

# The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Issue 75: 18 December 2020

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## The Best of The Riverporter 2020

This edition includes articles which appeared in The Riverporter over the past 25 issues, starting with Riverporter 50 published on 20 December 2019 and including the latest news in issue 73 published on 27 November 2020.

### Issue 50: 20 December 2019

Riverporter No 50 was a bigger issue than normal as there was so much going on in our busy town, something that changed rapidly over the following months due to the effects of the Covid-19 virus.

The front page article was about the downfall of local politician Jason Ablewhite which appeared under the headline

## EXPOSED



Left: Jason Ablewhite, with Tory colleagues after being elected Police & Crime Commissioner in 2016. Photo Saffron Walden Reporter.

Picture below by Cambs Times.

**P**olice chief quits after 'sending shocked woman pictures of his manhood', read the headline in Wednesday's Sun newspaper.

Under the heading **Cops & Nobbers** the article stated that Mr Ablewhite, whilst Cambs Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), allegedly sent a shocked woman pictures of his manhood and is said to have texted the snaps of his 'truncheon' after she visited the Police headquarters.

The report first appeared on the front page of the Hunts Post after the Editor of the group's Cambs Times, John Elworthy, was contacted by the woman in question.

The article explained that over a nine-day period exchanges of increasingly personal Facebook messages took place with a 50-year old vulnerable woman.

The woman, who was not named, reported the exchange to Cambridgeshire police and was soon visited by two detectives and interviewed for seven hours. Detectives asked her to give them access to her Facebook page, mobile phone and Kindle. More interviews were to follow after Cambs police reported to the IOPC.



The Hunts Post reported that both the alleged victim, and a friend, who is supporting her, were allegedly asked not to speak to anyone – even their closest friends – about the inquiry, now underway into Mr Ablewhite's alleged conduct.

But both said they had decided to speak out for the first time because of a lack of support and information and they felt that the police's attitude was, 'there, there you'll be all right'.

Later in on-line edition 3, 1 May 2020, the following headline appeared ...

### Suddenly he's just a naughty boy'

The Criminal Prosecution Service had decided that Jason Ablewhite would not face criminal charges. They said that 'There is no evidence to suggest that he considered the specific photograph to be indecent or obscene' and that the woman had 'encouraged' him.

The woman was quoted as saying, 'In all honesty I feel let down. Suddenly he's just a naughty boy and I'm flirty'.

The judgement seemed somewhat odd, as there was clear evidence that the picture had been sent. John Elworthy of the Hunts Post told *The Riverporter* that he did have a copy of the offending picture, although he couldn't confirm whether there was any identifying features to prove whose truncheon it was.

Also in RP50 we reported on a Planning application for The How which residents feared could destroy the meadow's setting and tranquility - for ever! Under the heading:

### There is no Planet B!

We announced the first meeting of St Ives Eco Action which would take place on **Wednesday 22nd January, at St Ives Methodist Church**. The aim of the group is to work with St Ives Town Council, local businesses, organisations, community groups and residents to map out a pathway to St Ives becoming carbon neutral by 2050, with a 60% reduction by 2030. This featured in several issues throughout the year.

### Issue 51: 24 January 2020

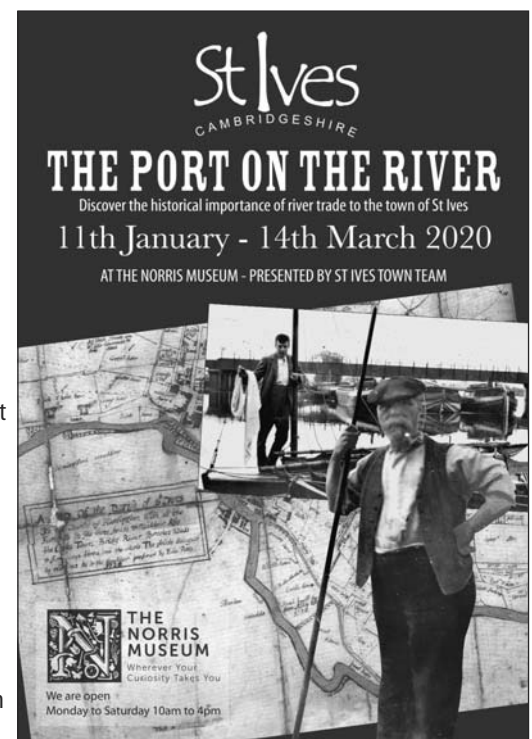
Under the heading

### Exhibition celebrates the historical importance of the river Great Ouse

We reported on an exhibition organised by St Ives Town Team at the The Norris Museum.

Town Team member Chris Lewis formally opened the exhibition, which, it turned out was well attended and well received with over 150 of the colourful catalogues sold.

Entry was free and it closed on Saturday 14 March. It turned out to be the last Town Team function for the year as Covid struck.



Read on-line at [www.theriverporter.uk](http://www.theriverporter.uk) or see our Facebook page. Email: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)

The publishers, Ron Westrip and John Souter, reserve the right to determine the content of the publication. © copyright reserved

## SNOWMAN FESTIVAL SMILES ALL AROUND

On Saturday 21st December the annual St Ives Snowman Festival came to a close with the awards ceremony at The Norris Museum.



Over 250 families completed the Snowman Trail. The winner was 3 year-old Rose Newman shown above left receiving her prize of a £200 Townrow Voucher from Joanne King.

The Festival included a Snowman Rocks Competition this Christmas and the winner was Jodie Ann, pictured above right with sponsor, Slepe Hall Hotel owner, Shammi Malik. Jodie and her family enjoyed afternoon tea for 4 at the Hotel.

### Best Window Display

The town centre was brightened up by the large number of Snowman window displays. Sponsored by Ellis Winters Estate Agents the winners, who received a cup and a £200 cash prize, was Premier Travel. Seen right are Samantha Cox and Brian Gilbert receiving the award from Mike Ellis. Runners up were West End DIY and Just Cards, who received certificates and chocolates.

The organisers of the Snowman Festival were delighted with the event and will be giving some of the money raised to local charities.



## Overwhelming community support for Eco Action

In response to the impending climate crisis, over 80 residents of St Ives and the surrounding villages gathered at St Ives Methodist Church to begin to form a community-led Climate Action Plan.



The meeting on Wednesday 22 January chaired by local resident Helen Dye and sponsored by St Ives Town Council discussed how best to move towards net zero CO2 emissions by 2050. A broad cross section of the community were present in the audience, with a range of ages and interests represented.

Also in this edition ... Erik received a letter from Marilyn Zanconato.



Dear Erik,  
ref: St Ives East Ward By-Election.  
Having seen Conservative Adam Roberts' literature, he seems confused. The leaflet suggests that Independent Councillors on the Town Council want to 'flood' the area North of Marley Road with new houses, suggesting that Tory District Councillors oppose this. Mr Roberts is clearly not aware that several of the Tory District Councillors were elected as Independent Councillors on the current Town Council and must therefore be in favour of more housing if the leaflet is correct.

# St Ives out to Impress

St Ives girl, Flick West, appeared in the Valentine's day edition of the ITV2 show Dress to Impress

Pictured here with *The Riverporter's* very own Erik, Flick went on to win the Valentines edition much to the delight of her friends.

Flick said appearing on the show was an amazing experience, and she enjoyed every moment.

Right: A somewhat startled looking Erik had a brief cameo appearance on national television.

Asked if the one second of fame had gone to his head and would put Erik off dealing with letters from *Riverporter* readers, Flick said 'I shouldn't think so, he loves the job too much!'



The show was filmed here in St Ives and at the ITV studios in Manchester.

## Conservatives retain seat in district by-election

Current St Ives Town councillor and ex-mayor Phil Pope missed out on being elected to the District Council last week by 66 votes. The seat was won by the Conservative candidate, Adam Roberts, who gained 558 votes to Phil Pope's 492 with Liberal Democrat Colin Saunderson and Labour candidate Barry O'Sullivan polling 109 and 103 votes respectively. 28-year-old Mr Roberts, grew up in Ramsey and currently works as the campaign manager for the Huntingdon Conservative Association.

### New Mayor and Deputy elect

This weeks meeting of the Town Council saw the annual decision on who will be the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2020-2021. Current Mayor, Daniel Rowe, chaired the meeting and it was proposed by Cllr Nick Dibben that the current Deputy Mayor Jonathan Pallant (above left) should take over as Mayor from this May. It was also proposed that the Deputy Mayor should be Councillor Pasco Hussain (above right). Both votes were carried unanimously.



### New Public Spaces Protection Order in place

As of this week, Feb 18th a new PSPO order is in place across St Ives. This may come as a surprise to some residents, but a real bonus received with thanks by many others. The order increases the powers of the Town Council and police to prevent any form of anti-social behaviour including removing and barring of individuals causing problems in those designated areas.

### Has the Fire Service been led up the garden path?

News broke last week that the Cambs Fire Service has wasted thousands of pounds and four years as a result of promises made by ex PCC Jason Ablewhite. According to the Fire Service, 4 years ago agreement was due to be completed with St John's College for land for a new training facility in Huntingdon. This state-of-the-art facility was urgently needed as the service has been so successful at reducing the number of incidents that fire fighters are unable to maintain their skills. At the time, PCC Mr Ablewhite was keen to take over control of the Fire Service and offered some land at Monk's Wood owned by the Police.

According to Kevin Reynolds, who heads the Fire Authority, they agreed to the proposal in order to save money and then spent the past 4 years getting planning permissions, which proved costly due to the sensitive nature of the site.

Now, at the last minute, the acting PCC has said the land is no longer available as it is needed by the Police. Leaving the Fire Authority out of pocket and back to negotiating with St John's for the original land in Huntingdon, and 4 years behind schedule, facing increased costs due to inflation.



# There's a new choir in town. And it's a special one



**T**he St Ives Dementia Friendly Community is proud to announce the launch of the Riverport Singers – a choir for people living with dementia, their carers, families and friends.

The first rehearsal was held in the Corn Exchange last week led by the founder Agi Peach and it was a rousing success. Within minutes Agi had the new members singing their hearts out, harmonising and stamping and swaying with gusto!

Her motto is **SING, SMILE and SHINE!** Says it all really ...

## 105 new homes for old Vindis showroom?

The developers have said that the homes, including flats and houses, have raised floor levels, undercroft parking and a boardwalk for pedestrians to offset potential flooding. Developers believe they have resolved flooding issues after discussions lasting 2 years with HDC.

The allocation for housing was removed from recent versions of the Local Plan owing to an objection being raised by the Environment Agency. The scheme involves the replacement of the current building with 67 one and two bed flats, 14 two bed and 24 three and four bed houses.

## Financial tightrope says councillor

Huntingdonshire District Council has just approved an increase in Council Tax of 2.6 per cent from April. According to Lib Dem Leader Cllr Sarah Conboy it is 'heavily reliant on the use of reserves'. She continued 'if we can't achieve the ambitious savings the council risks following the troubled council in Northamptonshire and losing our ability to control our finances'.

Council leader, Conservative Cllr Ryan Fuller called the comment 'quite offensive' and an 'outrageous suggestion to make'. Cllr Gray, who presented the budget, defended a deficit of £1.25 million, saying the council was using reserves to cover a shortfall that it had accumulated for such a purpose. The County Council had already agreed an increase of 3.59 per cent, two per cent of which is specifically to fund social care.

## Outstanding Ofsted for Children's Nursery

Staff at the St Ives farm nursery are celebrating after Ofsted inspectors gave them an outstanding rating. Situated at The Old Pig Farm, it was described as a 'very special' and 'unique' nursery where 'children are truly at the heart' in the report.

Right: *Some of the 23 staff.*  
Picture: MEADOW LANE NURSERY



## Traffic Wardens to return?

HDC's budget seems to include a sum of £200,000 for On-street Civil Parking Enforcement [traffic wardens?] in the capital programme. This is a reversal of their current parking policy and would need the support of the Police but it's good to know that the council is listening to concerns.



Left: A familiar scene in St Ives, back in 1978. The man is Stan Reynolds, uncle of Cllr Kevin Reynolds. Ex local bobby, Richard Carter, now 'Front of House' at the Norris Museum informed us that the lady is Violet Dendy.

## THE RETURN OF THE TRAFFIC WARDENS?



# First signs of panic started with a shortage of toilet rolls!



## Is there anyone out there?

Free with this issue 8 sheets of Emergency Toilet Paper Follow the 'easy to read' instructions on page 2

**W**e live in 'interesting times' to say the least. Of course like our readers the Editors are keen to understand how the current pandemic will affect them, so with that in mind we are keen to help spread the advice (rather than the virus) of what to do and how to survive the emergency.

The situation seems to be changing almost hourly at the moment, so the advice we might give may be out of date by the time you read it. At the time of going to press it is clear that socialising is likely to be a NO NO over the next month or two.

### Our town economy at risk

The number of COVID 19 cases in our county continues to grow and as national guidelines give way to national instructions so the effect on our town could become profound.

### Unusual for 'fun lovin' St Ives

For a town with a reputation for lots of places to eat, drink and be merry the economic consequences of 'isolation' could be catastrophic for town businesses, especially pubs, cafes and restaurants and shops selling non-essential goods.

Shops selling food and vital supplies, (e.g. toilet rolls?) may do well in the short term, although panic buying will not help the situation as some run out of everyday items.

### How can we help?

There are several ways we can all help to keep life bearable.

Initially we can use our local shops and venues at every opportunity. *The Riverporter* has learned that several businesses are considering operating a take away/delivery service during a period of forced closure.

### Be a good neighbour

St Ives has a large population of older people and if instructed to self isolate for months at a time it could be very distressing for them.

If you have an elderly neighbour drop a note through their door explaining who you are with your phone number, perhaps you could collect some shopping or at the very least give them the sense of not being alone. The form below can be cut out and copied for that purpose.

You can also keep in touch, by phone or on-line with family, friends and neighbours.

**It's That Moment when people take the threat really seriously**

**Oh No !!!**

**Don't worry relief is at hand!**

**Edition 55 was our last printed edition for some time - until 10 July when we began printing again with *Riverporter* No 63.**

We did continue to publish fortnightly until then but only on-line and being on-line we published in colour. This remains the case today and our on-line versions, which can be viewed at [www.theriverporter.uk](http://www.theriverporter.uk), remain in colour, however the printed editions are still in black and white.

*The Riverporter* is a free publication, which wants to give as much local news, in detail, as possible. The lower costs of printing in black, allows us to do this. We never carry more than three paid adverts so that we have room for all the news and reports from our community groups and we are indebted to our advertisers who make the publication possible. Especially now we hope you can support those businesses that support us.

# Some of the news you might have missed that was on-line

**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 on-line 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 on-line edition 3 included the following ...

### St Ives Town FC to stay at Westwood Rd

One reader sent us this message:

So now we know. St Ives Town Football Club will stay put at Westwood Road. Which means that there will be no spanking new sports facility for St Ives up the Somersham Road. It is sad too that St Ivo School also was not able to muster the energy and buy the football ground for its own development. In its determination to sell the ground to a housing developer the football club led St Ives folk and local Councils a merry dance for many a year.

### Amazing support from Muslim community

St Ives is recognised as a great place to live. Not only because of our beautiful location but it is our people and supportive friendly approach that sets us apart from other towns. If proof was ever needed it has been shown by the way our town has pulled together during this terrible virus outbreak.

None of us have had to face anything like this before, yet, individual groups have been springing up and rallying to support those that need help. Shopping deliveries, Neighbours cooking for friends [Thanks for the scones]. Food deliveries, advice lines, neighbours checking in on each other and looking out for those at risk. One of our towns Muslim groups has been delivering hundreds of free meals a day and the St Ives Mosque has been raising funds for our local food bank. The food bank is administered by All Saints Church who liaise with over 60 individual groups and the Mosque, that has been in St Ives for 33 years, chose to raise money to support it, the aim that supplies can be distributed to those with the greatest need. Remarkably the Mosque raised an amazing figure of £3,010 a fantastic effort.



### Police say we must maintain look down

The sunny weather has proved too strong a lure for some. Those that chose to defy the ban in town last weekend found the police ready to send them home. Police were seen several times on the Quay and through town last weekend, where they dispersed groups of sun bathers that were sitting far too close together and even defying the public space protection order that bans drinking alcohol in the towns streets with potential big fines and even 24 hour exclusion notices.

One incident in Bridge Street saw a group of disruptive drinkers arguing with police who eventually dispersed the group. Police are warning that they will enforce the ban and have said that anyone concerned that people are standing in groups or are acting in defiance of the street drinking ban, should call 101 and report the problem.

### Our Environmental Correspondent HEIDI had some Big News

Remember my lovely friends on the Great Ouse Valley Trust are worried about the possible Third River Crossing plan from the Combined Authority's Mayor? It's in his Local Transport Plan for Cambridgeshire and now it has appeared in the adopted Prospectus for Growth for St Ives.

Well, the thing is darlings, what the Mayor doesn't seem to have appreciated is that the Government's budget pledge to commit a whopping £28.8 billion on a massive road building policy, which presumably includes his transport plans for our region, actually flies in the face of its previous commitment to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2025. Even I can see you can't do both!

But listen – now, even more momentous, is the news that the same team that challenged and halted the Heathrow expansion plans because they didn't meet the government's obligations under the Paris climate agreement of 2015, is now launching another legal challenge - this time claiming that the road building programme also breaches its obligations. So, will the Mayor have to rethink?

What I have noticed dears, even from indoors but with window open, and I'm sure you have too, is that the air is clearer and cleaner, the traffic noise is reduced and I can hear the birds singing and smell the blossom. Now isn't that wonderful? Wouldn't it be marvellous if it was always like this?

Kisses and don't forget your masks!

Heidi xx



By on-line 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 Wednesday's 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.

On-line edition 5 carried some strange stories and some impressive craft entries

## 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.

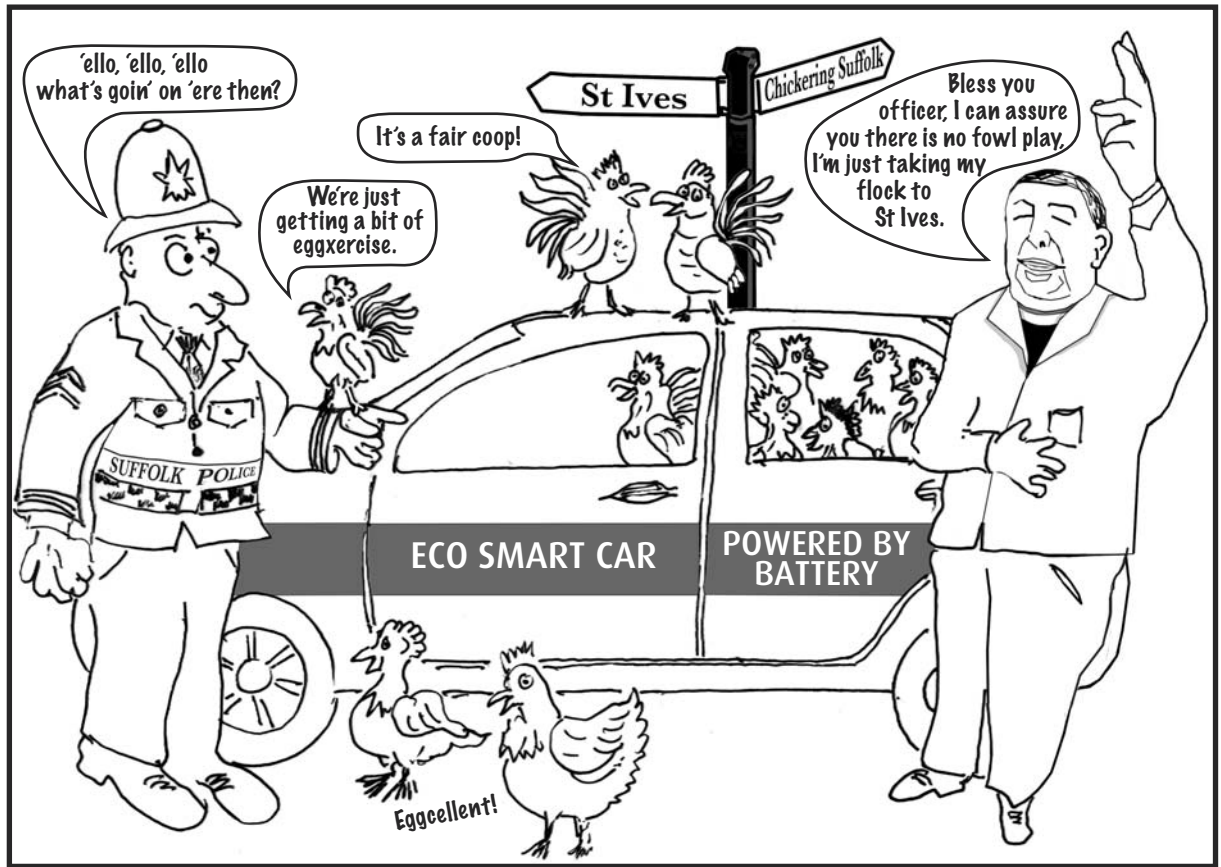
Wondering if they stopped him because of the corona virus situation, it turned out they wanted to check his insurance, which their computer indicated didn't appear to exist.

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?

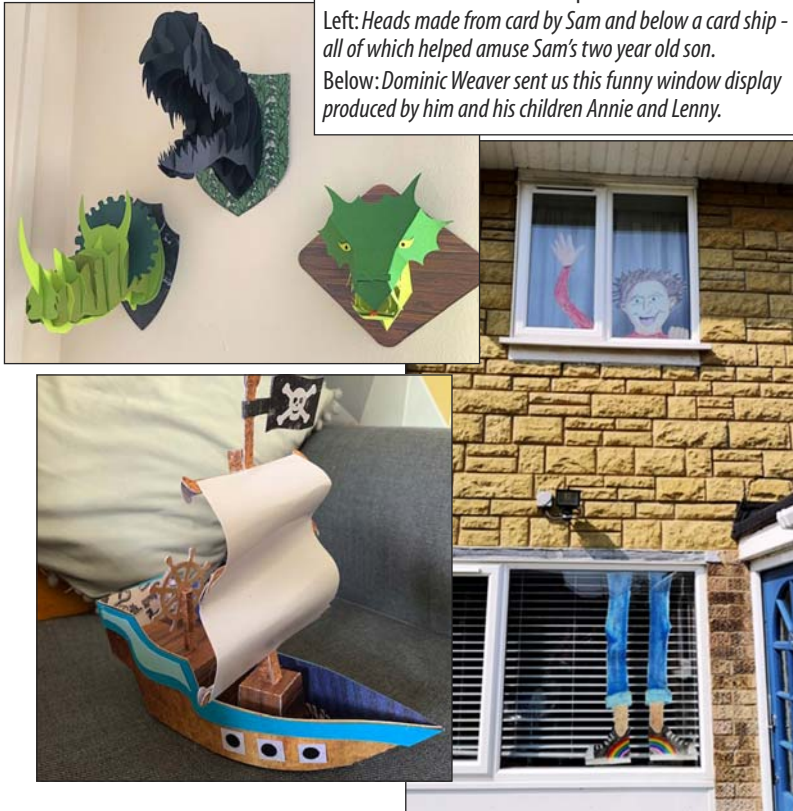


## More Corona Crafts

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.



On-line edition 6 criticised the Masterplan

## ST IVES MASTERPLAN SLAMMED

**R**ecently 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>



# 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.

## 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.



## 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 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.



## 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 installation, but HDC do not appear to have made such an application. **Eds note:** The bins never appeared and are still not there - Dec 2020.



## Began with an Inspiring message from a St Ives Policeman

Police Officer No.7173 posted a caring and inspirational message on the Huntingdonshire Police Facebook page following an incident on Marley Road on 16th July.

The unusual incident involved a man suffering heart failure while driving with his young son in the car. The comment from the Police Officer titled 'I STAND IN AWE OF YOU' praised all those people who came to help with the difficult situation. Many of those who commented on the Facebook post were moved to tears over the emotional post and heaped praise on the officer and those who attended the scene. Other comments raised concern for the man and hoped he was recovering.

### Dear Erik,

Why does the council get so many complaints about long grass? Are we all programmed to mow all the wild flowers down, keep them trim!! 'They look untidy'.

The concept of a 'lawn' developed in 17th century and allowed sports to be played. But why trim all roadsides and every inch of the park into a barren sports field. I love a lawn for sports but leave the rest of the park alone or at least leave some circles of wild area. If we leave it to grow we could just trim walkways and enjoy the flowers as much as the butterflies and bees....

### I wrote a poem too:

Get it mowed! it's looking longer,  
hateful weeds are standing stronger.  
daisy, dandy heads are peeping  
cut it now before they're seeding.

Get it mowed! make it neater,  
use the sit on by the litre,  
trim it, shape it, use the nitrate.  
thin the weeds increase the cut rate.

Get it mowed! I pay my taxes.  
I'll get it done, 'til lockdown relaxes.  
Those pesky bees are taking over,  
feeding on the four leaf clover.

Get it mowed, contact the council,  
The height of this is proper woeful,  
Poppys, cornflowers, thistles, red champions  
all a graceful rare phenomenon

Get it mowed? well maybe not,  
give the butterflies a shot  
grow the grass, feed those bees  
keep them pollinating seeds.

Beccy Morgan





Issue 64: continued

## Covid-19 cases higher in Huntingdonshire

Public Health England data for positive tests, as of July 6, shows there were 872 cases in Huntingdonshire, compared to 318 in Cambridge; 469 in Fenland; 191 in East Cambs and 343 in South Cambs.

## Natalie's Sewing Service

As from today, Friday 24th July, facemasks are required to be worn in shops as well as on public transport and in NHS facilities. If you are looking for a facemask with a difference then try Natalie's Sewing Service in Merryland.



Issue 65: 7 August 2020

## Eat Out - TO - HELP OUT off to a flying start

A lot of St Ives restaurants has joined up for the Government's scheme to help our beleaguered restaurants kick start their businesses. The idea is quite simple... If you eat out in any participating restaurant each person will get a 50% discount up to a value of £10 per person. So if two people eat out and your bill comes to £50 you would only pay £30 or if your bill only came to £25 you would only pay £12.50. The restaurant gets the rest direct from the Government.

**Dine as many times as you like...**

The scheme runs throughout August but only on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. However you can dine as many times as you want - breakfast, lunch, afternoon tea and dinner.

## ALDI opens its doors!

Our new St Ives Aldi store opened its doors yesterday on Thursday 6th August 2020



## Mayor & Deputy 'Floated Away'

Mayor Jonathan Pallant, accompanied by the Mayoress and their two daughters and Deputy Mayor Pasco Hussain spent most of a day travelling around the town judging the many 'Driveway Floats' in July's St Ives Carnival.



Mayor Pallant told The Riverporter 'It was an absolute delight to help judge the 'house floats' at the St Ives Carnival this year. We were all blown away by the efforts put in by everyone who took part - from a recreation of Nashville to a Simpson's Themed Nudist Beach and to a little slice of Venice in Italy. In the end though, we all agreed first prize had to go to the recreation of an Ocean Cruise - including cruise ship, ocean waves, dancing lobsters, rum bar and fog horn!'

## Shock news for The Riverporter

Co-workers, here at The Riverporter, were shocked following the publication of our last issue.

Many readers may be familiar with our local St Ives social media sites. One of these, St Ives discussions and rants, carried the comment (below) from Jackie Ablett on our Riverporter newspaper that appeared to announce, angrily, that ERIK IS IN FACT A DOG!

Here at the Riverporter office we were shocked at this revelation and have requested a meeting with Erik to explain himself and why he keeps hanging around the office fridge. We're not sure of the dog remark but he is looking sheepish.



**Jackie Ablett** What a load of mind numbing tripe and grumpy old man syndrome. Ripping articles from proper newspapers and spinning news and making it personal attacks. And really? Erik? HE IS A DOG!!!!

Ms Ablett did go on to give The Riverporter a true accolade and we can now announce to the world that we are not only Cambridgeshire's Local Newspaper of the Year 2019 but we are also 'Lower than a worm's tit!' We suspect that several local politicians will vehemently agree...

From our Environmental Correspondent Heidi N. de Tries

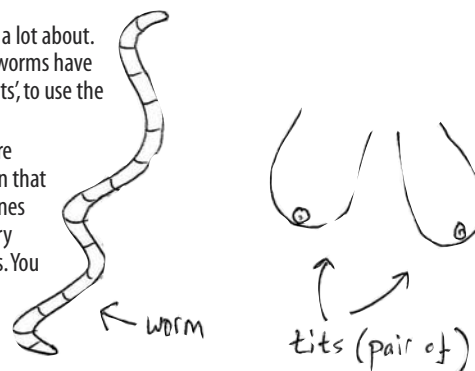
## HEIDI EXPLAINS ANATOMY

Dears, how exciting! Ed has just called. A reader is in dire need of some basic anatomy education.

### Can I help?

Well, it is something I do know rather a lot about. The poor thing appears to think that worms have mammary glands, or what she calls 'tits', to use the vernacular, which she did.

Darling, I have news for you. Worms are invertebrates. Perhaps I should explain that too. They are animals without backbones and are pretty unintelligent. Mammary glands are found on female mammals. You have tits darling because you are a female mammal, but worms? No. Here's a little drawing to help you tell the difference.



So there we have it. No more confusion. See how useful those biology lessons could have been? I'm happy to help with any other readers' anatomical confusions. Just send them in to our lovely Ed, who has perfect anatomy!

Bye-byes dears. Love Heidi x



Dear Erik,

I was pleased to see you had spotted the new defibrillator on the side of Nuts Bistro and reported on it in your latest edition of that fine newspaper, The Riverporter.

You wondered about its provenance. Well, it has been donated by the the Rotary Club of St Ives. The Town Council are, technically, the owners, but the Rotary Club had the idea and financed its purchase and installation. Nuts Bistro was more than happy to be the host and was very co-operative and helpful throughout.

We are in the process of producing a plaque to put above it and hope to have an official 'Commissioning Ceremony' in due course. I hope this helps! More power to your journalistic elbow. Iain Martin Rotary Club of St Ives.



# The giving culture - a warning

**W**e've all been aware of the many acts of generosity since the Covid-19 Virus took hold. Groups have emerged, some helping to feed those in difficulty, but *The Riverporter* has learned that it may not always be the best way forward.

An article from Father Mark Amey, Chair of St Ives PCC, who runs the St Ives Food Bank, thanked all those people and businesses who support the Food Bank but warned that some of the groups, which have developed, particularly since the pandemic began, may not all follow the same good practices which the St Ives Food Bank follows.

**Meanwhile our Environmental Correspondent Heidi N. de Tries thanked those who volunteered to help get rid of the Pennywort clogging our river.**



She explained: *A splendid couple from Hemingford Grey contacted this paper and joined the merry band this week. I was thrilled that my words had reached so far and produced a result. But wait, what a disaster – it rained and rained and rained. Poor things, they were drenched. But do you know what? They absolutely loved it and are coming back for more.*

Also on the river it was announced that the

# Sea Scouts are getting a new building



Rob Taylor, Group Scout Leader of the 2nd St Ives Sea Scout Group, told *The Riverporter* that the old sea scout hut, which has been a familiar sight beside the river for over 60 years, and has been used by generations of local boys and girls, is at last being replaced.

*'There are only so many patches that we are able to put on, said Rob. 'We have been raising funds for a number of years and now have sufficient for the project to move forward. The COVID-19 situation has provided us with the perfect opportunity for us to move this forward as we are currently not allowed to meet indoors.*

# On yer bike!

Since our last issue it's good to see St Ives shops and businesses opening up and getting back into action. It's even better when we see new businesses opening up and taking over empty premises. So congratulations to Phil Latin for his new bike sales shop 'Phil's Bike Rescue' opening up in Cromwell Mews.

Phil's idea has taken off selling and repairing a whole range of second-hand bicycles just at the time that the government recommends this is a great way to keep up our exercise and use as an alternative to our cars. If the Covid period gave us anything it showed us how quiet and peaceful the town could be without so many cars, so now Phil's new business can help us get our old bikes back into a useful new life... Good luck Phil!



# Fenny Penny... Have you seen him yet?

St Ives own fancy dress penny-farthing rider who suddenly appears in a different costume on his bike is raising money for the charity 'Mind'. Fenny Penny has set himself a target of £2,400 and as of this week he's well on his way with £959 pledged so far.



# Town Councillor Resigns

Richard Bellamy, one of the fake 'Independent for St Ives' candidates, who was elected in 2018 for the East Ward, has resigned from St Ives Town Council. [He later resigned his District Seat where he sat as a Conservative.]

# Great news for the White Hart

When the sad news came that the White Hart would not be re-opening after the Covid lock down it looked like St Ives centre was about to lose a second prominent pub business.

But unlike the Robin Hood the White Hart has sprung back into life, thanks to pub landlord Brenden who also runs the Seven Wives.

This week Brenden re-opened the White Hart doors and he told *The Riverporter* that he has great plans to rejuvenate the pub without spoiling its character.

But, as our Erik will confirm, Brenden's best move is bringing Carol Waring and Donna Fordham (pictured below with Brenden) to his team, we can look forward to some really great lunches. **Erik can't wait for pie night!**



# What is the real cost?

From next Monday parking charges will be reinstated in St Ives and throughout Huntingdonshire. Free parking was introduced to assist key workers during the lockdown period and charges were suspended on March 28 and continued throughout June, July and August to support the reopening of town centres. Parking in general is a hot topic and the issue has dominated recent town meetings. The last 6 months have been an opportunity to see the effects of a free parking regime. However the real effect has been masked by the Covid crisis with people staying away as shops shut. A parking regime which charges a minimum for two hours, when you only want to visit for 10 minutes is a deterrent. To compete with the out-of-town centres there must be a level playing field, where town centre shops are not at a disadvantage because of parking costs.

# George Returns

George's Cakes made a fabulous return to the St Ives Farmers Market on 5th September. Huge queues formed, stretching from the Octagon right the way up to Station Road. Simon Hepher told *The Riverporter* that he had just spoken to a couple in the queue who had driven over from Coventry to resume their regular Saturday morning trips to St Ives.

It seems George is back to his lip-smacking and finger-licking best and full production and sales after moving his bakery from home to a handsome sized unit on St Ives industrial estate.



# Town toilets remain a sticky problem

The only public toilets in the centre of town continue to be a problem and may close forever unless a solution can be found to make them usable again. The bus station toilets, which have been problematic for many years, due largely to drain problems, have been shut since March.

The Riverporter has been in touch with the Town Council, who spend over £33,000 a year on public toilets, and we have been told that SITC are now working very closely with HDC and Anglian Water on the problem.

The Mayor, Jonathan Pallant said, 'I have been given assurances that just as soon as someone can work out exactly what is going wrong with the antiquated sewer system, it will be fixed and we will then be looking to open the toilets again.'

The Town Clerk, Alison Benfield added 'At the moment the intention is that patch repairs and descaling will be carried out early next week and the toilets will re-open in a Covid safe manner as soon as possible.'

Mayor Pallant did confirm that, if the problems cannot be fixed, 'I don't think we can commit to taking on the lease at the Cattle Market again. [The toilets were open but soon closed again as the problem had not been fixed.]

# That went down a bomb

Well there we were, Erik and I, driving home when we were overtaken by a rather plain looking truck with the eye catching words 'Bomb disposal' written on the side. It's been many years, thankfully, since I last saw one of these on the streets.

I watched it head off towards the Hemingfords but thought no more of it until having got back to our Riverporter desk only to see reports of a WWII bomb discovery in Hemingford Abbots. It turned out that the bomb squad was called to carry out a controlled explosion. We understand from reports that an 18-year-old landscaper found the bomb and actually picked it up before realising what it was.

Mystery surrounds how the bomb got there as there are no reports of bombs landing in Hemingford Abbots during World War III!



# All change in the town centre

Notices have been popping up in town from Cambridgeshire County Council about social distancing. It appears we are to have a new parking regime on Market Hill. The extent of the changes won't be clear for a few days, but we do know that all the middle of the road parking bays outside WH Smiths will be designated as disabled.

The other bays, opposite the Town Hall, will be for loading only and kerb markings outside Smiths will prohibit any parking, allowing traffic to flow around Market Hill unobstructed.



# Would you like to be a Town Councillor?

The Riverporter has been informed that an election has not been asked for by the requisite 10 East Ward electors, to fill Richard Bellamy's seat. Therefore the Town Council's October meeting will co-opt somebody. If you would like to be considered for the position you should contact the Town Clerk either by post to the Town Hall, Market Hill, The Old Riverport, St Ives PE27 5AL, or by email to clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk or by telephoning 01480 388929.

# The Riverporter supports Mayor's Charity Time Capsule!

The Mayor of St Ives, Cllr Jonathan Pallant has launched a project involving local Schools and the Community to mark the end of 2020.

An array of items, writings, pictures and publications are to be sealed in a Time Capsule which will be buried in the Garden of the Norris Museum to be unearthed in 2050!

The Riverporter will be supporting the Mayor with a special edition of our newspaper which will include the most important stories of 2020 for inclusion in the capsule.

We will also be making a donation to the Mayor's charity fund and encouraging local Businesses and anyone who would like to support this initiative to also make a donation no matter how small.



The Riverporter is delighted to welcome a new contributor to our paper ... 11 year-old Daniel Wiseman. Daniel wrote to us suggesting that he can write a column about the history of the town. Not only is he a fan of St Ives he also said he liked The Riverporter [a wise move - flattery gets you everywhere of course]. So here is his first excellent piece in.

# A Creepy Coincidence

A few days ago, when Paula, the owner of The Crop Shop, was cutting my hair, she told me about a recent gas leak in Lloyds Bank across the road. Had there been an explosion it would have blown out her windows.

Workers in a St Ives shop a hundred years earlier, were not so lucky. It was just before one o'clock on a Thursday afternoon in 1898, when a customer in Mr. R Ruston's Ironmongers (now the Edinburgh Woollen Mill) asked to buy some gunpowder. Two of Mr Ruston's staff, both under 18 years old, went to the safe where the gunpowder was stored. When they opened the safe, some loose gunpowder poured out onto the floor, which ignited when they trod on it. The explosion killed one of the employees outright and the other died the following morning.

(Source: Cambridge Independent Press and Stamford Mercury, as reproduced on the web blog St Ives 100 Years Ago.)



# A secure future for our Corn Exchange

The Arts Council has awarded The Corn Exchange £50,000, as part of the 1.57 billion pound Government Culture Support Package to help the venue recover, when the Covid restrictions end. The directors announced that this is truly fantastic news for the future of the Corn Exchange and will help them support a whole new range of events and entertainment planned for next year.

# Police Community Support Officers to be out in half?

The Chief Constable has announced plans, which include cutting the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by 50% and to 'redevelop' Cambridgeshire Constabulary's neighbourhood policing model to reduce costs in order to meet next years budget.

This will mean that the St Ives & Ramsey Team will have only half the number of PCSOs currently available, meaning that seeing one will become a very rare sight indeed! Watch out there may be twitches crowding the streets if one is seen!

It doesn't seem that long ago that we all were charged an extra £12 p.a. on our Council Tax bills to pay for additional Police Officers and last year the Government announced plans to boost police numbers by 20,000 across England and Wales in the coming years.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary will receive a proportion of this so it is disappointing that the force still needs to make considerable cost savings to avoid using financial reserves.



# How many accidents does it take to get a stop sign put up?

Yet another person has been killed in an accident at the now notorious Wheatsheaf junction on the B1040. This fatal accident follows another last November when a minibus with 22 people on board was struck by a VW Golf. Over the past year there have been a high number of accidents at this junction and four people have been killed. The St Ives & District Road Safety Committee has been pressing for action for years. A spokes person for them asked: 'Just how many deaths are needed before effective action is taken?'

The County Council has been promising something will be done but their solutions have tended to be highly expensive and are never actioned. Regrettably the police do not support this section of the B1040 having a speed limit of 40 mph. That measure, along with replacing the give way signs for illuminated stop signs on the two side roads, as suggested by St Ives & District Road Safety Committee could help reduce the number of accidents at a reasonable cost.

# Lynn Davies embarrassed to be a 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 that 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.

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.

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 her 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. Nic Wells was chosen from four candidates and he later joined the meeting, giving the council 16 members for a short while at least.

There should be 17 councillors but 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. **Eds Note:** it was confirmed that Lynn Davies seat will be filled by the adoption of another councillor in January as no election was called for by residents.



# 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.

Following the silence came the laying of the wreaths and each of the services and dignitaries took their turn in the time honoured manor 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 had 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.



# Planning failure unveiled

Questions are being asked of HDC's planning system and of local councillors who supported the plans for the Cromwell Surgery extension against the advice of their own Conservation officers. Meanwhile Josie Betts, an eighty-year-old pensioner, who has lived in Cromwell Terrace for nearly fifty years, feels badly let down, both by the planners, councillors and her neighbour, the Cromwell Surgery, for presenting her with a view of a tall metal box a yard from her garden fence (see below).

The plans, submitted in early 2018 were heavily criticised at the time by many, including residents, the Civic Society and *The Riverporter*. Our headline in RP5 March 2018 was 'Is this the best we can get?' Although the plans were delayed being passed for a bat survey (which never took place - see RP20) Councillors Jason Ablewhite and Ryan Fuller ignored the concerns of everyone, including their own Conservation Officer and passed the application.

## A Carbuncle?

The comments we have received, since the building has been unveiled, show that concerns about the plans were justified, although that is no compensation for Josie who now looks out on a super-sized tin shed.

Speaking with a local Estate Agent the impact on the value of the property is considerable and could reduce it by as much as 10%.

We asked David Stewart, Chairman of St Ives Civic Society, if he had changed his view of the building now it was built. He said not and reminded us that he had presented the Society's views to the District Council Planning Committee which stated that they could 'find



very little to recommend this application, even as revised. The choice of cladding colour is wrong, the choice of roof design is a disaster'.

Whilst everyone agreed that additional health services was a good thing, that fact, and the poor design of the existing extension, built in the 1960s, seemed to override design considerations and the likely impact on the surrounding listed buildings.

## Dear Erik, SURGERY PURGATORY

The architectural abject awfulness of the Cromwell Surgery extension should be additionally enhanced, so a friend of mine urges. This could be achieved very easily by making the workmen's sheds and portaloos a permanent feature of the premises, he suggests. That would further emphasize the owners' total contempt for the built environment of St Ives and this main Gateway approach to the Old Riverport, he muses.

My friend asked not to be identified. Only he fears instant rubber-glove treatment the next time he visits the Surgery, needed or not. **Doberman**

