

The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Issue 81: 19 March 2021

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Death of popular councillor John Davies announced

We are very sad to report that Councillor John Davies, a three times Mayor of St Ives and current District Council Chairman, has died following a heart attack. He was always generous with his time and happy to engage with anyone regardless of their political persuasion.

John had been active in his support for St Ives for nearly thirty years and was Chairman of the 2nd St Ives Sea Scout Group, President of St Ives St John's Ambulance and a member of the Noble's Field Trust.

He was known for his support of the Cambridgeshire Army Cadet Force and the Girls Venture Corps and in June 2010 received a Royal Appointment as Cambs County President of St John Ambulance.

There will be many voices of praise for John, for his dedication to the town and especially for his generous nature.

Current Mayor Jonathan Pallant said 'His words of wisdom to me on becoming Mayor, on matters of attire and the dignity of the role, were very gratefully received and I continue to take them to heart. He will be very sadly missed and my deepest sympathy goes to his family and all who knew him'.

District Council leader Ryan Fuller said 'He chaired meetings of the council with grace and a keen observation and knowledge of protocols and the dignity of his civic leadership role. Few have given greater service to our community

than John. He will be missed.'

Riverporter Editor, Ron Westrip said 'During the last town council election I stood as candidate in the same Ward as John and as I went around the houses a very common response was Yes, they'd vote for me in second place, but John gets the first vote.

Then they would go on to tell me how he had gone the extra mile to support them in some way.

On polling day we stood chatting outside Crossways and many voters took the time to come and say hi to John. So on behalf of many in St Ives we thank you.'

Can you help shape community life in St Ives?

What do you value most about living in St Ives? How important is the sense of community to you and your family? Is there anything that would make you feel more connected, more supported or more able to help others?

Huntingdonshire charity Hunts Forum is working with the people of St Ives to empower them to design and deliver projects that improve wellbeing, strengthen community and enable us all to thrive.

The first step is to find out what the people of St Ives feel is important. No one is better placed to identify opportunities than the people who live here. When enough people share a particular aspiration, this is a powerful driver for change.

From pre-school groups to support for the elderly, book clubs to football teams, carnivals to meditation groups, the word 'community' can touch many parts of our lives. It's about bringing people together around something they have in common – a shared interest, skill, age, faith, ethnicity, disability or simply the street they live on.

That sense of belonging is hugely important to lots of people, giving them a sense that their home is

more than a building they live in. Whether it's a community litter pick or lobbying for improved infrastructure, the actions and voice of residents can be incredibly powerful when it's well organised. However, these community connections aren't always easy for everyone to access.

That's where Hunts Forum can play a role – identifying where there is a demand for new community initiatives and supporting residents to deliver change.

An important first step is to get people thinking and talking about their town and to get things moving Hunts Forum is conducting a community survey.

There are three ways to participate. One is to visit www.huntsforum.org.uk/stives and complete it online.

For those who don't have internet access, there will be paper copies available to pick up and drop off at St Ives Town Hall from 12 April.

Alternatively, residents can call Ben on **07745 805 937** (weekdays 9am-5pm) to complete the survey over the phone.

Thank you!



Plenty of community spirit on The Quay

Festival taking shape

The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival planned for 16th to 19th September will once again see a range of new acts and the return of Festival favourites.

The organisers, St Ives Town Team are delighted that there is every chance that the Festival will go ahead this year. It will be seven years since the first Festival in 2015 and it's popularity continues to grow with many people arranging their holidays to coincide with the four days of free music.

'Each year we try to ensure that the Festival offers something new for our customers and this year we have 7 acts which have not played here before' said Town Team Chairman, Sheila Stones. 'Having had to cancel the Festival last year I'm sure this year will be very special'. Although the programme is still being finalised there will be around 23 free concerts over the 4 days.



One of the new bands for the Festival are Nottingham based Kfkadiva who will be appearing at Floods at 5.30pm Saturday 17th September. With a sound that's hard to pigeonhole, their songs combine riffy-bluesy-rock with soaring melodies and hard-to-ignore messages. The result is an original-sounding, commercial and appealingly quirky 'multi-genre' indie rock-pop act with energy and impact.

Not-to-be-missed Festival and Illuminated Boat Parade is the reason to live in St Ives

An article that appeared on Cambridge Live stated that St Ives was the best place to live after Cambridge itself. Among the reasons why, was that our historic market town organises a not-to-be-missed Festival each year including a stunning illuminated boat event. The article also asked... 'Always fancied owning a little pleasure boat? Move to charming St Ives and you'll have the perfect excuse to spend your spare time messing about on the river. It might not have the beaches of its more famous Cornish counterpart but you can still enjoy waterside living in this lovely little town. Lower house prices also seemed attractive with an average price of £294k compared to £507k in Cambridge.'

CORRECTION The Riverporter has been contacted by Mr R King who asked us to correct an article we published last year about the Cromwell Medical Practice extension. Mr King stated that he had never owned any part or element of the building or practice. He also confirmed that his wife, Dr Morag King, who was a partner at the practice for 30 years and latterly held a one-fifth share in the practice, retired in 2015 and ceased to have any financial interest in the building or practice in 2016. The Riverporter apologises to Mr and Mrs King for this mistake and are grateful to him for this correction, which we are happy to make.

Mr King also said that his father, Mr H S King, who died in April 2020 at the age of 95 had been a teacher, scientist and engineer whose passion for design and technology never faded. He would have been most interested in the new extension's design and modern construction. Whilst he was keen to preserve the town's history, he was also keen to see modern innovation where appropriate.

Read on-line at www.theriverporter.uk or see our Facebook page. Email: editor@theriverporter.uk

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Volunteer Groups – Message Forum

If you are a member of a community group that wishes to let others know what you do, or needs specific help, or or just wants to promote your organisation, you can email us at theriverporter.uk and we will include it on the Message Forum.

Rotary Competitions for Young People

This year our Youth Committee have set up competitions for our Young people to get involved with. Entries will be on view at our Celebration of Youth in July, with winners going through to District Competitions. The competitions are aimed at 7 to 17 year olds with something for everyone.

Young Filmmaker for those budding movie-makers this might be the Inspiration you need – the theme is 'Challenge'

Young Environmentalist the theme is 'Climate Change-carbon Reduction'.

Young Artist a chance for our creative young people to come up with a Masterpiece, the theme is 'Wild Nature'.

All entries must be received by 17th April so email us now for further details and entry forms.

Young Filmmaker – YFM@stivesrotarycambs.org.uk

Young Environmentalist – YE@stivesrotarycambs.org.uk

Young Artist – YA@stivesrotarycambs.org.uk

Our Facebook page is always worth a visit to see what else we are doing ...

Do you know anyone who wants to gain new skills ... with a view to developing a career in environmental management, conservation or grounds maintenance?

Groundwork East, working in partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council, is currently seeking to recruit a Green Team to undertake conservation work in The Thicket, St Ives. This project is free and open to anyone over the age of 16 who has an interest in nature and woodland conservation.

Tasks for this project include woodland clearance, pathway and drainage management, installation of timber handrails and a community bench, making of bird boxes and planting of native bulbs and saplings.

Volunteers will have the option to work towards a qualification in practical horticulture and will have the opportunity to learn from and work with Huntingdonshire District Council's Operations Team and their contractors.

The project will be running for 3 days a week (Tuesdays – Thursdays) for 10 weeks from 10am to 3pm starting on the 20th April 2021.

Anyone interested in joining the project asked to register his or her interest on the form here:

<http://www.groundwork.org.uk/greenrecovery-cambs/>

Or please email Andrea.Finbow@groundwork.org.uk for more information.

<https://www.facebook.com/GroundworkEast/photos/a.408004752917113/1296483544069225>

Would you like to be a marketing apprentice?



Do you want the opportunity to learn about event and catering management? Or perhaps marketing?

The Corn Exchange is getting ready to re-open and will soon be looking for young people interested in working with us as we prepare our new program of music and arts events and all our usual hirers.

If you like the idea of the opportunity to train and build a career in hospitality. Let the Corn Exchange team know on... bookings@thecornexchange.org.uk

St Ives Railway Station in 1964.



THE RAILWAY LEAVES ST IVES

Part 3 from our history correspondent Daniel Wiseman.

From August 17th, 1847, passengers were able to travel to and from St Ives by train. On August 18th, 1900, the Cambridge Daily News reported that the world's first retail chain had opened a branch here...

'Messrs W. H. Smith and Son have recently made a great improvement at the railway station in opening their smart new bookstall, at which all publications can now be obtained. It promises an abundant selection of literature, and should prove to be of great advantage to both the travelling public and the inhabitants of St Ives and district.'

But across the country, the railways were in trouble. There were 120 companies competing for business and investors weren't happy. At the start of The Great War in 1914, there were over 20,000 miles of track and 4,000 stations. The railways became state controlled and were vital for efficiently transporting soldiers and supplies.

After the war, the Government decided to amalgamate existing companies into four groups, each controlling separate regions of Great Britain. So, from 1923, the Great Eastern Railway, which ran St Ives station, became part of the LNER. As passengers and goods moved to the roads, the four companies offered faster services (setting new speed records) and promised to get you there in comfort. But there had to be closures, too, including in 1931, the line from St Ives to Ely.

After World War II, it became clear the private sector would not be able to maintain the rail network, and so in 1948, it was nationalised, creating 'British Railways'. They were to end the use of steam locomotives, but to try to make the railways profitable, they would need to make further closures.

In June 1959, passenger services between St Ives and Kettering were withdrawn and Huntingdon East station closed.

Then in 1963 the British Railways Board, chaired by Dr Richard Beeching, published a report, which analysed a week-long survey of rail traffic and recommended that over 2,000 stations and 6,000 miles of track should close, including the Cambridge – St Ives – March line.

Although the St Ives to March line closed to passengers in March 1967, St Ives station survived a little longer, becoming unstaffed to save money. But the Cambridge line served a small population and passenger numbers were not high enough to sustain the service.

On October 3rd, 1970, the final regular passenger journey took place. St Ives Councillors treated the occasion like a funeral, dressing in long overcoats and top hats. As they gathered around a fake tombstone, they invited the crowd to join them in a song, to the tune of 'Oh My Darling Clementine':

Oh My Darling, Oh My Darling, Oh My Darling, Cambridge Line,
Thou art lost and gone forever, Dreadful Sorry, Cambridge Line...

As the 10 o'clock train departed into the night, the Mayor led a chorus of 'Auld Lang Syne'.

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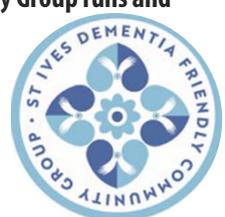
Call: **01480 879645**

The St Ives Dementia Friendly Community Group runs and supports a variety of activities in town

These include the Dementia Cafe, Love to Move (a seated exercise programme with music, developed by the British Gymnastics Foundation), reminiscing sessions in association with the Norris Museum, the Memory Lane Singing Cafe and the Riverport Singers - the St Ives Dementia Friendly Community Choir. We are looking forward to restarting our

activities in person as soon as government regulations allow. In the meantime, many of our activities continue on Zoom. For further information regarding online sessions and registering your interest in joining our activities when we restart in person, visit us at

<https://www.facebook.com/stivesdementiafriendlycommunity/> or contact the secretary of DFCC agipeach@icloud.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

COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE

HDC's Cabinet agrees to progress civil parking enforcement

Enforcement of on-street parking is currently the responsibility of the police but the demand on police resources means that parking issues often don't receive the attention that residents expect, leaving ongoing parking problems unresolved. A recent study found that Huntingdonshire suffers from high levels of non-compliance with its on-street parking restrictions. St Ives residents have been aware of this for many years and it seems that calls for Parking Wardens may be heard at last.

This move will see the District Council assume parking enforcement responsibility from the police for on-street (yellow line) offences. Local councils can seek permission from the government to adopt the powers for civil parking enforcement, and following the Cabinet's agreement HDC will now work with Cambridgeshire County Council to submit an application to the Department for Transport. If this application is approved, all on and off-street parking in Huntingdonshire's towns and villages will, in the future, be enforced by the District Council. St Ives Councillor Ryan Fuller said: 'Civil parking enforcement (CPE) is a discretionary activity that will cost the council money to deliver but my Cabinet and I believe it is the right thing to do to both free up police resources and to respond to what local residents are asking for.'

HDC teams up with TrailTale for Walks

The TrailTale App, which is free to download on mobile phones will allow people to access walks in the area. Walks will vary from 1 to 3 miles in length and will be launched on the app on 29 March with initial routes around St Neots, St Ives, Huntingdon, Godmanchester, Ramsey and Eaton Socon. Visit your app store and search for Trail Tale for more information.

Climate Commission publish findings

On Monday 16 March, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Climate Commission published their initial findings. The good news is that nature recovery is and will be a priority, including access to more and better green space. Healthier homes, cleaner air, good jobs in the growing green economy, improved public transport and better health and well-being are also prominent features. The report also recognises the important role communities will play in the transitions required and the extent to which behaviour change will be required to reduce emissions sufficiently to make a difference. It is anticipated the full report will be published in September this year, will include more information about nature and the role of communities in particular. To watch the presentation and read the report, use this link <http://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca-gov-uk-6985942.hs-sites.com/cpicc-initial-report>.

Town Council News

Last week's Town Council meeting unanimously approved funding for an extra Ouse Valley Way panel, which will be sited on the Waits. The Ouse Valley Trust is revising and updating the panels along the Ouse Valley, which guide and inspire visitors to enjoy these unique surroundings.

The Council also approved to spend up to £700 to serve notice and evict, if necessary, two boats from The Waits by an eviction company. The boats have overstayed their mooring time and could prevent tourist boats from visiting the town if they were allowed to remain there.

Good News the toilets are open again

The Riverporter has been informed that the Cattle Market toilets, managed by St Ives Town Council, which have been problematic for some time are now open. The toilets, often open for just a day, or as on the last occasion, six days, before problems occurred forcing them to shut again, have remained open since the 5th February, much to everyone's relief.

Dear Erik,

Since a car spun into my front garden hedge the other day I have an even clearer view of what's going on at a 'haul road' for lorries accessing a housing development across the road. Just to the left of the haul road is a cycle track entrance into the new estate, The Spires. All very laudable, especially as it links to cycle tracks all over St Ives, I'm told, and will eventually link to a cycle track leading to a new country park and out to The Thicket.

The only trouble is, the bit I'm looking at, through the hole in the hedge, leads on to a cycling route along Houghton Road, the A1123. And, as one would predict, it's used not just by cyclists, but by pedestrians as well. . .

Such as the young lad I just noticed being pulled by his dog on a lead out from the cycle track access on to the pavement on Houghton Road, just as yet another of those huge lorries appeared. The boy was going hell for leather towards the road itself, then managed to get control of his dog and veered up the pavement while the lorry driver at 40mph tried to brake and sounded his horn.

The car that spun off into my hedge fortunately did so on the side of Houghton Road where there's no pavement, only a ditch to stop it in its tracks. If it had spun off on the other side, where weekend families were out walking together, you would have already heard of the incident.

Similarly, if the dog had got the better of its owner, you would have heard about that too.

A cycle track exiting on to a road heavily laden with an upsurge in through-traffic HGVs from the A1M north, avoiding A14 roadworks doesn't seem such a good idea now, however well intentioned.

I, for one, wouldn't walk along Houghton Road these days. If that were the only route available to St Ivo School, I'd take my children by car. And it scares me that young families who have recently moved into The Spires may not as yet be aware of its dangers; and that those responsible for cycle tracks haven't as yet seen the error of their ways—and closed the cycle track, at least until the problem of excessive HGVs on Houghton Road is ironed out.

Peter Law

Safer Wheatsheaf junction better late than never?

As we write this issue yet another serious accident has taken place at Huntingdonshire's most dangerous junction. Yesterday HDC's cabinet sanctioned a contribution from CIL money of £500k towards making the junction safer. The total estimated cost of the work will be £1.2m.

We are not sure if the speed limits will be reduced but according to Colin Saunderson, who has been arguing for a solution for some time, they need to be. Although the money is welcome it will still be a while before the work is done. According to Colin, so far no speeding tickets have been issued from the enhanced safety camera. For six months at least it was not switched on.

A Blot on the landscape

Concern is being raised about the state of a piece of land which appears to gather more debris with each passing day. The Riverporter has been sent this picture from concerned residents, which highlights the problem. The land in question is in the heart of our historic town, by the Parish Church, in a conservation area. This is the view from our wonderful nature reserve of Holt Island, which hopes to open soon to visitors, subject to Covid restrictions. As the warmer weather returns and the town gets it's spring clean and newly planted flower beds, it is hoped that this eyesore, which some have labelled Steptoe's Yard, will be cleaned up.



Now it's getting serious

Once again we are hearing stories of people having worrying confrontations with maybe dog thieves. The weekly police neighbourhood report has now offered advice and guidance following numerous calls from worried owners.

Perhaps the most worrying reports are posts on local town sites of encounters with men in white vans, women in a Land Rover and pairs of individuals seen over the meadow behind the Dolphin. In checking our facts we found at least four St Ives posts on this issue in the past week. One such report says. . .

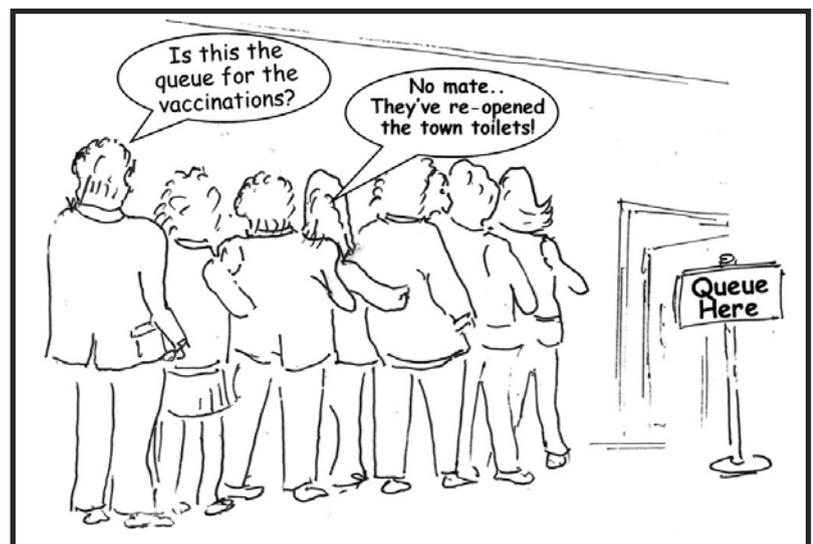
'A friend of mine was walking a dog around Hemingford Meadow (behind the dolphin) this

morning and a couple of guys tried taking her dog. The dog growled at them so they backed off. Please be careful and stay safe.

Description given: Both white male, one skinny with long greasy mouse brown hair the other a bit chunkier with short curly hair. Reported to police. (sic).

Police say to call 112 if you see or hear of this. But very worryingly The Riverporter has also heard that Police are not always responding to these reports.

National newspapers have been carrying stories of tougher fines and sentences for this most distressing crime, but government action seems slow. A recent survey suggests that all concerned dog owners should write to their MP and demand they take the issue seriously and let's not forget that the market in these poor dogs is created by those of us prepared to pay exorbitant sums of money to these thieves.



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Flooding Update

In a round-robin email, County Councillor, Kevin Reynolds said he had visited a number of known flood 'hot spots' on 10 March while it was raining and found a very mixed bag. The email said ... *'with water pooling in the road and up to the kerb, I guess if there had been more rain there may have been a problem to the houses that were previously flooded.'*

The email also raised concern about St Audrey's Lane, opposite Pig Lane up to Nursery Gardens and beyond near the public footpath on the north side of the road ... *'where there was a considerable amount of standing water during the rainfall.'* He continued *'It looks like it is not draining off the carriageway through the gullies drains and a build-up of silt is clearly visible against the kerb. I have asked the Highway Engineers to organise a visit by the 'sludge gulper.'*

The County Council announced an additional £2.7m for flood related items, but with many local areas affected during last December's floods seeking funds, will it be enough? Cllr Reynolds believes that most of the problems could be solved by proper maintenance.

Did a 2009 HDC report predict last December's floods?

The St Ives Action Support Team, formed after the floods, discovered that a HDC district-wide study/ report showed that St Ives' problems were known about in 2009.

It isn't known what, if anything, was done about it.

The report mentioned - *Problems exist in the Pig Lane catchment in St Audrey Lane and Pig Lane in times of heavy rainfall.*

Under the heading **Existing Flood Risk at St Ives**, the report mentioned the benefits of the St Ives and Hemingford Flood Alleviation Scheme and later says - *Local residents have complained to HDC about surface water flooding in the St Audrey Lane area, but these complaints had not been relayed to AW and therefore did not appear on their system ...* It then listed zones of higher flood risk, namely: the Fire Station and Clinic, No.23 North Road, West Street, Lynhurst, London Road, parts of the Golf Course, Needingworth Road and an area South of New Road.

Cambridge County Council has once again been mentioned in The Private Eye's Rotten Boroughs column, as this clip explains.

● **FORMER** Cambridgeshire county council deputy leader Roger Hickford, a financial adviser by trade, who in 2017 was awarded a £187,000 low-interest loan by the council to build a luxury extension to the "farm" he rented from the council – while chairing the committee overseeing the county's farms (*Eye 1488*) – has at last resigned. Meanwhile, the Tory council's audit and accounts committee has decided to keep secret 386 pages of a 400-page report into the affair, citing fears that members could face legal action. Fancy!

ADVERTORIAL

Housing Market Booming

The housing market is experiencing a second wave of heightened activity following the extension of the stamp duty holiday and interim increase of the nil rate band, to £250,000, until September.

The supply of homes advertised for sale continues to fall short of demand from buyers who are keen to take advantage of the stamp duty savings on offer. Other factors, like a shift to more people working from home, has motivated a new type of buyer, increasing competition for those searching for their next home.

Like 2020, 2021 remains a seller's market in which we are likely to see annual house price growth of around 4%. The national average house price increased by 7.6% over the year to November 2020 according to the Office for National Statistics.

First-time buyers have welcomed the Governments mortgage guarantee scheme, designed to help those with smaller deposits step onto the property ladder. With average house prices in Cambridgeshire at an all-time high, £324,942, finding the 10-15% deposit required due to restricted lending in 2020 was a barrier for many.

First-time buyers are often the vital first link in a sales chain. By lowering the minimum deposit requirement will benefit the whole of the market.

Now is a fantastic time to make the first step onto the property market, move up to a larger home or downsize to release equity. As with any big decision, good honest advice is invaluable and here at Ellis Winters we would be delighted to help you. Call us today to discuss your moving plans.

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