

The Riverporter

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

St Ives historic Chapel deemed unsafe

Cambridge County Council have decided that the lower floor and balcony of the St Leger Chapel on the bridge cannot be used on health and safety grounds.

The Grade 1 listed building, one of only four in the country has had its use restricted after inspection by County Council officials.

The County Council which is responsible for the Chapel's upkeep have decided that the stairs leading to the lower floor are not safe.

The stairs, which have been safely used for around 593 years, are narrow and quite steep and without a hand rail, it is assumed, do not comply with current H&S rules.

A statement from the Town Clerk said 'The lower floor and balcony are no longer accessible on health and safety grounds and will be fenced off from public use in the next few weeks.'

The decision has caused concern by some of those who use the Chapel. A member of staff at the Norris Museum, which opens the Chapel to the public most weekends during summer, expressed the view that it would reduce the impact of any tour of the building.

The day to day control of the Chapel was passed on to the Town Council

with a Management Agreement between to two authorities. This agreement has also caused concern as it stipulates that 'the Chapel can no longer be used for paid events.'

Chapel Arts Season affected

The community group, St Ives Town Team which puts on the concerts and makes a small charge to cover the cost of musicians have been told to make the concerts free.

The Team have decided to continue with this seasons concerts and will subsidise them, however their long term future is in doubt. 'Having made our group self sufficient over the past year we will now be seeking a grant from the Council for these concerts, if they are to continue,' said Town Team Chairman Sheila Stones.

The Riverporter understands that the Civic Society and other groups are seeking to get full use of the building again, especially as it is the main tourist attraction in the town.

County Cllr Kevin Reynolds is hoping that the agreement can be amended so as not to affect community use.

Armed Forces Day new venue a success



According to the Town Mayor Cllr Dan Rowe, pictured above right, the Armed Forces Day relocated this year from the Town Centre 'was a fantastic debut for this event at its new venue on Slepe Hall Field.' He said that 'The new layout coupled with the impeccable weather and great entertainment was warmly received by many who attended, and provides a good platform to build on for future years as it grows from strength to strength.' (see more on page 4).

A BUSY WEEK AHEAD

This Sunday sees the start of the Music on The Waits. The concerts organised by FESst start at 2pm and feature a different band every Sunday throughout July and August.

Also next weekend is the Carnival & Musical Festival in Hill Rise Park where there is a 'Proms style' concert in the evening, followed by the Music Festival on the Sunday.

Flea on the Quay **10AM TO 2PM**
SUNDAY 14 JULY
THE QUAYSIDE
2ND SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH

To celebrate their 10th Anniversary
 Festival Events St Ives (FESst)
 Present a

COSI SUMMER CONCERT



Sunday 14th July, 6.30 pm

The Free Church, St Ives

With a selection of music from around Europe – perfect for a summer evening!

- * Poulenc (Sinfonietta) * Mendelssohn (Fair Melusine overture)
- * Elgar (Romance for Bassoon and Orchestra)
- * Sibelius (Karelia Suite).

Conductor - Chris Hiscock, Bassoon Soloist - David Bartlett

Tickets: £8 in advance or £10 on the door.
 Children under 16 free.

Available from Just Sharing
 at The Free Church, or online
www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventstives



Some of the 'Picnickers in the Park' dancing to 'What's That Band' in the sunshine last Sunday. FESst's annual free event, featuring music from four bands, returned to its 'spiritual home' in Warner's Park. Great weather, food stalls and a bar run by the Oliver Cromwell added to the fun and visitors spoke of the event being the best ever. The organisers wish to thank all the FESst team and amazing volunteers who put the event on and of course all the musicians that entertained picnickers.

Ellis Winters & Co mark a new era with flagship office

State agents Ellis Winters, which started trading in town in 2001 will mark a new era next week by opening their new flagship office in Market Hill, St Ives next Friday the 12th July.

Matt Pyman, Lisa Winters and Anne Dellar, with more than sixty years of experience between them, will be on hand to guide home owners through the house selling process and explain some of the new technology being used along with latest marketing techniques.

Mike Ellis and Ian Winters started the company in 2001 and now have five offices in the local area. They both play an active role in the company with Mike heading the sales team and Ian directing their very successful letting department.

day running of the office and be responsible for looking after every property for the owners.

Matt said 'From the first time you contact the office to the day you move into your new home we hope that you see our drive and enthusiasm shining through.'

Last year we employed a marketing manager to look at new ways to harness social media and other online platforms, this is already showing great results and we expect this to snowball in the next couple of years.'



Jazz & Blues T-shirts on Sale

T-shirts designed for this years Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival are available for just £5.

The T-shirt, modelled by Town Team Chairman Sheila Stones, can be bought at the Town Team stall at the next two Farmers Markets and the Flea on the Quay. They can also be ordered from The Oliver Cromwell, Nelson's Head and Haywain pubs.

Neighbourhood Police Surgeries



In response to increasing calls to police, our local St Ives Police Team have been holding regular street open meetings where residents and business owners can spend a few minutes discussing the issues that affect them.

The most recent was held on the Quayside where PCSO Beverly Snell spoke with members of the local neighbourhood watch team who are now taking a far more robust approach to the problems caused by anti-social behaviour in the St Ives town centre area. If you see Beverly on her rounds please say hi and give her your support.

elliswinters & co

Exclusive & New Homes



MATT PYMAN
Associate Director

LISA WINTERS
Director

ANNE DELLAR
Associate Director

'After nineteen years we're still very passionate about what we do' said Mike, 'we're always looking to see how we can improve and move things forward, technology has come on leaps and bounds even in the last five years and I think people will be surprised at what we can do today.'

Matt, Lisa and Anne are all directors in the business and will personally oversee the day to

Ellis Winters new office will be open for business next week with an open day on Friday from 12 noon, they hope you are able to pop in to the office and join them for a glass of bubbles.

For information about selling call Matt, Anne or Lisa on 01480 388 888 or email exclusive@elliswinters.co.uk

Late News

It is over 3 years since Cllr Ablewhite said that the Octagon was going to be one of those HDC properties that would be sweated for income. It is 3 years since the Save The Octagon group returned the Mick George grant as HDC decided to withdraw support for the project. More recently, Magpas was rumoured to be going to lease some of the Octagon.

Riverporter sources say that this has fallen through and there is no user in sight.

Cllr Davies is reported to have said that everything is on hold until HDC produces its Masterplan for the St Ives Town Centre but details about this are hard to find.

Apparently the Civic Society has asked Cllr Fuller about the process and how to contribute, and the timescales but he hasn't provided details, although we understand that the community may not be consulted for up to 9 months. Some people fear that the decisions will be made in advance of the consultation period by a select group of mainly councillors. It has just been reported that a bat roost was discovered with around 50 soprano pipistrelles emerging from the soffit on the old building above the Cromwell Place Surgery on 3 or more nights in late May. The surgery is talking to its ecologists and its architects to see what effect this might have on their plans.

POETRY CORNER

In memoriam

So, Farewell
Then Horse Chestnut.
You fell so gently, so gracefully
To the ground.
No protest, no anguished sound
From you –
From others to be sure.
You had to fall, you were old
And deemed a danger.
But you had conked our hearts
With your towering grace
And will the bats miss you?
We shall never know.

Anon - with a nod to E.J. Thribb

Happy Birthday Iris !

The Riverporter learned that Iris Smith celebrated her 90th birthday recently. Iris who has been a leading light in the local St Ives Darby and Joan Club for many years held a celebration of her birthday in her garden and the sum of £210 was raised for the work of Diabetes UK. A letter of thanks was received from Diabetes UK who said the money will go towards helping people manage their diabetes and improve their quality of life... Congratulations Iris.

Chapel promoted

The Town Team received this email recently from Sarah Crossland, Church Tourism Manager for ExploreChurches an organisation promoting church buildings throughout the country.

ExploreChurches includes St Ives Chapel

I am writing because I am really pleased to tell you that we have included your church in one of our popular themed lists, this time listing all the medieval bridge chapels in the UK.



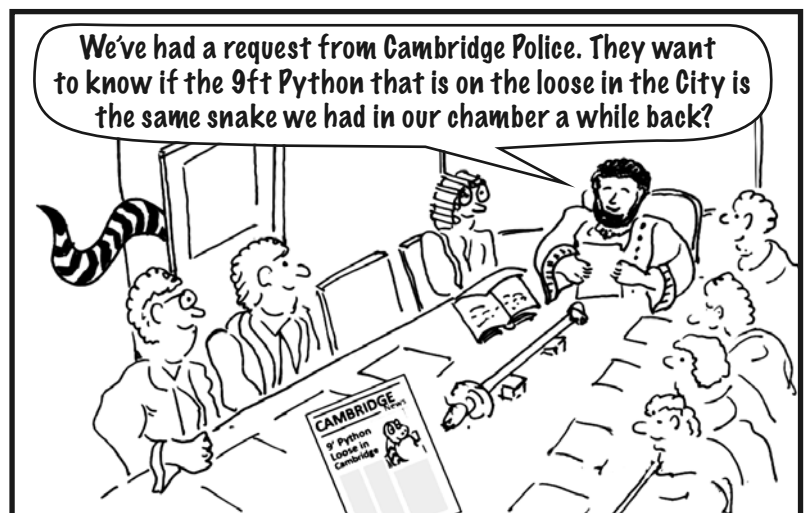
Whilst this is good news for promoting our town and the Chapel The Town Team did point out that St Ives is a town and not a village as the front page of the website states (see above).

Disturbance in Market Hill

Several shoppers at last Fridays market in Market Hill were confronted by a man swearing and shouting abuse and behaving in a threatening manner. Several calls were made to the police and officers arrived quite promptly to deal with the issue however a scuffle ensued and a lady police officer received damage to her eyes. Another office

assisted by members of the public restrained the man until the appropriate police van appeared whereon the man was cuffed, arrested and taken away.

A police report received by The Riverporter shows that the man has been charged with Public order offenses.



having your say ...

The Riverporter

COUNCIL & COMMUNITY NEWS



Dear Erik PAWS FOR THOUGHT

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

Dear Erik,
Thought you might like this for your next issue.

The Town Council workmen need to go to SpecSavers. Keep up the good work.



An unusual reading light for a bench Alan

A shaggy dog story

Dear Hairy Pawter,

I'm sorry to hear that we have a Poodle pushing his weight around in the Council Chambers and with lack of Independent thought, the atmosphere is turning Blue. I'm concerned what Erik might think of this.

Yours Virginia Woof

*The Editors received this comment from one of our readers ref the article **Anti-social behaviour in the town** in our last issue.*

They reminded us that the same topic was discussed at the Town Council meeting in November 2017, when Cllrs Jackson and Dobson's concerns about the same problems on the Quayside were belittled by Cllr Fuller. They went on to say 'I sincerely believe that if Cllr Fuller had been more respectful on the night, had genuinely listened to the concerns being expressed by the Councillors on behalf of members of the public and businesses on The Quay, - and perhaps if the Mayor had shown a bit of back-bone - then St Ives could already have 'Public Order' legislation in place.

Day Care Centre says thanks



To thank all our lovely volunteers, we held a quiz night during national volunteers week. Without them the day centre would not be able run. Gillian



The next **COPE** meeting for members in and around St Ives will be held on Friday 12 July 2019, 10.30-12.30 in the Free Church.

Looking for a date?

If you are, and between the ages of 30s and 40s, then you should go to Slepe Hall on Friday 19th July at 7.30pm. New to St Ives is this speed dating called **Mix 'n' Pick** is described as having ice breaking activities on each table!

Dear Editor,

I was appalled to read your article in the last edition. Obviously I am not privy to what has actually happened before however that is not the point. I thought the letter from Ms. Lancaster was atrocious and very threatening. I thought that she actually worked for the people of Huntingdon. HDC Councillors and employees should be accountable and open to public and press scrutiny. We are not yet in a police state although a certain PCC may wish we were. I think the question needs to be asked ... Did Ms Lancaster send out the letter off her own bat or was she told to by a very naughty boy and his pal? Whatever happened it is not acceptable to threaten a constituent with the withdrawal of services!



From the Spanish Correspondent!

OYES OYES OYES

I should like to say a few words about the outstanding work completed by the previous mayor councillor Tim Drye. He has shown great energy and through his sponsorship has been able to support many worthy causes.

In particular he has helped the Holt Island Nature Reserve with a cheque for £1530 toward the ongoing flood damage and boardwalk maintenance.

In short I believe the community of St Ives is better for his term of office and thank you Tim.



I am also pleased that maybe no longer the Mayor Tim will still be around to keep his beady eye on the town from his country seat in my garden. Regards Phil Sly

Friends of Holt Island AGM

The AGM will take place in the Corn Exchange, St Ives on Wednesday 24th July starting at 7.30, doors will open at 7.00 pm.

Development at Houghton Grange at last?



The former Government Poultry Research Station is set to make way for a new housing development after being closed for nearly 30 years. The redevelopment of the site, at the top of Houghton Hill, has proved controversial because people living in Houghton and Wyton are worried that the scale of building in the area will lead to the joining of their community with nearby St Ives. Much of the land on the adjacent former golf course has already been built on, as has land on the opposite side of Houghton Road.

Ninety eight new homes will be built on the site if plans win approval. The listed Houghton, an Elizabethan Revival building dating back to 1897 and built for the Cootte family, would be converted into five flats in the scheme by Morris Homes, which already has outline planning permission. Plans for the scheme have just been submitted to Hunts District Council.

A report to council planners by the developers said Houghton Grange was on the council's buildings at risk register and a lack of maintenance and vandalism has resulted in it now being in a very poor condition, which is having a negative effect on its significance and repair work is urgently needed to ensure the retention of its special interest.

WARNERGATE

The state of the gate into Warner's Park was raised with the Town Council following the recent Picnic in the Park. The gate is very difficult to use as it slumps to the ground when open and is very heavy to move.

The response from the Council was that it was the first complaint they had received about it, although they did say that it has been like it for many years and they will have a look to see what can be done.

Fire service plans to cope with fewer on-call crews

Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue has outlined plans to cope with on-call staff shortages, including potentially scrapping the five-minute response time at 'non-strategic stations'.

On-call firefighters, who provide a cheaper alternative to full-time staff, and support the full-time service, are currently required to be available within five minutes when on-call, a demand that is one of the reasons that it is proving harder to recruit them.

One solution suggested is to invest in appliances which can be crewed by fewer than four people, so allow smaller teams to respond to incidents. Another option being considered would extend the response time at 'non-strategic stations' so as not to exclude candidates who cannot meet the current five-minute requirement.

It is suggested with a response time of an hour, on-call firefighters could still relieve full time staff responding to major incidents. This approach will be trialled in the summer to determine if it does provide the anticipated benefits.

St Ives is one of the non-strategic on-call stations in Cambridgeshire.

Corn Exchange announce the date of their AGM

The St Ives Corn Exchange have announced the date of their AGM to be held on Monday August 12th. The full details and time will be on display at the Corn Exchange from July 15th. Members of the public that would like to lean more about how the Corn Exchange works are welcome to drop in and listen in on the presentations.

Once popular sport Squashed out

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has decided to demolish the last remaining squash courts in St Ives and provide yet another gym at a cost of close to £500,000 to the tax payer.

This despite a well supported public petition against it and 50 years of continuous use by the community. Rob Baird of St Ivo Racquets Club, in a letter to the Hunts Post, stated that the health, wellbeing and participation benefits claimed by the council in making this decision obviously do not include those of the squash and racket ball community.

He also stated that no attempt was made to consult or engage with the squash and racket ball community before the decision was taken and there was no attempt to either explore the root causes of falling court usage.

Whilst admitting that Squash has declined in popularity nationally he pointed out that the major factor of reduced usage at St Ives has been the poor condition of the courts, which led to significant numbers of previously loyal players leaving in frustration for other facilities.

Mr Baird said that the business case for this change was kept shrouded in a cloak of secrecy, and that HDC has already recently spent £millions on a gym at the indoor centre, which also involved demolition of squash courts. He continued, the additional gym is certainly not aimed at youngsters, who will now be denied a local grass-roots sporting and social opportunity.



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Armed Forces Day fly past



The audience and St Ives residents were treated to the sight of a Lancaster Flypast (left) as part of the Armed Forces Day celebrations on Slepe Hall Field last Sunday.



Also pictured left are Mayor Dan with his fiancée and Mayoress, Amy Sewell (centre); the Deputy Mayor of Huntingdon, Karl Webb and consort and Godmanchester's Mayor Dick Taplin and his consort.

Screen St Ives

Fri 19 Jul 2019, Screen 1:

FIRST MAN (Cert 12A)

Dir: Damien Chazelle, US / Japan, 2hr 21min, 2018.



We all remember astronaut Neil Armstrong, whether we were 'there' watching on crackly TV screens in 1969 or learning later about the first man to walk on the moon. What was the story behind this epic mission? What was the impact for those on Earth?

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.

From our Environmental Correspondent Heidi N. de Tries

Storm in a tree cup?

I love lying back in the dappled sunshine of a towering trunk – don't we all? But last week I received the shock of my life. My favourite place to dilly and dally with a glass of prosecco had disappeared! A pile of logs, a single leaf and a scatter of chippings was all that remained. I soon found out what had happened.

The wonderful Horse Chestnut in Warner's Park had been condemned and removed by the Council. Two recent surveys of its condition revealed that it lacked the strength to be regarded safe in a public place.

Before the deed was done a notice on the surrounding fence showed the pretty diagrams proclaiming the grim news and explained that it would have to come down. The only uncertainty was when.

Why the hesitation? Bats!

Now I don't know about you but a girl like me knows little about bats. Call me a wuss but they spook me out. So I asked a gentleman

friend.

Darling, you have no idea how important they are. They are on a red list of endangered species. They are so important you can't touch them and you are breaking the law if you kill them or even disturb or destroy where they sleep. Wow!

So, here's the thing. If you are certain a tree is unsafe but there are signs bats might use it then you need a survey for bat activity. Why? Because you then have to remove it in a particular way. And the survey has to be carried out over a period of time and at different times of the day. If there is evidence bats are present a qualified bat expert has to be present at the felling and the boughs left on the ground for the little lovelies to take their own time to leave. See how much I learned? I'm now a bat bore!

Then, early one morning last week the tree suddenly vanished. A lot of concerned people still wait for another notice to explain what the bat expert had discovered. Questions still remain, certainly for a curious bat girl like me. Why don't the Council do bat surveys when they do routine checks on trees?

What was the result of the bat survey? And was a bat expert present when the tree came down?

The Town Hall says the Clerk is indisposed at this time and so perhaps this is why we are left to wonder. I know you will join me in wishing

Going ...

Going ...



her a speedy return to office and for her team to continue to care for our lovely trees. Meanwhile, I have become rather fond of the warm, furry little darlings that are so precious. That handsome Captain Morgan tells me I can voyage up the river with him one evening soon to see them – I've already booked my ticket! See you on board?

Byeeee!
Heidi xx

Gone!

