

The Riverporter

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

A touch of deja vu at Town Meeting

Despite a good turnout at the Town Meeting on March 2nd it seems that many in the audience were left unconvinced by councillors efforts to address the issues raised.

The Town Council must receive praise for making the Town Meeting more interesting with the introduction of a 'Question Time'.

For the second year running a good turnout saw residents raising issues ranging from anti-social behaviour to drainage and parking.

This year there was the added advantage of putting some of these questions direct to those involved in dealing with the issues, as representatives from Cambridgeshire CC, Huntingdonshire DC and the Police attended.



Above, some of the stalls at the Community Fair and below, some of the audience about to raise their concerns.



Dissappointment

It became clear during the meeting that the same old questions were being asked once again.

Several members of the audience stated that there seemed to have been little progress on many of the issues raised last year and the promises of action given 12 months ago had not been kept.

The Panel (above) consisted of (left to right) Police Sergeant Alice Draper, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Jason Ablewhite, County

Councillor and Fire Authority Chairman Kevin Reynolds, M.C. Martin Collier, Town Mayor Tim Drye, District Councillor Ryan Fuller and Managing Director of Hunts District Council Jo Lancaster.

Some of the issues raised included complaints from residents of price rises by community housing landlord, Luminus; badly maintained pavements; speeding vehicles; anti-social and drunken behaviour; cyclists and cars crossing the bridge; parking arrangements during the planning process and general

parking chaos in the town centre. Several panelists mentioned that it was difficult to deal with some issues raised due to the lack of funding. It was said that parking problems are not a priority for the Police and that HDC cannot afford to decriminalise parking.

It wasn't all doom though as the County Council were praised for a quick response to blocked drains on Houghton Rd. Residents also learned that National Planning Policies do not allow planning applications to be refused on lack of parking places.

Ed Goodman asked panelists to state what personal achievement they are proudest of this year. Answers included: Cllr Fuller - securing the land for the Country Park; Jo Lancaster - convincing the Combined Authority Mayor to release money for market towns including St Ives; Cllr Reynolds - Morrisons coming to town; Mr Ablewhite - ensuring a town speedwatch and increasing police numbers.

Town Mayor, Tim Drye mentioned his involvement in making St Ives a CALM town, the Campaign Against Living Miserably dealing with mental health issues for young men and saying thank you to all the

vunteers who work for St Ives. Whilst answering a question about signage and parking, Cllr Reynolds said that Bridge Street will soon be having a facelift - so we will look forward to seeing that.

Mr Ablewhite was asked a question about the role of the PCC and replied: 'The fact that the Police and Crime Commissioner is now cheaper to run than the former Police Authority, then you save that money in your pocket or I get that to give to the Chief Constable for more cops.'

The Riverporter thought this claim was somewhat optimistic so we looked into the facts which we detail on page 2.

Bulls bitten by Vipers



St Ives Bulls attempts to gain promotion for the second year running took a knock last Saturday as they too were incapacitated by a nest of Vipers.

The Vipers in this case were the Vipers Rugby Club from Whetstone, near Leicester who, before Saturday's game with only three wins this season were facing relegation, but somehow managed to beat the Bulls convincingly by 27-17 pts.

Following a brilliant win the previous week, away to table toppers Olney, who had lost only once all season, the Bulls were naturally very disappointed to lose and are now 9 points behind second place Market Harborough with just 4 games left.

Have you experienced this as well?

Dear Riverporter, Just thought you might be interested to know that I received a letter from ZZPS Ltd today telling me that my fine for parking at the Dolphin in December was now £170!

I think gobsmacked is the best way to describe my reaction!!!

This is after I spoke to Liz at the Dolphin on 18th Jan when she assured me my reg no was on the list to be written off. I have spoken to her again today so she has sent my reg no to Enterprise again. I also spoke to ZZPS who assure me I now need to pay £170 or go to the County Court - in a very unfriendly fashion! Thanks Tish Peek

Have you had the same experience? If so let us know by emailing editor@theriverporter.uk

Snowman Festival makes donation



Our picture shows Sandra Souter from the Snowman Festival presenting a cheque of £100 to Vicci Godbold, Head (Giraffe) of Thorndown School on Friday 8th March. It was the school's world book day and pupils and staff were dressed as animal characters. Thorndown pupils helped make some of the hundreds of small Snowmen that adorned the lampposts of the town centre during the Festival and the donation is to help buy craft materials for the school.

Does our Police & Crime Commissioner really cost less?

During the recent Town Meeting the Police & Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire, Jason Ablewhite, stated he was cheaper than the old Police Authority.

Responding to a question from Peter Mason, Mr Ablewhite, who was asked why we need a Police & Crime Commissioner, stated:

'The fact that the Police and Crime Commissioner is now cheaper to run than the former Police Authority, then you save that money in your pocket or I get that to give to the Chief Constable for more cops.'

This statement seemed at odds with a report written a while ago by Richard Taylor which showed that Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) Graham Bright, Mr Ablewhite's predecessor, was more expensive than the Police Authority he replaced.

The Riverporter decided to look into this claim and this is what we discovered . . .

Firstly we contacted the Chairman of the Police Panel, Edward Leigh, who is responsible for scrutinising the PCC's work. He said it was naughty for Mr Ablewhite to say that, but did suggest that Mr Ablewhite would argue that he does more than the old authority.

However we were able to find the proposed budget for the PCC's department for this coming year, 2019/20, which will be £1,215m.

The cost of the old Police Authority, allowing for inflation, would be around £990k, a whopping £225k less than Mr Ablewhite's costs.

Any claims of savings are therefore not accurate and as the PCC's budget will be £1.350m for 2020/21 there is certainly no hope of us taxpayers saving any money in our pockets.

Mr Ablewhite has recently been reselected as the Conservative candidate for the PCC role, which is up for election next year.

We asked the PCC to comment on our findings and are awaiting a reply Ed.

Another of Mr Ablewhite's comments, which touched on his position as a District Councillor, and raised an eyebrow or two, was a reference to £1 million that had been available to spend in St Ives. Taking about the parking problems he said:

'Yes there are people that park inappropriately around the town. I can remember a conversation we had which would have solved the problem completely some years ago, which caused a huge amount of controversy, when there was a million pounds on the table from the District Council, which is no longer there, and that is to pedestrianise the whole of the town centre.'

We assume this refers to the £1 million of environmental improvements of 2009, which HDC's Conservative Cabinet withdrew when it didn't agree with the scheme that many in St Ives supported.

'Permission to Speak'



KEZZABELLE AMBLER
Performance Poet
At St Ives Corn Exchange
Tue 19th Mar 2019 7.30 - 9.30 pm
TICKETS available at door £7

Volunteers Needed

East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH) need volunteers to help at a supermarket collection at Morrisons in St Ives on 28th March!

We are looking for pairs of volunteers to cover a 2 hour shift between 11am and 5pm.

Collections are a great way for us to raise valuable funds and a couple hours of your time can make a huge difference!

All you have to do is stand with a bucket, smile and watch the generous donations come your way . . .

Anyone interested in taking part please contact us on 01223 204916 or email ellen.bing@each.org.uk.



FREE TRAVEL EVENING WITH NIBBLES & FIZZ

The first of a year long, bi monthly set of events in which **Ponders Travel** bring experts to talk to you about the different types of holidays available. Their first event is about European, Asian and African river cruises and is on the **27th March between 4 and 7 pm** at their Over office. Tickets are free. You can book online or just pop along on the night to Ponders Travel, The Gallery, 25 High Street, Over, Cambridge, CB24 5BN www.ponderstravel.co.uk

Nice touch with the yellow lines Burt . . . Now round to Mrs Jones, she wants a Zebra Crossing in her driveway!

With reference to Workers initiative brightens lines, see Council & Community News page 3.



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 4th Apr 2019 Screen 2 COLD WAR



Director: Pawel Pawlikowski
Poland | UK | France 2018 1h 29m

Passion, music, dance, history and divided loyalties weave magic through this special cinematic experience from the award-winning director

of Ida. Loosely based on the true story of a couple trying to rebuild their lives in post war Poland, Cold War plays with our emotions, undermines our expectations and delivers a mighty punch to our hearts.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

1982 The old Regal Cinema in The Broadway 2019



having your say ...

The Riverporter



Dear Erik PAWS FOR THOUGHT

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

Dear Erik,

This is the diary of the Dolphin Hotel car park. Regrettably the owner of the Hotel doesn't seem to concern himself with the environment or appearance to visitors or his clients.

This, along with the large number of parking signs, really enhances the view for locals and visitors in what is meant to be a Conservation Area!

I have clearly been under a misunderstanding that tight controls were enforced by HDC in this area regarding development (installation of intrusive poles) and although the storage of waste is Cambs CC waste department's responsibility I would have again considered that HDC might have had an interest in the effect it has in the area.

However, we can always wait for the next flood so it can be washed away.

Jan Blinks

20 January - bits of furniture and carpets form an increasing heap throughout the month.



22 February - a skip appears, after a number of days the waste gets put into the skip.



1 March. The skip is now full and a new pile starts beside.



Dear Erik,

With your report of the (Nest of Vipers) I would like to point out following the last election where our elected members all became Independent. The start of the one party state of St Ives.

I thought as we are moving towards a new North Korea the secret meetings will be just the start. I think the next thing will be an order from the Town Hall that from the 1st April 2019 flat caps will be worn by all that live in the town!!!

Very interesting to read about Mayor Palmer and his cronies 'Jobs for the boys - only mates allowed'. Thank you for a very interesting newspaper that gives the facts.

Jim Morrison BEM

Dear Erik,

Please can you give this a mention in *The Riverporter*?

I have been asked by the St Ives Carnival Committee to invite Classic Car owners to exhibit their cars at a static display.

The Carnival is on Saturday 13th July. No passes are needed, just be on site by 11am - at Hill Rise Park, St Ives.

Anyone interested can contact me by email at:

r.b.newland@outlook.com.

Many Thanks,
Rita Newland.

Dear Erik,

When walking towards the Waits I noticed that the railings had finally been repaired ... or had they?

It looks like Bodgit and Son had been employed (see the attached photos) and whoever signed it off wants telling off!



The picture above shows what it should look like. The picture, left, shows what it actually looks like now.



The bottom picture shows the whole effect with raised paving stones and no attempt to return it to the original state.

Usual disgraceful treatment of this lovely town.

Disgusted of St Ives



COUNCIL & COMMUNITY NEWS

Workers initiative brightens lines

At Wednesday's Town Council meeting Cllr Fuller advised councillors that they may have noticed that the white lines had been refreshed in the local car park but wanted to explain that this was not as a result of the councils intention to relay out the car park, as that work will occur later under their new parking plans. On this occasion it was simply that council workers on another project had paint left over and took it on themselves to freshen up the existing lines! (*Any residents wanting their house repainted can apply to the Mayor, but the only colours are white or maybe a bit of yellow!!! ... Just kidding. Ed*)

Do You Care about our Town Centre?

Local businessman William Scantlebury is keen to stop our Town Centre from suffering decline by getting all interested parties together and agreeing a way forward.

William explained 'Having become involved in several meetings and conversations with the Town Team, the Town Council, SIT1 and The Riverport Retail Group it has become clear to me that we are all concerned at the declining footfall in the town centre and the negative impact this has on the prosperity of the town. The different groups all work hard to bring people into the town, but all with slightly different aims and methods. Therefore, I am inviting local town groups, town centre retailers and business people to an open meeting to try to come up with a long-term town plan. There are no preconceptions and we should be open minded in looking for positive suggestions on how we can enhance footfall for all.'

If you feel you can contribute to this meeting please use this link to book a seat:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/st-ives-town-business-working-group-tickets-47813460347>

Slepe Hall Hotel has kindly offered to host the meeting which will be on Monday the 25th March at 6:30pm.

Trust raises questions about its audit

A Trust that runs three Huntingdonshire schools, including St Ivo claims it is 'financially sound' while announcing a delay in publishing its accounts. Astrea educational trust, which manages Ernulf, Longsands and St Ivo Academies, announced that it will bring in specialists to delve deeper into the accounts. All academy trusts were expected to publish their accounts online by January 31 2019. Astrea took on St Ivo School last year, and is expected to be running the school fully by March this year.

When will they ever learn!

This latest incident on the Guided Busway has again brought calls for better signage to prevent this ongoing problem.

'The issue is clearly not going away and the disruption to bus services is really quite unacceptable' said a resident stranded for over an hour.



Judging by the picture it begs the question ... Just how far can you drive down the busway before falling off? Perhaps we can get Jeremy Clarkson on the challenge!

Beautiful views and even better reviews for St Ives

So reported Cambridgeshire Live this week when their reporter visited St Ives to interview local people at random. It seems we have all spoken well for our town. So much so that Cambridgeshire Live stated '**We are starting to be convinced that St Ives really might be the loveliest place to live in Cambridgeshire.**' Excellent news.

One mum who was walking through town with her two children told Cambridgeshire live: '*St Ives is perfect for us, there are good schools and nurseries for the kids and it's close to Cambridge for my husband's work. I love living here especially on days like this (clear blue skies and sunny). You forget you are in a town and you feel more like somewhere you pay to visit for the day. Moving here is the best thing we have done.*' The reporters then spoke with elderly shoppers and young students - all spoke well of our shops and facilities and the fact that there are always so many good things happening in town. At a time when we see so much gloom and despondency in many UK towns and cities it's amazing that a snap survey of this type would reflect such a truly warm feeling from our residents.

Town Team donate to The Methodist Church Project 200

John Souter seen right, presented a cheque for £100 from the Town Team to Christine Mainwaring from the St Ives Methodist Church Project 200 team.

The money was raised during the Boxing Day Hobby Horse Hunt and will help the church with their exciting plans to help modernise the building.



Visitors from New Zealand said they had really enjoyed their visit to what they thought was the best antique centre they had been into during their stay in the UK



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Sunday 31st March 2019

If you would like to have a stall please email us at townteam@theoldriverportstives.co.uk or call us on 07940 180160



ADVERTORIAL

WHAT'S HAPPENING UP YOUR STREET?

Mike Ellis of Ellis Winters assesses the current housing market



According to figures from Zoopla, house prices fell by 0.1% in February despite stable activity in some sectors of the market. This leaves the annual rate of house price inflation (HPI) at 0.4% and the average UK home according to Nationwide, costing a little over £211,000. The housing market's sluggish start was attributed to a fall in consumer confidence as uncertainty surrounding Brexit continues.

As always, there is significant regional variation and the lower priced properties appealing to first time buyers have seen more activity. This sector has received a lot of government assistance through the "help to buy" scheme, stamp duty exemption and better mortgage products being available.

The more expensive homes, on the other hand, have been impacted by higher stamp duty rates and strong house price growth over the last ten years has led to property values becoming high in relation to earnings.

The weakening in sentiment appears to have hit sellers harder than buyers.

Although both the number of properties coming on to the market and the number of new buyers has slowed, the balance between supply and demand has tipped slightly in favour of buyers.

Predicting the course of the housing market going forward is difficult due to uncertainty over the terms and even the timing of Brexit, but general opinion is that this year will see

very little in terms of house price increases.

Once we've seen the back of Brexit, it is assumed that normal service will be resumed as people will always have to move home, whether through job moves, change in circumstances or the simple matter of needing a larger home.

Please call us on **01480 388 888** if you are considering buying or selling in the near future.



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