, the Hangover Party raised £745 for the British Heart Foundation and gave local musicians a chance to entertain. Paul was joined by The Sidekicks, The Mad Hatters, Colin Gibson and *The Riverporter's* own (and Erik's dad) Ron Westrip. Paul thanked the landlord Andrew Lowson and his staff for their hard work and the musicians, who all played for free. A great time was enjoyed by all.



Dear Erik, We find the Riverporter excellent and now we have managed to get regular copies think you are doing a very good job. From the latest newspaper we would like to make the following comments. Julia and Tony Lain (Julia was born in the town and lived here for over 76 years!!!)

## ST IVES TOWN PLAN AND ACTION

In response to your article in *The Riverporter* 14th December 2018 'We need a plan' it is no wonder that the footfall is declining and it's not all to do with shopping on line. Just a few simple remedies would improve this if our council would listen instead of being so negative and pleading poverty.

Although we are lucky and only have a few empty properties at the moment, how long before more follow and then the town will start on the slippery slope that other towns have found them selves in.

One of the biggest problems that needs urgently dealing with is parking. It is much easier to go to the Park and Ride and catch the bus to Cambridge. The Dolphin have just gone over to Pay and Display resulting in vehicles moving to on street parking which is not policed. Parking in St Ives ranges from being well controlled to no control at all. The Broadway being the latter problem.

Vehicles are parked for hours by people working in the town from all day to several days on end without ever being moved so shoppers are unable to 'pop' in to town.

Between The Waits and The Broadway parking on yellow lines is also apparently acceptable!! Delivery vans have problems, especially when vehicles are parked round the Victoria fountain. One solution to this would be to bring in a parking company saving the Council a cost and relieving the Police of a job they are unable to fulfil.

As you also point out our Council are blinkered as to the benefits diverse businesses bring to the town like the appalling decision on The Octagon, the shambles to alter the one way system (the wrong way) during the Michaelmas fair and allowing properties to remain empty for years such as The Robin Hood. Then there is the state of the pavements (at least Crown Street is a little safer now) but you still have to watch your step in other areas. This again is hardly surprising when heavy vehicles are allowed to drive over them.

*Dear Julia and Tony thank you for your letter which I edited slightly due to limited space. Many of the points you make were mentioned by people in the Town Team's survey and will be put to our councils soon. ED.*

### COUNCIL WARNING

## RESIDENTS SHOULD ASK FOR ID IF THEY ARE UNSURE

HDC has been made aware of a person, wearing the Council's hi-viz uniform, accessing a resident's garden unnecessarily. The Council would like to reassure residents that its waste collection crews would never have reason to be in anyone's garden, unless prior arrangements have been made for an assisted collection. Also you should not see any of HDC's collection crews before 6am and all employees are issued with ID cards. If you are concerned they will be more than happy to disclose this to you, or you can call the Council on 01480 388640.

## Has anyone noticed busses disappearing recently?

About six months ago I began to suspect some drift in the Bermuda Triangle, towards the St Ives area. I, and several expectant passengers, waiting at the St Ives Park and Ride site observed the non-appearance of an A bus. We had, for 10 minutes, watched the due time slowly count down, then nothing... There have been no reports of what did or didn't happen, no reports on missing persons (only cats and dogs), no re-appearance of much needed busses and their drivers.

Now my grandson says I'm just a muggle, and I can't expect to be able to see all busses - referring to some triple decker he, and one Harry Potter ride on frequently?

My son says none of it - his conspiracy group advise that it is just stagecoach fiddling the figures to meet their minimum service level agreements. He says they must run these phantom busses, to

get the recorded numbers up, else someone will get suspicious about the number of people they cram on board (it's how they make more profits)!

One driver recently advised us that we can get 58 people on board standing on a single decker! I believe that the mass starvation necessary to slim us down, so we can fit 58 UK people standing on a single decker bus will be at least a couple of years after Brexit!

Obviously Stagecoach have the answer to all these waiting passengers. Some of you may notice that they have recently started routing A busses to the start of Hill Rise and either parking there for half an hour (with the new driver just on) or telling all the passengers to get off (because the drivers finished for the day)! Other services now terminate at the bus station, so anyone living in St Ives will have to share a crammed full bus, if it turns up! **From Nick.**

### Quote of the week

*Politicians don't understand people who do good just because it's right. It makes them nervous!*

Mr Incredible - Incredibles 2

## Permission approved!... But for what?

The Riverporter has noticed that the planning permission to merge the two stores located on Sheepmarket (British Heart foundation and the Nationwide BS) into one single store, along with a rear extension and a change of use to be only retail, has been approved by the HDC.

However the company making the application is still a mystery and the intended retail occupier is also unknown, so we'll keep watching. Could be exciting!



### LOOKALIKES

SANTA

TONY ABBOTT



## Strange goings on in the Town Hall?

Some weeks ago *The Riverporter* contacted the Town Clerk about a matter raised at the November Amenities Committee meeting. The Council had been contacted about making a payment for using the Sheepmarket pavement for the Farmers' Market.

The Clerk confirmed that she had taken a call but declined to say more about it until it had come to the Council. She did confirm that the request had not come from the District or County Councils. Now being good journalists we like to confirm the accuracy of our articles before publishing, so we waited for the minutes of the meeting to appear so we could be sure of the facts.

The minutes duly appeared at the December Council meeting but did not contain any information about this request for payment, although it had clearly been discussed. Our understanding was that the request for payment was to be backdated 5 years and could

be for many thousands of pounds, money that is not allocated in the current budget, so we were surprised that it wasn't discussed at December's Full Council Meeting, according to the agenda. Even more surprising is that it may have been discussed at an informal, unminuted, meeting on Saturday 22nd December and that a sizeable payment has been made to HDC.

We contacted the Council before Christmas to seek clarification but have had no reply.

**There are several questions that need answers:**

Who is the payment to and who sanctioned it? Why was any discussion not minuted? Why is the Council holding private unminuted meetings and where is the money coming from if it's not in the current budget?

If this fee/charge(?) is to be recouped from the market traders, will this affect the markets viability? As taxpayers shouldn't we know?

## A POINT OF VIEW

Recently a friend said he was depressed because he hadn't achieved much. When I asked why, he said that he thought he was going to change the world and now he is 70 he knows he isn't. Let's face it very few people get to change the world for even a short time, so I thought he was being a bit hard on himself, especially as he'd been a successful teacher of children with special needs and had undoubtedly affected hundreds of lives for the better. Yet I understood what he meant. In the 60s my friend went on Ban The Bomb marches, anything seemed possible. Okay we lived in Huntingdonshire, which was hardly Carnaby Street and in many ways was behind the times, yet there was optimism in the air as ordinary people like us went to university. In middle age my friend entered local politics in the hope of making a better future, he remained optimistic. My friend represented Labour and briefly, during the Blair years, wielded influence locally, but looking back he realises these successes soon ended when the opposition was re-elected. What this tale highlights to me is that few of us ever realise our dreams, especially when the bar is set so high. I'm not saying we shouldn't aspire to great things, because we all know that the higher you aim the higher you get. Perhaps my friend's depression is caused, not by the lack of success but, by a lack of optimism. Of course the young are bound to be optimistic before experience says otherwise and I'm sure there are youngsters who see a rosy future but somehow it is hard to be optimistic as we enter 2019. The doom and gloom of a looming Brexit (sadly on my birthday) does tend to put a damper on things but hey, I'm not giving up. There is a chance that here in our little town we could do things differently. Just look at the reports in this paper of what has been happening over the Christmas period and you cannot fail to be impressed at just how much goes on here. Yes we have problems and *The Riverporter* often points them out, but they could all be resolved with determination and effort from those in power and good will from everyone else. So my new year's message is let's all work together and make 2019 a year to be optimistic. Ed.

**Boxing Day's Hobby Horse Hunt saw around 50 riders and horses complete the course. This fun, family event saw a wonderful array of Hobby Horses some of which are pictured here.**



# The world of Travel is coming to Over High Street

**Ponders Travel is opening a new Travel Agency this Monday 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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ADVERTORIAL

## GUIDE TO HOMEBUYING

*Mike Ellis of Ellis Winters explains some simple steps to take*



**ellis  
winters  
&CO**

Buying a home can be complex but is ultimately a rewarding process!

The following steps will see you collecting your keys in no time.

### **How will you fund your purchase?**

Contact an independent mortgage broker to get an idea of how much you can borrow. He or she will be able to search the market for the best available deal and help you maximise your borrowing power. They will also be able to explain what types of mortgages are available and what is best suited to your.

You will need to have details of your income and all of the things that you spend money on each month. Funds will also need to be available for a deposit, stamp duty, legal fees and perhaps any maintenance or updating that may be required to make the property your home.

### **What should you buy?**

Define your criteria. Decide what you are looking for in a property – whether you need parking and a garden, how many bedrooms will you use, should it be freehold or leasehold and what you want out of a location. Does it need to be close to local schools, transport links and other facilities.

### **Will it meet your needs in the future?**

So when you have decided on a budget go out and start viewing some potential new homes. You are unlikely to find the dream property straight away, and you may even find that your criteria changes dramatically when searching but don't despair, stick to your budget and never rush into buying probably the biggest and most expensive purchase you will ever make.

A good estate agent will always be on hand to offer advice and guidance so however trivial you think a question may be we have almost certainly heard it a few times before so please ask. For more help and advice contact our team of experts today!

**For more information, please call our team on 01480 388888**



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