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## Difficult start for the new Mayor

**P**asco Hussain could not have envisaged that his first week in the job would involve trying to deal with an issue which has resulted in a public petition on a matter dealt with by the Town Council's Amenity Committee a month ago.

Running the cemetery is one of the Town Council's functions and one that regularly requires a degree of tact. Dealing with bereaved relatives is not easy as emotions can be, understandably, high and what can appear as a simple rule to maintain balance to councillors can be seen as officious and overbearing to someone burying their loved ones. Planning applications can have the same response when the 'rules' seem unjustifiable and prevent an applicant from simply altering their own property.

As the old saying goes there are two sides to every story and it often helps to ensure you get all the facts before making a judgement.

The issue, which we reported on in our last paper (RP85), is about the Town Council putting up a poster giving notice that people should remove any solar powered lights from their relative's graves.

This ruling upset many people and a petition, now signed by over 800 people, was soon started. Local radio picked up the issue and within a few days Councillor Hussain was under pressure to do something about it. All of the public comments on social media were against the Council's ruling and as is the way these days some of the comments were very harsh claiming a 'corrupt council' and that 'we are not living in China' and councillors should be ashamed of themselves. Of course it may be that everyone feels the same but we may not know if that is the case.

It is likely that when councillors decided on this action they did so for good reasons one of which was to maintain dignity in the cemetery. It was designed as a lawn cemetery and that is why there are only gravestones on a narrow concrete bed rather than a large grave. This aids maintenance so that the grass can easily be cut without having to remove flowers and other items and maintains a visual calmness.

The famous American Cemetery in Madingley is a prime example of a lawn cemetery

So the Mayor is in a difficult situation because the weight of public opinion seems to be that the Council should reverse its decision. But here there is a problem as rules state that the Council cannot discuss the issue again for six months unless a special motion is agreed by 5 councillors. The Mayor has quickly issued a statement as he promised to do.

### SOLAR LIGHTS AT RAMSEY ROAD/HILL RISE CEMETERIES

*I am pleased to inform you that five members of the Council have put forward a motion to re-open the debate on the decision taken at the Amenities Committee on 28 April. The Motion will be presented to the meeting of the Town Council scheduled for 30 June.*

*I am very grateful to the community for all the feedback on this issue and will post the decision reached by Council on our Facebook site following the meeting.*

**Councillor Pasco Hussain**

This statement received much support but also drew the following comment on-line:

*'I'm all for protocol, but it's absolutely farcical that this will require formal discussion to reverse the decision, especially considering the townships response. Please Mr Mayor, show some leadership and just make the decision.'*

In a nutshell this highlights the problem. For the Mayor cannot make a unilateral decision on this and quite rightly he shouldn't, otherwise we would be living in China!

The fact that a lot of people see no harm in the lights doesn't mean that no one has an alternative view of this matter. It is possible that a large number of people may not want to see solar lights around headstones, but they are unlikely to express this view on-line for fear of angry comments if they do.

### So what is the answer?

As the Council cannot meet until 30 June (due to a High Court ruling see page 7 of RP84) perhaps this is the chance for the Council to really test public opinion with a town referendum.

Okay so referenda are not so popular but there does need to be a method for the Council to decide on what rules the cemetery should have based on what the public want. Without that knowledge the Council is in a No Win situation. Mind you a 50/50 vote could prove problematic - hasn't that happened before?

## Chapel Arts at the Corn Exchange



The Town Team and St Ives Corn Exchange are organising a series of concerts in the Corn Exchange's impressive cafe area.

The cafe style concerts will take place on the last Friday of each month until November between 7.30 and 9pm, starting on 25th June with the Martin Kemp Trio.

Tickets (£10) will be available from 1st June.

Concerts include Harpist Ruth Holden (pictured above), Harpsichordist Robin Walker, classical guitarist Daniela Rossi, singer songwriter Soloman Smith and the eponymous Dickie de Vere.

This is a really exciting series of concerts featuring some of the best local and international musicians. For full details go to the Town Team website: [stivescambridgeshire.co.uk](http://stivescambridgeshire.co.uk).

## Pictures of the cemetery lights

Here are pictures of some of the solar lights in the cemetery. The picture (bottom left), of a baby's grave, was printed in this weeks Hunts Post article, which featured comments from Roxanne Knight and her friend Ryan Townsend who started the petition.



A Near Miss

Lightening striking the Dutch building on The Quay.  
Photo by Ella Miah Robinson

## Free exhibition of modern art at the Corn Exchange

As the lockdown continues to ease so the towns Corn Exchange opens it's doors to welcome people back inside. From next week visitors can view an exhibition of original art by celebrated artist and musician Danny Anker. Danny's work shows a variety of well known movie stars and musicians in amazing colour. His work can be viewed upstairs in the Corn Exchanges beautiful new Riverport cafe bar that will be opening soon.



# 'This boy sure can play the blues'

B.B.King talking about Dr Ika.

Dr Ika was born in Soviet Georgia and started to play piano at 7 and classical guitar at 12. After listening to Albert King, B.B. King and Albert Collins, Ika discovered the blues and the electric guitar. Later, after having heard the Beatles and Jimi Hendrix, he fell in love with rock music which was a strictly forbidden fruit in the Soviet Georgia.

The KGB was after him (Ika was listening to the 'enemy' radios like BBC and the Voice of America) and police were cutting his moderately long hair short. While waiting for a better future Ika became a Doctor of Biology and earned a Bachelor's degree in music. When the strict attitude towards the 'subversive western music' had softened, Dr Ika started to perform on several rock and blues festivals and twice was honoured as the country's best guitarist. During the 1986-1989 Ika lived and worked as a scientist in Sweden. and played with top jazz and blues musicians such as Jimmy Smith and has twice performed with the legendary B.B. King - an unusual claim for a neurosurgeon.

Miraculously in 1993, Dr Ika and his wife, Lia, were awarded the Royal Society Fellowships to carry out research at Cardiff University. They left Georgia for good and immigrated to the UK. Along his scientific work, Ika started to play funk-fusion with the band 'The Funker' and also a totally different type of music in the rave clubs together with heavy house dance DJ, Paul Lyons. Soon he was sharing the stage with such top DJs as Sasha and Love Dub.

Dr Ika now lives in Hertfordshire and devotes himself to music. In 2014 Ika, together with two wonderful musicians Ivan Hoe on drums and Andrew Heart on bass/vocals, founded power trio The Dr. Ika's Pharmacy, which plays Jimi Hendrix and Cream classic tunes mixing them with powerful original material.

'Dr Ika is the best thing to come out of Russia' - Adam Crute, 'The Mix'.



**Dr. Ika's Pharmacy The Lounge 8pm Sunday 18th September**



## Dementia Friendly Community - Mission

Last week the Alzheimer's Society has run a powerful campaign for reforming our social care, raising awareness during their Dementia Action Week. Their hard-hitting posters didn't shy away from the harsh realities of dementia: Dementia kills. Dementia is devastating. Dementia puts an enormous, often unbearable strain on the carers.

Yet, amidst the heartbreaking stories there is also the truth that if a community tries hard enough, dementia can also bring people together. In St Ives, on 15 May, the St Ives Dementia Friendly Community Group had a stall at the Farmers' Market, to talk to people about what there is on offer in our town for those with dementia. During the pandemic we ran our activities on Zoom (reminiscing, exercise and singing sessions). This was made possible with various grants, and a very generous contribution from St Ives Town Council. Now we are busy getting ready to restart all our groups in person, as soon as the government lifts the remaining restrictions, hopefully at the end of June.

Our Chair, Roger Kuch, hosted the stand with volunteers from the Group. Despite the relentless rain, we had a wonderful and emotional day at the stand. Many people visited us. Volunteers, newcomers to the town, people with dementia, their carers, family members who have lost people to dementia or were worried about an upcoming diagnosis, choir members who only met on Zoom before, COPE members... and it was great to have our group's founder Ian Jackson, come and see us. We had laughter, we had tears, and most of all, we had a strong feeling of community and hope.

**We are all looking forward to a fresh start post-lockdown, to reach out to all those affected by dementia and to the community to give them their warmest support. This is our simple mission.**

For further information about our activities please contact our Chair, Roger Kuch, email: rnkuch@gmail.com.

## Rob 'The Swan Man' appears on TV again



Back in June 2018, in *Riverporter 11* we featured Rob Adamson, who had adopted an orphan swan called Sydney the Cygnet. Rob who lives on a narrowboat at Jones Boatyard and Sydney became an internet sensation.

Now Rob has appeared on local BBC television for rescuing a swan and her brood from being swept away in floods. The swan and her mate (left) seemed grateful to Rob who managed to secure the nest with some board and string preventing it being swept away as the waters rose.

From our environmental correspondent Heidi N. de Tries

# HEIDI GOES BIRD WATCHING!

I know, it surprised me too. Well dears, it's a bit of a long story, but I'll leave out the intimate details (to spare his blushes) and get straight to the point. You see I once had an acquaintance with an outdoorsy person who, to tell you the truth, was a bit of a nerd.

He was sweet enough but on long walks in remote places, and quite often even as we paused in the long grass for a picnic, he would suddenly call a halt to the proceedings, look up and shout, 'Look Heidi, a Swallow!' Or Lesser-spotted something, or Waggle-tailed that. I found it a bit distracting actually.

But you know what? Over the course of our (quite short) relationship his incessant bird spotting must have rubbed off on me, sotospeak.

So now, out and about in the town, and especially in my own haunts by the river, I find myself also looking up at inopportune moments and distracting not only my new companion but also myself! Who'd have thought it? And, following that cosy moment in the wood with our own forthright Editor (see RP 84), he suddenly said to me, 'Heidi, you should write about the birds.' So I am.

But where to start? Well I'm sticking to just four of my favourites, because this is the time of year when it is fun to watch for them arriving here from their long journeys. Have you noticed small, brownish lovelies swooping round The Quay and disappearing up the drainage holes? Amazing!

These are Sand Martins, the first of the four to arrive. They are supposed to nest in holes in sandy banks, but ours make do with ready-made tunnels - lazy aren't they? Soon after, their relatives, House Martins with a white rump, appear and race up and down Bridge Street inspecting the eaves for suitable places to build their mud nests.

Then the lovely Swallows come in swooping low over the water to catch flies, and show long, forked tail feathers - so beautiful. The last to arrive, high-flying Swifts with flickering scimitar-shaped wings, chase each other and scream with excitement. Gosh, I do envy them!

So, darlings isn't it amazing what you can see when you simply look up? I have to a lot to thank my nerdy-birdy friend for in those long-grass days. But please don't let me distract you! So here are some pictures to help! Bye and happy spotting!  
Love Heidi x



## Revamped Town Team website should help visitors and residents to find out all about St Ives . . .



The Town Team have been busy reorganised their website, making it easy to find out about what is going on in St Ives. The **Home Page** contains details about events and under the **'About St Ives'** and **'Travel info'** buttons you will find essential information, including accommodation, caravan sites, where the public toilets are and how to take a river trip. There are also links to the **Town Council**, **Norris Museum**, **Corn Exchange** and **Our St Ives** websites. Whether you search for the OldRiverport.co.uk or StIvesCambridgeshire.co.uk you should be able to find all the information you need to enjoy our town.



# having your say ...

# The Riverporter

Erik doesn't want to play ball!

**Get it off your chest, email Erik at: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)**

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

## NEWS UPDATE

### The Royal Oak suffers a low blow ...



Just at the very moment when our towns pubs and restaurants were looking forward to welcoming us back inside the poor landlord of the Royal Oak had to suffer another blow right at the point of re-opening. Last week *The Riverporter* received the following notification from our local police. . . . Police responded to an incident that happened in the town centre on Sunday evening, 16th May, in which a male, thought to be heavily under the influence of alcohol or drugs, entered a public house and caused extensive damage to one of the toilets, before collapsing and having to be taken to hospital by ambulance. He had earlier caused damage at a nearby hotel where he was staying. Investigations are continuing. *The Riverporter* understands that repair work is well under way and that the pub will re-open soon, perhaps we all need to go and buy a pint and give them a chance to catch up.

Dear Erik

**Subject: Berman Park Vandalism**

Additional to your report 'Oh Fence-ive behaviour' regarding the vandalism regularly occurring in the new Berman Park. Every morning when we walk the dog through the park we see more and more depressing, wanton damage, litter and remnants of burnt fencing. Normally after a weekend or school holiday evening, especially if the weather has been dry.

There must be at least 50 slats now missing from the wet area fencing (see attached picture) and their burnt remains can be seen. They must be so grateful that their fuel has kindly been replenished after the fencing was all but burnt last year.

I have raised a police incident but it must be so difficult for them to catch the perpetrators if only they would leave a trail of litter and then hide defiantly behind a roaring bonfire in full view of the thicket path!

Regards **Neil Hewitt**



Dear Erik,

At long last the Safety Camera on the B1040 is working. My FOI request in November seems to have generated a check on the camera and the problem fixed in January. I am assured that notices of intention to prosecute have been issued. **Colin**

Dear Erik,

Yesterday in the afternoon sun I was enjoying my chillax on The Quay. In front of Amore there was a great crested grebe diving for his or, being properly PC, her tea. And just beyond the Electric Boat pontoon a cormorant was doing likewise.

I spied a ferocious cob swim fully 100 yards like Mark Spitz to drive off other cobs out of sight and towards Jones's Boatyard. His pen then led her six tiny cygnets gracefully and in safety along The Quay.

How fortunate we both are to reside here in St Ives. **Doberman**

Dear Erik

It is very well documented how our towns and markets need help. With this in mind, when will St Ives Market be back in the town centre? We should make the most of the wonderful assets we have in St Ives. Shop local includes the market traders out in all weathers. If we do not support them St Ives will become a market town without a market. **Carrie**

### A Sneaky peak!



*The Riverporter* has been allowed a quick peak at the new interior of the Corn Exchange's new 'Riverport Café Bar' due to open very soon. The new lounge, with an array of cosy seating, tasteful décor, a superb re-fitted bar and new stage area, will play host to musicians, and other performers offering evening and weekend performances. The seated area with free Wi-Fi will have a great new coffee menu and a range of scrummy cakes made by local craft bakers as well as a well-stocked bar with good wines, beers and soft drinks.

The Corn X Team say the opening will be very soon. So watch out for their open doors.



## State of the art craft beer shop opens

Local independent store, The Filling Station, created by former brewing group executive Matt Kelly from Houghton opens this weekend.

Ten beers will be available on constant rotation on the tap wall, and over 200 different craft beers, ciders and stouts from the ice-cold fridges.

The 10th tap will be known as the 'Community Tap', and each month via social media, the customers will choose which beer is stocked.

The Filling Station (opposite Morrisons) opens most days from noon 'till late and will soon start operating a delivery service to the surrounding towns and villages. More details about the launch can be found on the Filling Station website: [www.thefilling-station.com](http://www.thefilling-station.com)



## An appeal for Noble's field

Noble's field is a wonderful natural asset to all of us in St Ives. This unspoilt 4.5 acre area with its perfect riverside location is a real beauty spot right here on the edge of town and has recently been enhanced by it's position adjacent to the new Berman Park.

The area is the perfect picnic spot and is loved by many dog walkers, family outings and of course visiting boaters moored along its river edge. But Noble's does have a problem.

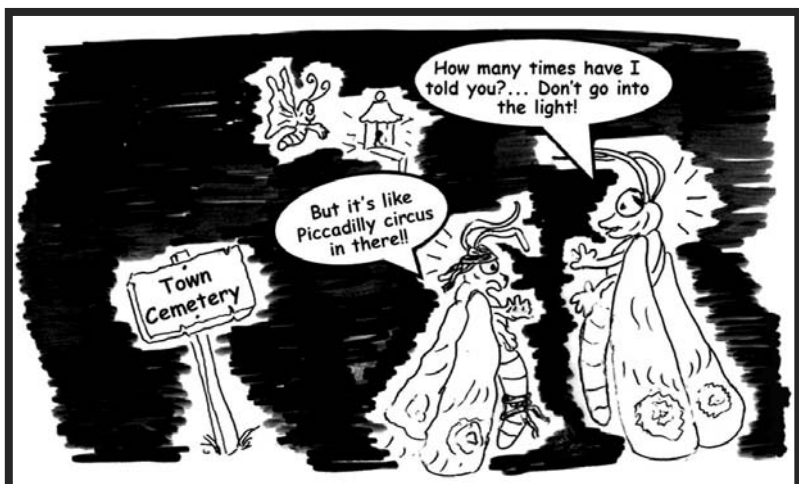
Looking after the field does have a cost and the Covid year has all but removed any income it may have had. Grass still needs to be cut and maintenance has to be done and paid for.

Unlike other public areas Noble's Field is not paid for by the council, it was given to the people of St Ives and is cared for by a volunteer committee that raise funds as best they can. We have all noticed the high river and sometimes savage weather of the past six months. This has served to further erode the riverbank. So the committee has decided to redouble their efforts to raise the cash to re-establish the original line of the riverbank and are appealing for help. One way that interested local people can help is to pay a small contribution to the trust each month by way of a personal covenant. If you would consider helping us maintain this St Ives beauty spot please contact Noble's Field trust at: [r.westrip@sky.com](mailto:r.westrip@sky.com) and you will be sent details of how you can help.

### The Noble's Field Trust



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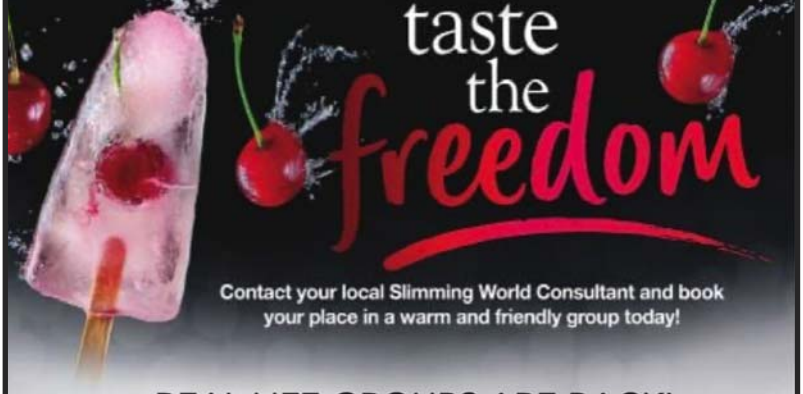


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## The Right Buyer...

Mike Ellis explains it's about finding the best buyer possible ...



*Most estate agents are scrambling around for instructions at the moment as there are fewer properties coming to the market, most are promising a buyer within weeks if not days, but that may not always be in the sellers best interest.*

*People move for a myriad of different reasons, jobs, children, neighbours, upmarket, retirement etc. etc. and we need to know and understand what the sellers are expecting from us before deciding on the best marketing strategy.*

*We believe we can make buying and selling a much more enjoyable experience but this only comes from a complete understanding of the sellers individual needs. They may need a sale quickly as they've seen the house of their dreams and don't want to miss it, in which case the speed in getting to market may be more important than holding out for the very best price.*

*It may be they need to achieve the best price possible to be able to afford their next home, in which case the presentation of all the marketing material needs to be of the highest quality to show the property in its best possible light to attract the highest offers.*

*However there is still an important part of our job that needs to be addressed and that's the qualification of the buyer to make sure they are going to go through with the purchase in a timescale that suits the seller, they have the mortgage or finance arranged, have instructed a solicitor and have a closed chain behind them that's been verified. Only when all this information has been provided and they've agreed a sale price do we recommend the buyer to our seller. And so, it's not always about the quickest deal or the highest offer - it's about finding the best buyer possible.*

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