

# The Riverporter

LATEST COVID EDITION - READ BUT DON'T PASS ON!

Issue 63: 10 July 2020

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## The Riverporter print edition returns

Welcome to our first printed edition since 21st March. Of course we have still been available for the past 16 weeks with seven on-line editions, four of them in colour.

Most of our readers do prefer a printed edition so we have produced an extra 4 pages this issue to highlight the main stories that appeared over the past 4 months. You should be able to pick up a copy in newsagents, the Corn Exchange, the Library, and those places that you used to, as they re-open to the public. If you are feeling nostalgic you can read every issue we have produced since the first one in January 2018 as well as the on-line issues produced since March. They make interesting reading. Just go to [www.theriverporter.uk](http://www.theriverporter.uk)

## SUPER SATURDAY ????

So how was it for you? ... St Ives shops, pubs and restaurants were all swinging back into action on Saturday 4th but with a mixed reaction from people out and about.

The Corn exchange opened its doors for a craft fair and people were very respectful of the social distancing rules. Wetherspoons was open with a nice gentleman welcoming people at the door and explaining the process of sitting and getting your breakfast.

The really amazing queues were for the men's barber shops which saw long lines of gentlemen desperate to get a trim. Armando's in Bridge Street and Venditti's in Merrylands did their best to get through the rush but it's just as well Boris reduced distancing to a metre.

However mutterings were heard from several worried shoppers not happy with much busier areas and the more careless shoppers who no longer seemed to make any effort to keep their distance when passing.

One elderly lady we spoke to was so concerned on seeing a crowd she said she was going home and wouldn't come back until the novelty passes.

Restaurants and bars have been encouraged to use the available space outside their premises on pavements.

For those businesses lucky enough to have this space the rule change could be a life saver and with the fewer cars the effect on the streets is pleasantly enhanced especially when the sun shines.

The weekend Times newspaper ran a headline from the chancellor saying: Eat out to help out! And certainly our pubs and restaurants need that support this week.

The Riverporter spoke with Corrine Harwood of La Muse who said that she had been busy on re-opening and her customers seemed to appreciate that only two could be in the shop at one time. She did also say that moving the market away from the town centre had reduced the number of shoppers reaching the Broadway and that some of her regular customers were still concerned about getting the virus to go out casually shopping just yet. Unfortunately we read on local social media this week that the White Hart will not be re-opening, sad news.



One of the new outside areas includes the Tap Room which published a picture showing their new street layout which, when viewed with Oana's and the River Terrace, Bridge Street suddenly looks quite continental.

So all we need now is the weather!



Regulars at the Ollie were delighted to book their private table and spend time catching up while the staff now work behind acrylic screens.



## But will entertainment ever be the same again?

The government guidance says that steps will be taken to prevent entertainment 'that is likely to encourage audience behaviour which increases transmission risk' such as group singing or chanting or just having to speak loudly to be heard over music.

The guidance also states that venues 'Should not permit live performances, including drama, comedy and music, to take place in front of a live audience.'

For several of our local venues the live music is a major contributor to their success. In the past week many famous performers and artists have petitioned the government to relax the live performance restrictions saying that the total closure of live music will risk destroying the industry and do irrevocable harm to our national culture. St Ives had a thriving night time economy with several venues and bars supporting a real wealth of local musicians but Corona virus has put this under real threat.

Among the many casualties is this year's Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival, which the St Ives Town Team has reluctantly decided to postpone until 2021.

The Festival wasn't due to take place until mid September but there is no sign of live music being allowed in the near future and although the venues and bands were booked in February, there is still much to be done if the Festival was to take place.

The printing of the unique programmes, T-shirts and advertising plus licenses for performances need to be organised and paid for well before the start. Without assurances that it can go ahead, time is now running out to put all the arrangements in place. Of course the Town Team are hoping, as most groups are, that next year will see a return to a less restrictive lifestyle and we can once again enjoy the music and entertainment, for which St Ives is renowned.

# 40 blooming years!



A popular figure on our town market, Brian has served 40 years on his stall but last week saw many of his local supporters come to say a fond farewell as he sets off into retirement. Brian started his time on the market working with his dad and then took over to keep the family business going. Brian is never short of interesting stories about his life and of course a mine of information about horticultural issues. Brian told us that he'll miss the market and his customers but having achieved 40 years and with the pressures on the market as well as the dreadful issues with the CoVid19 epidemic it was time to step back. The photos (right) show Brian in his early market days and (above) on his last day.

## Thank you for the clarification Mr Mayor

Following the setting out of new street layouts in town, Mayor Jonathan Pallant took to social media and the Town Council's website to explain the rules on parking and social distancing.



Many felt he did an excellent job of clarifying the new plan. In fact we noticed a good number of comments complimenting Mayor Pallant on his clear explanation of why this had to be done.

However, it seems you can never please everyone and lots of naughty motorists decided to move the new red street dividers to a position that better suits them! The result was in Bridge Street there was even less room for pedestrians than before the new measures... The council have said we are all very naughty and they have now taken the step to strap down the new dividers effectively making a far more tidy approach.

Local shoppers now get wonderful entertainment by watching the bigger trucks trying to unload and car drivers who refuse to accept the no entry signs, making multiple attempts to turn round... Of course we could all go and cheer, but cheering is naughty too.

ED. Erik says he's glad he can't lip read as he thinks people are saying rude words.



And while on the subject of a long time ago, did anyone know that Waitrose opened in St Ives 30 years ago?

Happy Birthday Waitrose!



## Consultation - a load of rubbish again!

By the time you read this there should be new 3-part recycling litter bins installed in Bridge Street. The bins aim to help with recycling litter and will be installed in all four market towns.

It seems that little or no consultation with St Ives Town Council or residents took place, which has raised a number of concerns. The bins are much larger and being placed in a conservation area would normally require planning permission before being installed, but HDC do not appear to have made such an application. The position of the bins has also been of concern.

Cllr Fuller, when elected as Leader of HDC, said he wanted to bring together our Huntingdonshire community and bring an end to the ultra-local form of town-based nationalism, that is so often wheeled out to pit one part of our district against another. *The Riverporter* suggests that his aim will be achieved more easily by consulting first before imposing changes.

## A new padre for the cadets

St Ives Parish Church vicar, the reverend Mark Amey will take up the position of Senior Army Cadet Padre with the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force from July 1.

Following the retirement of Senior Padre Ryk Parkinson, Mark has been commissioned into the Royal Army Chaplains Department and has special responsibility for spiritual, moral and welfare matters. The duty of the padre is to serve the needs of the 750 Cadets and 150 adults leaders who form the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force. Padre Mark has been married for 30 years to Kathy and they have three children. He says his hobbies include biking and continental driving.



Padre Mark can be contacted at [padre.amey@armymail.mod.uk](mailto:padre.amey@armymail.mod.uk)

Picture courtesy of the Hunts Post.





having your say ...

# The Riverporter

NEWS UPDATE

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

## The beer is here!

Prior to the pubs reopening a brewery dray truck was carefully reversing out from the Quay this week, closely watched by Erik from his window. One of the drivers was overseeing the manoeuvre when he was asked by a passer-by... 'is that a new delivery?'

The exuberant driver punched the sky and shouted... 'The Beer is here!'

Astonishingly random cheers could be heard coming from all directions including over the town bridge and down Bridge Street...

It seems a few people have been waiting for that moment and I reserved my pint on the spot. **Eriks Dad.**

## Dear Erik,

I have noticed some nice sights recently:

A house on Hill Rise has a splendid array of painted pebbles, and The Pound/Burstellars has a ribbon of flowers now in bloom. I'm not sure which council deserves the credit but here are some pictures. **Colin Saunderson**



## New Community Room

Morrisons are holding an opening ceremony of their new community room next Tuesday 14th July at 1pm. Michelle Laing has been asked to cut the ribbon for us in gratitude for all of her community work.

Bookings for the room will be taken shortly. There is no charge to use the room and it will be available for all things community related including meetings for all local town groups. According to Denise Gable from Morrisons, Michelle has been chosen because of her community work. She heads up a group called 'Helping the homeless and people in need in Cambridgeshire.'

'Before lockdown Michelle would feed the homeless in St Ives and since the pandemic, she has been making up food parcels for families struggling to feed their children.

She takes a good deal of the waste food from Morrison's and receives donations from many of the 300 volunteers on her group. She is an inspiration.' said Denise.

## Something to make cyclists smile

(Extract from Cambridge live online)

We note temporary traffic schemes designed to help people get out and socially distance during the pandemic - including 'pop-up' cycle lanes on Huntingdon ring road - have been welcomed by a cycling and walking group.

The scheme, which has been approved by Cambridgeshire County Council's highways and transport committee, could also lead to the suspension of parking on market squares in St Neots and St Ives.



Brampton District Councillor John Morris, from the group, said: 'Hunts Walking and Cycling Group welcomes the list of temporary proposals to support safe cycling and walking in Huntingdonshire. Funding for the schemes has been approved by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority in advance of the first tranche of investment from the government. This means that we should see measures implemented quickly.'

The projects would be temporary, lasting 18 months, the first six months of which will be open to consultation and are subject to detailed approval.

## Covid-19. It's not all good news

During this dreadful epidemic, *The Riverporter* has spoken with many local people, some feel totally unaffected by the lock down. Some deny the virus exists and speak of conspiracy, others have remained locked in their homes in fear.

We decided to look at the official figures released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and see what effect the virus has had on St Ives. The ONS divides St Ives into two areas, North St Ives and the South St Ives. The ONS data shows that since the 1st March up to 6th June, eight people have lost their lives to Corona Virus 19 (four in the North and four in the South).

When compared to the total number of deaths in St Ives, we see that in the North Covid-19 accounted for 15% of deaths and in the South it accounted for 20% of the deaths.

In writing this piece we should remember that the virus is here among us and while we are in a better position than much of the UK we still have eight families that have lost someone early and our condolences go out to those families. Anyone with symptoms of coronavirus - a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste - should book a test immediately.

## GOT HIM!

Shane Smith, 36, of no fixed address was due to appear in court on July 1st charged with four counts of burglary, attempted burglary, possessing a knife in a public place and dangerous driving. Offences that occurred in St Ives, Papworth Everard, Hilton, Biggleswade and Potton.

## Investigation into racial profiling

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has started an investigation into a complaint of racial profiling when Cambridgeshire Constabulary stopped and questioned a man in Ely on 7 March 2015. On 8 June 2020 Cambridgeshire Constabulary received a complaint about the incident when a video of the incident appeared to show a police officer telling the complainant that he had stopped him due to him being black. The video was shared on social media and the IOPC have assessed the matter as requiring independent investigation.

Anyone who is unhappy about something that happened to them that involves the police can make a complaint to contact the police force involved. Police force websites include information about how to complain. People can also complain in writing or by telephoning 101 or visiting any police station. Further information is available on the IOPC website at:

<https://policeconduct.gov.uk/complaints-reviews-and-appeals/make-complaint>

## Keep an eye out for suspicious activity

Cash and drugs have been seized as part of a warrant in Holywell. Officers from the St Ives neighbourhood team entered a property in Back Lane on 25 June and found class A drugs, believed to be cocaine, ketamine and MDMA, worth more than £87,000 and £90,000 in cash.

A 23-year-old woman and a 28-year-old man were arrested at the scene and charged with three counts of possession with intent to supply class A drugs and concealing criminal property. Drugs and drug related crime can have a negative impact on our communities and to keep our communities safe the police encourage you to look out for common signs of drug dealing and let them know if you see anything suspicious. Unusual activity could include people coming and going from an address at odd times of the day and night, strange smells, windows covered up or curtains closed and cars pulling up near to a house for a short period of time.

If you have noticed any of this type of activity and suspect drug dealing at a house or in your area, please report to the police online or call us on 101.

## Council support walking and cycling plan

At Wednesday's meeting of St Ives Town Council a proposal from the St Ives Eco Action Group to produce a Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan was wholeheartedly supported. Mayor Jonathan Pallant told *The Riverporter*; 'We were all encouraged to hear that there does appear to be a recent uptake in people walking and cycling around St Ives. So much so, I hear that one local bicycle shop is starting to run out of stock!'

He continued 'The District and County Council have already done considerable work in this area as part of the St Ives Area Transport Study so it was agreed that we would get in touch with them to avoid needlessly duplicating effort. We also agreed that we would re-visit this at a future meeting if we did feel that this was something we needed to proceed with by ourselves. Watch this space!'

I know many are keen for us to continue pushing for more cycle racks in town (something that does require a certain amount of inter-council co-operation), so I'm happy to say we also elected our members of the Amenities committee for this Civic Year, and that I'm very keen to see proposals on this topic move forward, along with the redevelopment of Warner's Park Pavilion. You will also be pleased to hear that our Local Highways Improvement bid for a pedestrian and cyclist friendly crossing on Erica Road won the County Council's approval, and I look forward to journeys through the north of the town being made easier by these improvements.'

## Help with toys, clothes and baby essentials

A new hub to support struggling parents with donations of clothes and toys has been set up by a group of St Ives mums. The 'Parent and Carer Hub' started as a Facebook group after friends Rosie, Laura, Michelle and Tina decided they wanted to help make a difference in their community. Since then they have been inundated with donations of clothes, baby items, toys and toiletries which are stored at St Ives Town Hall and their homes.

Team member Rosie Burke, 42, said: 'We did not expect it to blow up like it did - the response has been amazing. It's been a bit like a foodbank but with prams, adult clothes, equipment, Moses baskets - you name it. Rosie, who also works as a part-time Carer, said they hope to expand the group to help parents with English and Maths skills to build CVs.

We would love it if any sponsors could get involved to help us out, she added. We are nearly running out of space for donations. I've got things stored in my shed, cupboards and my daughter's Wendy house, she laughed.'

Anyone who would like to get in touch with the group can send them a direct message on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/teamparentandcarerhub/>  
or email: [parentandcarershub@gmail.com](mailto:parentandcarershub@gmail.com)

# Some of the news you might have missed in the last 16 weeks

**L**ike many organisations and businesses we were surprised by the speed of lockdown when it came. We realised that getting *The Riverporter* out to our readers would prove difficult when all our outlets were closing.

We decided to go with an on-line edition but there was suddenly no news other than virus related so our first edition was only a single page, but we did have fun with a couple of cartoons.



*By the second edition we were experiencing the strange effects of lockdown.*

## The silence of the Lanes

Each day the government live update gives us the grim data on the virus outbreak and each day they preface the announcements with a thank you to us the public for staying in our homes depriving the virus the opportunity to take another life and it has been amazing to listen as journalist after journalist asks the same questions every day: How much longer? Why haven't you done this? Why haven't you done that? For many the captivity in our homes feels unbearable, some can't stand the solitude, some worry about their jobs, for others it's family they worry about.

But while we go through this extraordinary time nature continues its course into spring and we notice a silence we have never heard in town before.

Erik lives right here in the centre of town but there is no noise, no traffic, no aeroplanes, no extractor fans, no crowds, chatting or music from our pubs and clubs, but you can hear the Blackbirds and the swans on the river.

In fact you can hear the river itself lapping past the bridge and the daily exercise is a real pleasure. Early morning in Market Hill is an eerie mixture of calm tranquillity while at the same time a scene from a Hollywood post-apocalypse movie. So, when a good friend who teaches 'Mindfulness' points out that while this is hopefully only a passing moment in history it's also a moment to take stock of our busy lives and remember that the world moves on with or without us.

Left: Trainee Sub Editor Milly was so concerned when she heard that a tiger had caught Covid-19 she insisted on wearing her facemask.



### The Council started with its Virtual meetings

In April the Council held an on-line meeting and also intend to continue to do so in May when the agenda will include the usual decisions about the change of Mayor. The actual 'Mayor Making' civic event will take place later in the year. The Council had already taken a vote at February's meeting agreeing that the Mayor elect would be Councillor Jonathan Pallant and Councillor Pasco Hussain would be Deputy Mayor elect.

The April meeting also resolved the delegation of all matters that are linked to ongoing Council business, and/or directly resulting from the current COVID 19 situation, to the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and to defer all Committee meetings until such time as personal contact restrictions are lifted to allow meetings to take place in public again.

Finally it was agreed that a meeting is convened and made available for public participation through ZOOM on the second Wednesday of each month to receive an update on those matters where delegated authority has been used.

### and under District Council matters ...

Councillor Fuller reported that £200k had been put into budgets to investigate civil parking enforcement across the District. [*The Riverporter* had highlighted in issue 54 that this money had been allocated in the accounts. It seems that this is just to investigate civil parking, which we were told at 2019's Town Meeting needed to be done across the District and couldn't be just in St Ives. Should a scheme go ahead then it will be possible to fine drivers who park illegally, something many of the town's people have been calling for for some time. It is likely that any decision will take time, especially in the current circumstances, so we suggest you don't hold your breath!]

### Under HEIDI'S LOCAL HEROES

Heidi noticed as she was popping out to the nail bar (well it's an essential isn't it?) and on the way I came across a Town Councillor litter picking - on her own! Now, if she's not a Local Hero I'm a geisha girl. Now that's a thought.

Well done Cllr Margaret King!

Bye luvvies. And if you are locked down like me - keep your pecker up!



*We also launched our Covid Challenge*

## Corona Crafts!

**How to use this moment of enforced leisure?**

### Idle hands and all that ...

Many it seems are taking the opportunity to fix all those things around the house that need repair, many are taking to paint and decorating, and some are turning to art and craft as a release. Erik has learned of people painting, model making, sculpting, craftwork with tile mosaics ...

### Covid 19 Lockdown Challenge

Send us pictures of what you have been up to during the lock down (not the naughty stuff!) and when it's possible we will arrange a small exhibition of the entries and we'll ask our Town Mayor to pick the favourite and the winner will receive a *Riverporter* Trophy to mark their achievement. So don't be shy be creative and send in your ideas, it's only for fun.



The main story of Edition 3 was about ex-Police and Crime Commissioner Jason Ablewhite.

# 'Suddenly he's just a naughty boy'

**Former Police and Crime Commissioner Jason Ablewhite will not face criminal charges for sending an indecent image to a vulnerable woman he had only recently met, according to the Crown Prosecution Service.**

The decision by the Criminal Prosecution Service [originally due in February] said that 'There is no evidence to suggest that the suspect considered the specific photograph to be indecent or obscene' and that the woman had 'encouraged' him.

It is understood that the woman will appeal the CPS decision not to prosecute.

As we have reported before Mr Ablewhite resigned his £85,000 a year post last November as Cambridgeshire's police and crime commissioner. A nine-day exchange of sometimes sexually suggestive messages with a woman he had met at police headquarters in Huntingdon was behind the resignation.

The woman complained to police about Mr Ablewhite sending an indecent image. The matter was handled by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) who sent a file to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to decide whether the 47-year old should face any criminal charges. The CPS concluded the woman, 50, appeared to 'encourage' Mr Ablewhite, adding she was 'flirtatious'.

The woman was quoted in the Hunts Post as saying, 'In all honesty I feel let down. Suddenly he's just a naughty boy and I'm flirty and led him on.'

## Solicitor explains decision

The CPS solicitor who handled the case, Kirstie Dye, reviewed material provided by the IOPC following their investigation into the Facebook messages exchanged last October.

In a letter she told the woman:

*'There is no evidence to suggest that the suspect considered the specific photograph to be indecent or obscene. Whilst I understand that you said you deflected away from his comments, 'with being funny but never encouraging', in my opinion the conversations taken in their entirety do appear flirtatious.*

*'Although I understand that the suspect's position at the time may have added to your impression of him, he was not acting in this capacity when he messaged you.'*

Ms Dye said there was insufficient evidence to bring a prosecution and no realistic prospect of a conviction. She went on to say that the IOPC had asked her look at whether a charge should be brought under the Communications Act of 2003, and although agreeing that the picture concerned could be described as indecent or obscene, she noted that there was a mental element to be considered.

She said that 'Case law makes it clear that this mental element is directed exclusively to the state of the mind of the suspect and not the recipient.' She continued, 'I have to consider what the suspect's intention was when the message was sent'. She concluded that the evidence did not show that Mr Ablewhite intended to send the woman an indecent or obscene message and therefore Ms Dye could not prove that element or part of the offence.

An IOPC spokesman said: 'We can confirm that the Crown Prosecution Service has decided to take no further action.'

## Solicitor's ruling raises concerns

This decision by the CPS not to prosecute Jason Ablewhite has drawn some criticism, ranging from a 'whitewash' to a 'Cop Out'. Reading the details of the ruling does raise several issues, namely:

Why does the decision to prosecute seem to rest on what the suspect intended? If that were always the case then wouldn't it be almost impossible to convict on many occasions?

Mr Ablewhite may have considered that a picture of his 'manhood' wasn't intended to be indecent or obscene but we at *The Riverporter* would suggest that might be a minority view.

The suggestion that Mr Ablewhite 'was not acting in his capacity' as PCC when he messaged the woman is also tenuous. He certainly was the PCC when they first met and clearly used that position to start the exchange of messages.

To acknowledge that the images sent by Mr Ablewhite are considered indecent and obscene, as stated by the solicitor, would seem to be enough to expect a prosecution. Whilst we want the law to be even-handed with a view to prosecutions, if there was anyone who should have known better, surely it would be a Police and Crime Commissioner.

The very person setting policing policy and presumably a good example. Ignorance of the law could not be a defence and one would hazard a guess that if someone was caught flashing their privates in a public place they would most likely be arrested, whoever they are. Another concern is the perception, once again, that the law seems oblivious to the feelings of the victim and women in particular, whilst Mr Ablewhite gets off with no arrest, no charges and no conviction.



By Edition 4 there was a lot more news.

## Where's Wally?

Police received reports of an animal matching the description of a small kangaroo seen on Ramsey Road late on Wednesday evening, 6th May. It was in fact a wallaby, escaped from Johnsons Farm in Old Hurst, and officers eventually managed to capture it in the garden of a house on Chestnut Road, from where it was safely returned to its home.



## Council meeting - more entertaining than TV

**With television relying heavily on repeat programmes at the moment we recommend our readers join the St Ives Town Council Zoom meetings for some new and unpredictable drama.**

Anyone who zoomed in on Wednesday's meeting would have witnessed an 'underhand and disrespectful attempt to subvert procedure' as one member of the public described it (see letters to Erik).

In May the new Mayor is usually elected at a public event, in the Corn Exchange, with councillors dressed in their ceremonial robes. It follows a well-worn routine: the outgoing Mayor thanking all those who've helped him over the year and declaring which awards to give, and to whom, and what sums he has raised for his chosen charities. That is followed by the election of the new Mayor by the councillors. It isn't normally a surprise as the Council selects the Mayor Elect in February. As face to face meetings have been suspended due to the virus, councillors have been using Zoom to hold their meetings, including Wednesdays Mayor Making meeting. The meeting followed the normal pattern at first with the outgoing Mayor, Dan Rowe naming his award winners - followed by his last job as Mayor calling for nominations for the position of the new Mayor.

As expected Cllr Jonathan Pallant was proposed by Cllr Dibben and seconded. As protocol dictates Mayor Dan asked if there were any other nominations and surprisingly there was, despite the fact that Cllr Pallant was chosen without opposition in February.

### The coup fails

Councillor Rianna D'Souza nominated Cllr Tim Drye to be Mayor, which was seconded by Cllr Fuller which led to a vote being held. This was pretty exciting as council meetings go as each councillor was asked in-turn by the Clerk who they wished to support.

After a few votes Cllr Drye was in the lead and to those watching it could go either way. Eventually Cllr Pallant was elected by 9 votes to

7, a pretty close call especially as Cllr Bellamy was absent and Cllr Lynn Davies joined the meeting too late to vote.

Those who supported the coup and Cllr Drye's nomination were Cllrs, D'Souza, Fuller, Drye, Dickinson, Pope and John Davies.

### Unprecedented action

*The Riverporter* contacted several long-serving ex councillors and none can remember such a thing happening before. To try to replace a Mayor, without good reason, in this manner and at a time when we are all being asked to work together is a clear indication that the murky side of local politics still exists here.

For his part Cllr Jonathan Pallant showed great restraint and handled the situation well, setting out his plans for the year ahead, vindicating the support he received and rising above the political gerrymandering.

### Long term harm?

Of course this episode also suggests that the council may not speak with a united voice, which it needs to do at this critical time. Indeed the Council operates on the principle of corporate governance and collective responsibility, something this paper discussed at length with Cllr Drye, when he was Mayor, so it seems strange that Cllr Drye should have led this less than unifying action.

### Rumblings started in April

*The Riverporter* was made aware of discussions between councillors, starting in early April with a suggestion from Cllr Drye that the Mayor should be someone retired who could give more time to the role during the crisis.

This received several responses, some supporting the change and others suggesting it was a distraction and the wrong way to elect a different Mayor, which should and could only be done at the May, Mayor Making meeting.

# The Great Chicken Run

## St Ives Vicar stopped by Suffolk Police with a car load of chickens.

Father Mark Amey, the Vicar of All Saints Parish Church, whilst dressed in dog collar and with a car full of chickens was stopped and questioned by Suffolk Police.

Father Mark, who had been waiting for the lockdown to ease so he could collect his new flock, clearly aroused the suspicion of the local constabulary.

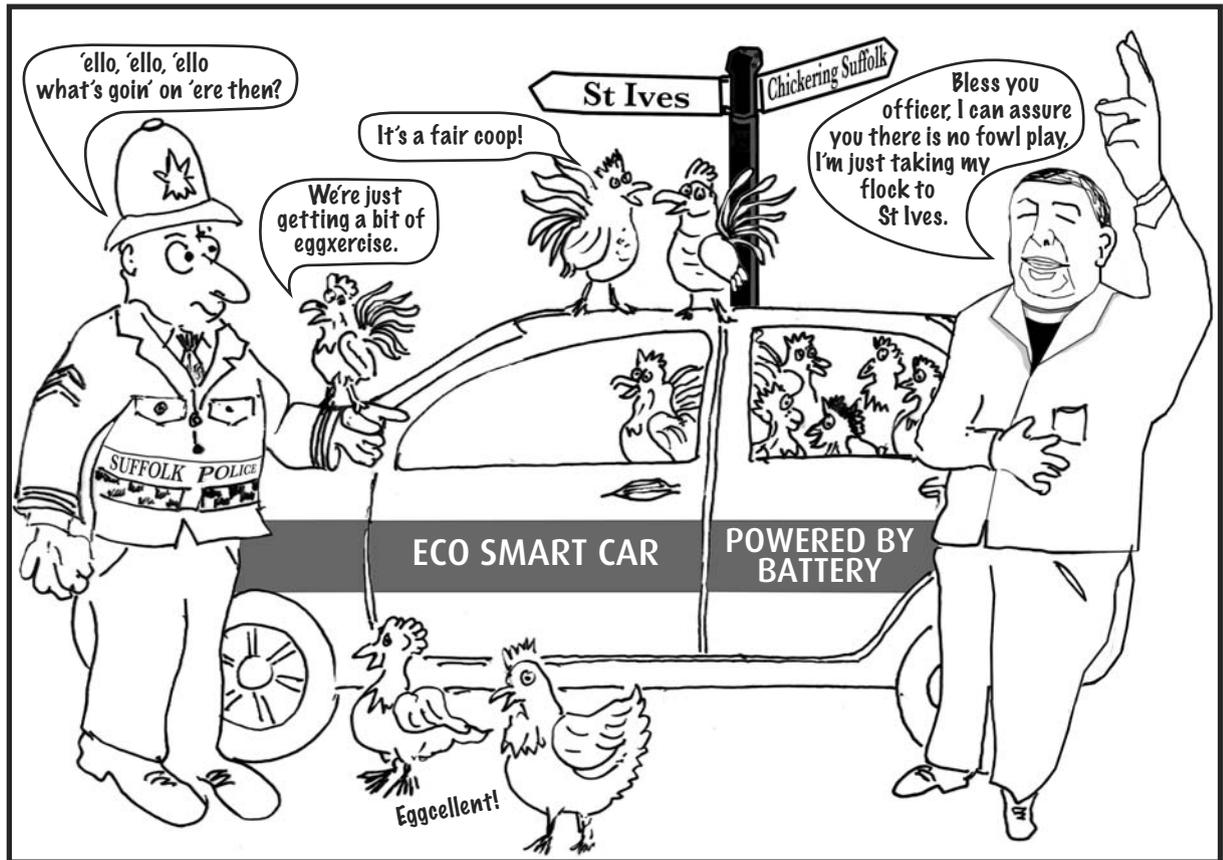
Wondering if they stopped him because of the corona virus situation, it turned out they wanted to check his insurance, which their computer indicated didn't appear to exist.

The Vicar said 'They were very polite. As it turned out it was a computer error and I was able to show them that the vehicle was insured.'

Father Mark keeps a coop of hens in his garden at the vicarage on Westwood Road and will probably be looking forward to a new batch of eggs each morning for his breakfast

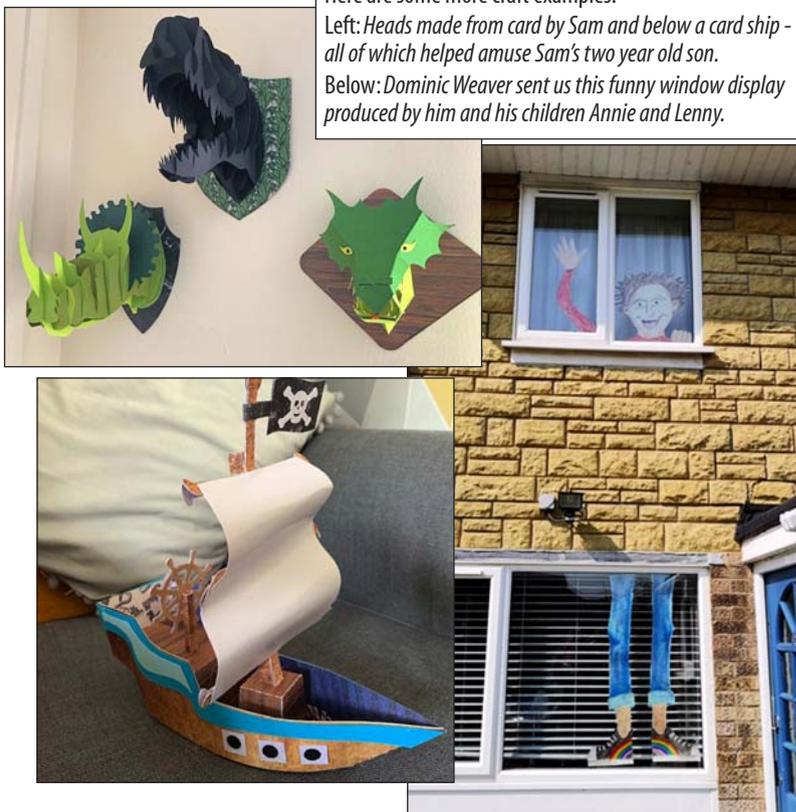
Of course this raises the question.

What came first? The Chicken or the virus?



# More Corona Crafts

Here are some more craft examples.  
Left: Heads made from card by Sam and below a card ship - all of which helped amuse Sam's two year old son.  
Below: Dominic Weaver sent us this funny window display produced by him and his children Annie and Lenny.



## Edition 6 had criticism for the Masterplan

# ST IVES MASTERPLAN SLAMMED

Recently the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and its Mayor James Palmer issued the good news that Cambridgeshire's market towns could receive up to £1 million each, as a share of the CPCA's investment strategy.

The authority said that ten market towns can now bid for a share of £10 million with up to £1 million available for each. The CPCA's strategy saw each town given £50,000 to develop a 'masterplan'. They also said that masterplans for March, Wisbech, Chatteris, Whittlesey, St Neots, St Ives, Huntingdon and Ramsey had been completed and approved with the first funding applications likely to go to its board for approval from July 2020 onwards, and that funds must be spent by March 2022.

### This must be good news?

On the face of it this is good news, as St Ives may have £1 million spent on it in the next two years. But, as is often the case, that may not be the whole story. *The Riverporter* has found that there are big concerns about the 'Masterplan' and in particular about how this plan for the future of our town has come about.

### Plan not fit for purpose

Speaking with several important groups, including St Ives Civic Society and a number of prominent people, concern was voiced that the 'Prospectus For Growth' plan is very poor (the words used by one person were somewhat more direct than that) and that there had been no meaningful public consultation. Graham Campbell, Chairman of the Great Ouse Valley Trust commented 'The Prospectus for Growth states that a new elevated highway in the area between St Ives and Huntingdon (the third river crossing) should be built in the next 5 to 10 years. No data is produced to justify this assumption.

An early report of the process by Metro-Dynamics stated that there would be

'stakeholder consultation with residents' and that they would publish an interim report. It seems this did not happen and that the first time St Ives residents could see the report was after it had been approved by HDC's Cabinet.

### Where has all the money gone?

HDC received £50,000 to produce the masterplans for each town, which we, at *The Riverporter*, thought was quite a lot of money to spend on such a poor document.

One eminent resident summarised the Prospectus For Growth as follows:

*'There is no fiscal evidence, at any stage, that these 'ideas' have merit. There are many leaps of faith with no-supported assertions and basic geography and facts seem to be ignored. If this report is the answer - than what was the question?'*



There has been some on-line comments about removing the Oliver Cromwell statue.

# Election date to be set later

## Following the resignation of Brian Luter as a Town Councillor

### STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

*The Riverporter* understands that an election will be called as ten letters have been received by HDC requesting an election for the vacant post. However the Coronavirus Act 2020 has postponed all polls until Thursday 6 May 2021 and the date of the election will not be fixed until the public health situation becomes clearer.

The seventh on-line edition was unusually full of good news...

# THIRD RIVER CROSSING SCRAPPED

Following our critical article about the St Ives Masterplan in our last issue, we are delighted to announce that the suggestion in the plan for another river crossing between Huntingdon and St Ives has now been dropped.

The Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT), which has been instrumental in opposing the plan has approved this 'common sense decision'.

The Trust welcomed the news by giving credit to the authorities for listening to their arguments and responding appropriately.

On Tuesday the Combined Authority reported that members of Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and ward members on the A141 and St Ives Steering Group were presented with the findings of the work completed by Cambs County Council looking into options for the A141 including the controversial proposal for a Huntingdon Third River Crossing.

James Palmer, Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), said: 'A critical part of the assessment work has been completed and shows that the cost and growth scenarios no longer add up, but importantly we would also fall foul of our commitment to enhancing and protecting our natural environment.'

A paper, based on the recommendations of the Report will go to HDC, CCC and the CPCA committees for approval to progress the best performing A141 options commencing with a Strategic St Ives study later in the year.

Cllr Ryan Fuller, Leader of HDC, said: 'I welcome that the studies show enhancements to the A141 will deliver better results, be more affordable and will have much less of an

environmental impact. The next phase is to deliver a strategic transport study for St Ives and I shall be working with the Mayor to progress this through the CPCA to make sure that St Ives gets the infrastructure improvements it needs.'

The Great Ouse Valley Trust said 'We can now look forward to a new era where the real value of the Great Ouse Valley to the economy of the County is recognised. Its importance for the environment and for physical and mental health is obvious to everyone, but if we want to attract visitors, high-tech businesses and the brightest and best to come and live here, we have to protect the things that make this area so special.'

Sarah Conboy, Lib Dem District Councillor for Godmanchester and Hemingford Abbots said: 'We now have news that the potential third river crossing is no longer appropriate, affordable or deliverable and doesn't solve the traffic issues.

After 11 years of campaigning, lobbying and persistent influencing we have a decision based on evidence rather than someone's good idea. Initial findings of the transport study suggest that the better solution would be a northern Huntingdon Bypass. Whilst this is brilliant news for Hemingford Abbots and Godmanchester, we are mindful that other settlements will not be so elated as it could open the way for unwelcome development on their doorsteps.

That said, it does positively reinforce why we must challenge and ensure that decisions are sound, and evidence based.'

## QUOTE OF THE MORNING

*'Now the meadows can breathe a sigh of relief.'*

GOVT Trustee Helen Boothman.



## Erik checks out the new shopping arrangements

Erik decided to go and see what the new arrangements are for shoppers in the town.

Here he is sticking strictly to two metre distancing outside the Mace store, waiting to go in when it is his turn. Of course he realised that he might need to get himself a mask, so he told the Editor he was off to make himself one.

**Eds Note:** Ever since his trip out Erik has been leaving orange marks everywhere, probably from the distance marks on the pavement which he sat on. BEWARE!

## A remarkable story of a remarkable local lady



In recent times St Ives has been made aware of issues that can cause social or mental health problems and volunteer groups have been doing a wonderful job supporting our town residents and raising money in support of the work they do. In these unprecedented times we have all gained a renewed willingness to show our support for the work our medical and support workers do.

None more so than Laura Bird. This past weekend Sunday 21st June *The Riverporter* saw a crowd cheering on Laura as she came across the town bridge to complete her tenth Marathon in the past ten days.

The gathered crowd were responsibly socially distanced and greeted Laura jubilantly as she crossed the finish line. *The Riverporter* asked Laura to tell us her story and she sent us the following astonishing details...

*'East Anglian Air Ambulance saved my life nearly 10 years ago when I tried to commit suicide by walking out in front of a lorry on the A14 dual carriageway. Their incredible team of doctors got me to Addenbrookes hospital in time to save my life and my leg.'*

*On Friday, the 12th June I set off in Ipswich on my 10-10-10 challenge. Running 10 marathons, in 10 consecutive days, in 10 different locations all across the UK raising money for EAAA.*

*We have been to Brighton, Thetford, Felixstowe, Grafham water and many other places. The final marathon location was St Ives with a 4 lap route taking in Houghton, Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Grey. I was joined by lots of friends, family and runners throughout the 10 days and lots of St Ives residents turned out to celebrate the last marathon.*

*By Sunday we had covered 262.2 miles in 10 days, and it was only fitting to finish in my hometown of St Ives!'*

### Laura says she has raised over £6,500 so far.

For anyone reading this who would like to contribute to Laura's amazing fund raising please see the Just Giving link shown here...

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/laura-bird17>





18 vibrant new businesses now open including Eco friendly – Happy Earth Refills with more to follow with Di Ritas Coffee shop pod opening this weekend



Open 7 days a week 9-5 Monday to Saturday and 10-4 Sunday

# Heidi's Back-street Discovery

*Hello lovelies! Guess what? I ventured out! I know.*

*The thing is, nobody recognized me in my mask. Probably just as well as I'm still not feeling up to much...*

*Well, anyway, I sauntered along one of my favourite side streets (it's best to be discrete isn't it?), glanced into one of those scruffy yards and was overwhelmed by what I saw. It was so unexpected. I was quite lost for words. [Ed: Tell us Heidi, tell us! Just get on with it.]*

*Well it was a veritable forest of Hollyhocks, all in full bloom. Now I'm not much of a gardener and don't normally take much notice, especially when I'm presented with a bunch of wilting tulips by Mr Gasket which I'm sure are from the filling station. But this time I did. I snuck in, took a quick photo and here they are. They cheered me up and so I hope they do you too dears. **Byee! Heidi x***



ADVERTORIAL

## Top tips to sell your home



### Kerb appeal

Buyers form an impression within seconds of pulling up outside your property and you'll never get a second chance to make a good first impression. Give your home "kerb appeal" by painting the front door, tidying the garden and planting those hanging baskets.

### Listen to your agent

A good estate agent will offer their impartial advice on how best to stage your home, take this on board when preparing your home for sale and chances are you'll find a buyer in no time.

### De-clutter

Buyers need to picture themselves living in your property and it can be difficult to see past all the family photos and other "stuff" that's just hanging around, so de-clutter and make your home as neutral as possible.

### Create an atmosphere

It's a cliché we know, but the smell of freshly baked bread, fresh coffee and flowers can make a big difference in making your home stand out.

### Be accommodating at viewings

Be as accommodating as possible with viewings, try to see them at their convenience, make sure pets are out of the way and leave the viewing to the agents, they know what to do and say.

### Don't be greedy

Ask a price that will entice interest, over-valuing can mean extra months sat on the market. Buyers know the market well, they set alerts to see everything that comes available and soon realise when a property is at the wrong price.

### Be viewer ready

Viewers turn up just when you don't want them to, be ready. Ask the children to tidy up, wash those dishes, you never know when the agents going to call.

### Have all your paperwork to hand

Planning permissions, building regulations, insurance, utility costs, have them to hand, you're likely to be asked about them.

### Instruct a good solicitor

Engage with a good solicitor, even prior to agreeing a sale. Talk to us about who we recommend locally.



ellis&co  
winters