

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

We noticed a comment on a local Facebook page that 'the other paper' should be renamed the St Neots Post as there was little news about St Ives. *The Riverporter* was mentioned as the best source for St Ives news and we are pleased to, once again, bring you an issue bursting with news about our town. This includes a fiery Council meeting, Eco news, a new initiative from the Parish Church, the Remembrance ceremonies and HOT OF THE PRESS another resignation!

Lynn Davies embarrassed to be member of Council

Wednesday's St Ives Town Council meeting, which included the adoption of a new Town Councillor, ended up with a row about the Burleigh Hill Centre and the resignation of Cllr Lynn Davies.

Town Council meetings have been quite informative recently and the meetings, held over Zoom, have thrown up some interesting issues. None more so than last Wednesday's meeting, which had a full agenda, some controversial comments and lengthy debates which resulted in the meeting closing before all the topics were covered.

The Council was asked to consider a motion put by Councillor Lynn Davies, seeking to:

Implement action that will remove from St Ives Community Ass. the right to continue running the Burleigh Hill Community Centre, and to implement alternative arrangements that will ensure the Burleigh Hill Community Centre is run efficiently, transparently and openly, creating a new vibrant approach to the use of such a valuable asset.

A paper detailing the issue Cllr Davies raised had been circulated to Councillors but not to the public. [The Town Clerk, Alison Benfield, explained to *The Riverporter* that the document circulated to Cllrs was not a report it was a personal opinion and on that basis it was circulated to councillors only.]

The debate that followed showed that there was some criticism of the way the Centre was being run, which upset the Community Assoc. Chairman, Councillor Drye, who defended his role, citing Covid as one of the factors causing problems.

Cllr Lynn Davies denied Covid was an issue as problems had been obvious well before 2020. She said that accounts had not been submitted to the Charity Commission for 6 years.

The debate widened - contributions from other councillors raised concerns about the issue coming to a head in this way. There was disquiet about the raising of the motion with one councillor embarrassed about it coming before a public meeting.

The merits of the proposal, about how the Centre is run was not really discussed and Cllr Dibben put forward a proposal to reject Cllr Davies motion, which was seconded and a recorded vote took place, which rejected the motion by 9 votes to 2 with 3 abstentions.

That evening Lynn resigned and *The Riverporter* spoke to afterwards. She explained that she had found it very difficult to get to use the Burleigh Hill Centre. This had caused her to look

into how it operated and she was critical of the Community Association saying 'It is an absolute disgrace that this valuable Community Centre has been allowed to deteriorate.'

Her motion was an attempt to improve the situation. She felt she had 'been fighting a losing battle and had been sidelined on this and several issues'. She went on to say that she was 'embarrassed to be part of The Council which, she said was good at rubber stamping but useless at addressing any issues.'

She also felt that by resigning she would be freer to talk about the issues and not restricted by council protocols. She also stated that: 'if an open council meeting isn't the place to discuss such issues... where is?'

Adopting a new Councillor

Councillors also decided on the adoption of a new councillor to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Cllr Bellamy. Four good candidates applied and each submitted a letter of application. Each candidate was given one minute to speak to Councillors before the vote took place.

The candidates were:

Alex Thompson who has lived in the town for 13 years and works in education.

Craig Smith, who was a candidate at the last Town Council elections in 2018 and has lived here 19 years.

Sajjid Khan, a 35 year old, sole trader from Cambridge who moved to St Ives in 2012.

Nic Wells, who has recently retired after 40 years in technical and management positions and moved to St Ives from Godmanchester five years ago.

It took a little while to count the votes via chat, email and text message and it took 3 rounds before one candidate gained the support of more than 50% of the councillors present.

In the end Nic Wells (below) was chosen and he later joined the meeting, giving the council



Remembrance day wins over Covid



The weather was kind this year and while government Covid-19 guidelines said keep away and remember our fallen from your own doorstep, many St Ives townsfolk turned out to see our Town and District Councillors, the Deputy Lieutenant and our MP, Jonathon Djanogly lay wreaths at the War Memorial.

While their numbers were undoubtedly fewer than in past years, somehow this special service gained an additional poignancy in the face of this pandemic.

Even with the absence of the parades from our services men and women the towns people turned out and were respectfully distanced and many wore their masks. Following the silence came the laying of the wreaths and each of the services and dignitaries took their turn in the time honoured manner to pay their respects. *The Riverporter* noticed that later that day several social media entries appeared praising the event and speaking of their pride in being part of the event and their pride in St Ives historic link to the military.

The Town Mayor of St Ives also previously held a short Service of Remembrance on Wednesday 4 November, in advance of the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown regulations which came into force on Thursday 5th November. A third small service also took place on Wednesday 11th November.

16 members for a short while at least.

There should be 17 councillors. The vacancy caused when Brian Luter left will be filled at an election, which might be held next May, subject to Covid restrictions.

Lynn's resignation means that three councillors have now resigned recently. The Mayor Jonathan Pallant told *The Riverporter*:

'I may be the first Mayor in recent history to lose three Councillors due to resignations, perhaps we should also note I am also the first Mayor in recent history to take office during a global pandemic, and to host all of their meetings via Zoom instead of being in the Chamber. It should come as no surprise that some Councillors find the technology we are now forced to interact with easier to grasp than others, and although I can't say whether that was part of the decisions taken by those who have resigned, it certainly adds to the challenges the Town Council faces.'

Also discussed were

St Ives Eco Audit

The Council approved a very good and comprehensive report from St Ives Eco Audit, which detailed how the Council could save energy and costs as it attempts to become carbon neutral by 2030.

London-Luton Airspace proposal

The Council eventually agreed to reject proposals to allow planes to stack over parts of Huntingdonshire. Cllr Tiddy proposed rejection of the plan which was initially seconded by Cllr D'Souza who changed her mind before the vote. No one knew if it was possible to withdraw her support at this stage but Cllr Fuller stepped in, just as some councillors seemed on the verge of accepting more planes overhead. Supporting Cllr Tiddy's motion, he questioned why some councillors should consider accepting more noise and pollution when the electorate they represent do not want it. The vote supported Cllr Tiddy's motion.

[Comment: If we adapt a well-known line by Oscar Wilde: 'To lose one councillor may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose two looks like carelessness.' To lose three shows...?

This may not be just a St Ives issue, after all we are aware that nationally there is criticism of the way our political institutions are run and concern about the role of advisors and officials. Being a councillor is not an attractive proposition if their voice is not heard or their concerns addressed due to advice and rulings from unelected officials. **ED.]**

St Ives family takes action against climate change!



Increasingly concerned about the environment and climate change, Kirsten and Kevin Sporns from St Ives, decided to take matters into their own hands when they purchased 2.5 acres of agricultural land on the B1040 between St Ives and Somersham, on which they plan to plant 1500 trees.

Cambridgeshire has the lowest tree coverage of all the counties in England, and increased tree coverage is one way of sequestering carbon and improving biodiversity, both of which can help to mitigate climate change. Tree-planting, horticulture and connecting with nature and community also have health and wellbeing benefits.

During October half term Kirsten and Kevin invited families to plant around 100 native tree saplings on their plot. The trees, including oak, sycamore, horse chestnut, walnut and hazel, were all donated by local families who had either grown them from seed in pots, or whose mature trees had produced saplings that could be transplanted.

In November, they plan to plant a further 1100 trees and shrubs, many of which will form windbreaks, and another 300 trees into the orchard and wild zone, including some rare local species like black poplar. Originally from Canada, Kirsten and Kevin moved to Cambridge 18 years ago. They found they loved the weather, the lifestyle and the people, and they moved to St Ives in 2012, where their children, Errol (aged 7) and Verity (aged 10) pictured above with their Mum and Dad attend a local primary school.

'We chose to live in St Ives because we love the history and sense of community.' said Kirsten.

Kirsten and Kevin would like to offer

thanks to: The Raptor Foundation, who have helped to identify the best location and type of owl nesting box for the land (and a friend who has offered to build it!); Cuckoo Bridge Nursery, who have been incredibly generous with allowing parking for volunteers; B's Coffee Shop for their used coffee grounds which are being composted into fertilizer; St Ives EcoAction who has been helpful in getting the message out and connecting the family with other like-minded people; all volunteers who have stepped forward to help.

If you would like to improve local biodiversity by volunteering to help Kirsten and Kevin with tree planting after lockdown, please e-mail mclaughlin.kirsten@gmail.com.



From our environmental correspondent Heidi N. de Tries

HEIDI SAYS, 'WHO NICKED THE FENCE?'

So now dears, I am an investigator! How thrilling! The editor said, 'Take a walk Heidi, I've had a tip off'. I love it when he's masterful. So off I toddled. You probably all know that our District Council has made sure that a large area of the Old Golf Course development is set aside as a community green space. To be honest, it was my first visit and to say I was impressed would be an understatement. If you walk along the Thicket Path you'll see the metal security fence on your right. That'll keep people out I thought. But no. Soon enough I came across a deliberate gap. A sign indicated no entry between 16/3/20 to 28/6/20, but the second date was partially blacked out.



Curious? You bet. I love a mystery so in I crept. I needn't have worried – up came a lovely bunch of dog walkers who reassured me access was easy and now allowed. Why then the fence I mused?

Up through a lovely wooded area I discovered a new path, in the distance complete with street lights, which led up to new house construction next to the old Golf Clubhouse. Here the security fence reappeared across the path preventing any further progress. It was heading back when I made my big discovery. A vast area of damp pasture appeared with dense clumps of striking Bulrushes and all sorts of reeds, sedges and grasses as far as the eye could see. Wonderful. A glance at the map identified this as a 'seasonally wet attenuation

basin'. Well, whatever that means it was a sight to behold, and all surrounded by a very sturdy and handsome chestnut paling fence. But wait! Whole sections of it, including a gate, were missing. It was obvious from the disturbance – protruding nails, half a gate latch – that it had been removed in a hurry. But why? And who would do such a thing?

I tried to call HDC for news, and for confirmation of the public access claim from the doggie folk, but no-one picked up I'm afraid. I saw other walkers and a chap on bike with a child, and so I suspect this is true. And so I am tempted to say, 'Go see for yourself'. But I'd better not!

The apparent vandalism troubles me though. So, if you are offered a nice bit of fencing by a stranger do take a picture and call 101!

WHAT AN EYESORE!

What a sight along the path to All Saints Church from The Waits. Can the owner be encouraged to tidy it up? After all, a lot of community effort goes into making The Waits the lovely place it is, attracting visitors and townsfolk alike. This is not helping. Take pride in your town, whoever you are – please.



Since receiving this article we have learned from HDC that the green space will not be formally opened to the public until next spring or summer. Love, Heidi x



St Ives EcoAction to host first Repair Café Repairers' Online Event

If you're a fixer of stuff...read on

With so many products designed to fail and difficult to fix, it's little wonder that many items end up on the scrapheap or in landfill. However, a growing global movement of Repair Cafés aims to turn that around, and St Ives is set to join the trend by adding to the network of repairers and Repair Cafés in Cambridgeshire, and internationally on Wednesday 25th November, 7pm. With the support of Cambridge Carbon Footprint and the Cambridgeshire Repair Network, St Ives EcoAction is proud to hold its first ever 'Repairers' online event on

25th November. While the event is for anyone interested in finding out more about what a Repair Café is and does, they are particularly keen to attract potential volunteer repairers who have fixing skills, and who want to know first-hand what's involved in becoming an active repairer.

To this end, experienced repairers from the Cambridgeshire Repair Network who have skills in electrical and mechanical, sewing and jewellery repairs, will talk about the most common type of repairs that people bring to Repair Cafés, the



tools most commonly used, and the preparation and time required to perform the repair. Items repaired can include a toaster, a teddy bear, a pair of boots, a bicycle or a piece of jewellery. Importantly, a Repair Café ethos is one that encourages skills sharing and learning,

builds confidence and community in the process, and keeps stuff out of landfill. So, a win-win-win all round!

So, if you're curious about what's involved in becoming a volunteer repairer, and have skills to offer, don't be shy and hop onto the Zoom call. While current restrictions may be limiting the ability to hold a Repair Café in its traditional form, there is a lot of preparation required to set one up and this event is one step towards getting a 'Repair Culture' off the ground locally. We are especially looking for people who are handy with:

- * clothing /textiles * bicycles*
- electrical appliances *
- furniture/wooden objects
- * mechanical items * jewellery*
- computers and technology

If you are a potential Repairer, would like to become a Repair Café Volunteer, or would like further information including a link to the Zoom meeting on 25th November, please email: stivesecoaction@gmail.com





having your say ... The Riverporter

Voted Best local newspaper of the year 2019/20 in the Cambridge Building Society's Community Magazine Awards

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

NEWS UPDATE

Locked in... or... Locked out?

Amazing really and you could have been forgiven for being confused by the question.

The weather has seen a couple of lovely sunny mornings and when the sun is out there are few nicer places to be in St Ives than on the town bridge and Quayside and with the town coffee shops open for a roaring trade the number of people taking their 'allowed' unlimited exercise was easily comparable to our last August bank holiday. It's fair to say that people were generally keeping their space around them while queuing for their coffee and then finding somewhere comfortable to sit and enjoy it in the sun. You have to feel so sorry for the shops, pubs and restaurants that are forced to close and we saw local hairdressers open to nearly midnight on Wednesday the 4th trying to both please their customers and make the last penny before losing their income for another month at least.



Sometimes you have to laugh...

The following was found on the St Ives social media site this week... Christmas lights people please take note... **WARNING MASSIVE RANT!**

For those of you who are placing Christmas lights/decorations in your garden, can you please avoid anything that has Red or Blue flashing lights together?

Every time I come around the corner, I think it's the police and I have a panic attack.

I have to brake hard, toss my beer out the window, hide the weed, fasten my seat belt, throw my phone on the floor, turn my radio down all while trying to drive. It's just too much drama, even for Christmas. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Council makes us smile

But we note that the town council too are also looking to make us smile at these strange times. An official looking sign has appeared at Hill rise cemetery that announces that due to CoVid regulations the cemetery is closed!



Except for... Funerals and Burials and people visiting the graves of loved ones and friends... Is it me? Have I missed something? ...

Oh yes and face masks must be worn!

POLICE REPORT

The Town Council received a comprehensive Police report but Wednesday's meeting closed before this item was discussed. The report mentioned: Continued abuse of parking in the loading bays on Bridge Street and Market Hill - having exchanged a couple of email with The Town Clerk on this matter the officer was not clear that Police have the power to enforce such temporary measures.

Further on the report noted that the appearance of homeless [people] housed by Huntingdon District Council at The Dolphin Hotel has resulted in spikes of alcohol related disorder, violence and general ASB in and around the hotel and spilling out into town throughout the pandemic. Encouragingly, several of those housed at The Dolphin have been able to move out to more suitable permanent accommodation.

For the St Ives and Ramsey Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) the number of PCSOs will reduce from four to just two. In the last two years the number of PCSOs had reduced from seven to four. This will be a further loss to the NPT and the impact will be felt by the community in terms of a reduction of the volume of work which can be achieved. On the positive side the team now has two PCs, and a new recruit will be joining them before Christmas.

Dear Erik,
Couple of questions for the Town Council. When are they going to sort the parking on Bridge Street which at the moment is a shambles? And Who has allowed somebody to open a Junk Yard in the most historic part of our lovely town? **Gordon.**

Dear Erik,
Could you please put this announcement into the Riverporter:
FEST are sad and very sorry to say that due to Coronavirus concerns, they have had to cancel the 2020 ArtsFEST exhibition.
Thank you **Gilly Jackson**

Dear Erik, Torment Unending

Corona and Corvid have struck Deepening the deep, dark hole Wherein already we were stuck. In the town centre there's still no public loo, Still nowhere for a pee or a poo. No place is it to be, the Old Riverport, If you get caught short. Red plastic barriers, Despondency carriers. No builder's action call, Only the wrecker's wrecking ball. Shops going bust, Nobody's much fussed. Market stalls disappearing, A few in far-away car parks re-appearing. Council's Community Hub on Zoom Emitting only gloom and doom. Community Hub? Hah! No crasser hum bug! Promoting, they say, positive attitudes. Sound more like empty platitudes. There they contrive To let fake do-gooders prosper and thrive. The Government's partial lockdown Spawned here a complete SHUTDOWN. No Michaelmas Fair Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Bridge Chapel not available, not on any day. Closing Hill Rise Cemetery Appears arbitrary and unnecessary. In the town centre there's still no public loo, Still nowhere for a pee or a poo. No place is it to be, the Old Riverport, If you get caught short. **Doberman**



Dear Erik,
Ref: Old golf course park
We walked along Thicket path last week to see how the new park was progressing. Two new footpaths and some nice fencing around the swampy pond area...but on a closer look we were horrified to see that a large portion of the fencing boards/slats had been removed!! It wasn't an unfinished job as the nails were still in place.

If anyone has had a bargain fence installed perhaps they should ask where the wood came from.

St Ives is a lovely town but we do seem to be blighted by the mindless few wasting our (taxpayer) money and spoiling things for all - not unlike the response to the national Covid restrictions!!

Love The Riverporter and glad that I can always get it online.

Regards **Maureen Brennan**

Dear Maureen,
Thanks for the letter I have asked Heidi to investigate, see page 2. regards **Erik.**

DOUBT REMAINS ABOUT CANDLE LIGHTING

The annual British Heart Foundation Candle lighting event held in the Bridge Chapel, might not go ahead despite Covid safety measures, even after the current lockdown has ended. Organiser Jean Chandler has so far been unable to get agreement for the event from the Town Clerk who manages the building on behalf of Cambs County Council.



Erik is not keen on fireworks



LEST WE FORGET

From our history correspondent Daniel Wiseman



It is easy to forget over 100 years ago the men and women who gave their lives in the Great War for our liberty and prosperity. The fighting took place hundreds of miles away in other countries, but the people and places of St Ives were directly affected. Hemingford Meadow was used as a training ground for soldiers. The hall in the Methodist Church was used as a Red Cross Hospital for the wounded brought back from the front line and was the first to be recognised by the War Office. And the Corn Exchange and Cattle Market were requisitioned by the army. Today the War memorial on Market Hill, unveiled in November 1920, stands proudly, symbolising the sacrifices made for our freedom.

Source: <https://stives100yearsago.blogspot.com>

B's Coffee Shop & Bistro

7 Kings Hedges, St Ives

B's Coffee Shop & Bistro have joined forces with Happy Earth Refills so now you can fill up your essential products and grab a coffee too, Come & visit us



Open 8 til 6 Mon to Fri and Sat 8 til 5

A newly refurbished, welcoming & dog friendly cafe serving breakfast all day.

Buffets, Business lunches and Parties also catered for.

Please call 01480 462422 for enquiries or find us on Instagram @bees_coffeeshopandbistro

St Ives Parish Church launches **STAYING IN 2 HELP OUT**

During this challenging time, we are aware of many local businesses in St Ives that are adversely affected by the current restrictions, in particular our local independent businesses such as pubs, restaurants, cafés and other traders. They will be missing your trade just as much as, if not more, than you miss their services and facilities. We are therefore appealing to you to consider their plight, in the light of your normal spending habits, and assist them by making a small voluntary donation.

This can be as small, or as large, as you feel appropriate. It need not be your usual 'spend', but a percentage that represents their profit margin on your usual spend might be appropriate. A good definition we would suggest is an amount of which you are neither proud nor ashamed.

Simply put your donation in an envelope and deliver, or post, it to a local business of your choice; your chosen business need not be catering. Please include a note in your envelope stating 'Staying in 2 Help Out' and, if you wish to, your name. Of course, you can leave it anonymous if you prefer.

Having said that donations can be anonymous, we know from our experiences with the Foodbank and from questions asked by our treasurer that it can be very frustrating not knowing how to express gratitude and thanks if details of the donor are unknown. This way will at least give the business owner the opportunity to thank the Initiative if not the individual!

If we could all do this as individuals who form the community that is St Ives we would at least have more confidence in knowing that these businesses will be there for us when we want to use them in future.

With Every blessing and thank you for taking the time to read this.

Fr Mark AMEY (Vicar of St Ives)

Martin COLLIER & Barry WILLS

(Churchwardens at All Saints Parish Church)

'When I pray coincidences happen, and when I don't, they don't.'

William Temple (1881 - 1924)

New Town Economic Development Officer

We now have a new Town Economic Development Officer, Charlotte Riaz. If you are a local business operating during these difficult times Charlotte is on hand to help you from a council perspective, helping you find ways to adapt and keep our high street alive.

If you feel like you or your business could do with some additional support please reach out to Charlotte at charlotte.riaz@huntingdonshire.gov.uk who will be more than happy to help!

ADVERTORIAL

WE ARE HERE TO KEEP YOU MOVING

IMPORTANT COVID19 UPDATE

The Government has confirmed that estate agents will stay open whilst many other businesses are having to close. We will no doubt get further details over the next few days.

We have rigorous protocols in place to conduct Covid-safe valuations and viewings and we will continue to insist they are adhered to.

Our offices are locked and we will only see clients by appointment and no one will be allowed to enter without a face mask. We will do what we need

to, to comply with guidelines and to keep staff and clients safe.

You can still book a virtual or an in-person market appraisal to find out the current value of your property.

We can still safely visit your property to take photos and videos for marketing.

Unless you are exempt, please wear a face covering when visiting our office or attending a physical viewing.

We may also ask you to make an appointment when visiting us.

For the latest advice and official guidance for people moving in England, please visit Gov.uk



**ellis&co
winters**

