

# The Riverporter

ISOLATION DAY 82 - READ AND FORWARD ON!

On-line Issue 7: 26 June 2020

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Riverporter hits the streets next month

**A**fter almost 15 weeks of self isolation most of our shops will be open next month so this will be our last purely on-line edition as we will be back in print again for the July 10th edition.

We hope that you will be able to pick up a copy in newsagents, shops, the Corn Exchange, the Library, and those places that you used to, as they re-open to the public.

As well as the good news about the re-opening of our town this issue brings you quite a lot of good news all round. NOW THERE'S A FIRST FOR *The Riverporter*!

## THIRD RIVER CROSSING SCRAPPED

**F**ollowing 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.'

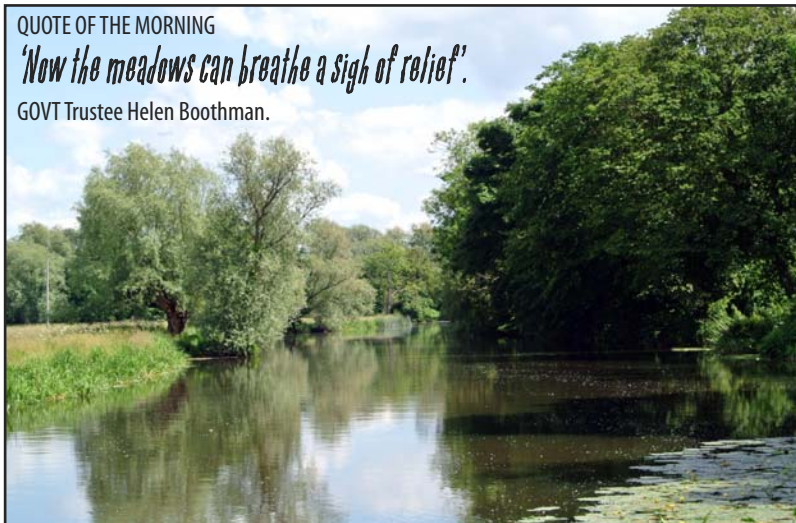
After 11 years of campaigning, lobbying and persistent influencing we have a decision based on evidence rather than someone's good idea. Initial findings of the transport study suggest that the better solution would be a northern Huntingdon Bypass. Whilst this is brilliant news for Hemingford Abbots 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.



Town Council staff putting up new hanging baskets outside the Corn Exchange.

## Corn Exchange spick and span and re-opening soon

Last Tuesday's new 1 metre rule was very welcome news for the Corn Exchange and centres and venues like ours. We hope to open again very soon for the people of St Ives, our hirers and our range of activities, events and markets. And we look forward to welcoming new bookings, hirers and users!

We have been working energetically on the procedures and equipment required for a safe re-opening, so that these can be firmed up quickly once the finer details and guidance are issued by the Government.

The Charter Hall is looking spick and span after its re-decoration during the Lockdown.

We have moved several important projects forward too. These will include an upgrade of the front window displays and enlarging and refurbishing the main bar in the Charter Hall; also we intend to have new modular staging and to make a significant improvement to the working environment in the main kitchen.

In the meantime please keep an eye on social media for announcements when the first markets can go ahead.

Looking forward to seeing you again soon.

**Ian Dobson**, Chairman, St Ives Corn Exchange Community Interest Company.



# 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>

## EU funding is still being sought

**Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is set to build upon the unprecedented demand for digital connectivity to help businesses and communities recover from the Covid-19 crisis and put them at the leading edge for technology with the help of EU funds.**

Plans to aid businesses to gain the digital knowhow to succeed and roll out 'smart' technology to market towns across the area was considered by the CPCA Housing and Communities Committee on Monday 22 June.

The proposals for two additional workstreams form part of the Connecting Cambridgeshire Digital Connectivity Programme- Review Report 2019-20, which gives an overview of work under way to significantly improve broadband, mobile and public access Wi-Fi coverage across the region by 2022.

### EU funding bid

The new 'Keeping Everyone Connected' workstream includes a bid for a business grants scheme using EU funding to help small and medium-sized enterprises transition

to increasing reliance on digital technology to strengthen the resilience of the local economy. Match funding of £430,000 from the CPCA will be used to support an application to the EU European Structural Investment Fund (ESIF) for the business grant scheme to be launched later this year, if approved. This work will also support greater digital inclusion across communities, in particular focussing on ensuring that social housing residents are not excluded from future-facing digital provision.

### Better WIFI for St Ives

Public access Wi-Fi is being rolled out to market towns and village halls to improve connectivity, and the fourth phase of the superfast broadband rollout is underway,

targeting hard-to-reach rural premises aiming to achieve 99% superfast coverage by the end of 2020, subject to the impact of Covid-19. In addition, a new 'Smart Places' work package will trial 'smart' technology and data solutions in several market towns over the next 18 months, as part of the new 'Advanced Communications and Emerging Technologies' workstream. The project includes providing SmartPanels - using real-time transport information to provide local travel updates - and low-cost Internet of Things (IoT) networks.

### Visit

[www.connectingcambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.connectingcambridgeshire.gov.uk) to find out more about improving your digital connectivity. **[Thought we'd left the EU? Ed.]**

## 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!



Great Ouse Valley Trust  
*Our landscape for life*

## What is the Great Ouse Valley Trust?

The Great Ouse Valley Trust (GOVT) is a charity formed in October 2018 with the charitable objective:

*'To promote for public benefit the conservation, restoration, and enjoyment of the landscape, wildlife and heritage of the Great Ouse Valley and environs in the county of Cambridgeshire.'*

Members include local councils, the local Wildlife Trust, St Ives Town Team, the Civic Society, Friends of Holt Island, individuals and environmental groups.

The Trust's Vision recognises the Great Ouse Valley is a fantastic place to live and visit, with off the beaten track areas to explore by foot, cycle or horse. The area is nationally recognised and valued for its wildlife, leisure, natural and heritage attractions which contribute to the county's natural green spaces. This is achieved by GOVT being the catalyst which brings national organisations, local communities and individual people together for the common good.

### GOVT's mission covers:

- Enhancement of landscape – increased biodiversity
- Promotion - sense of place, tourism and local economy, health benefits
- Protection – active conservation and campaigning
- Access for all – residents and visitors, disabled
- Partnerships and alliances: groups working together
- Increased engagement – education, volunteering





having your say ...

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

Milly's maiden voyage. She takes a break from filing to go boating.



# The Riverporter

NEWS UPDATE

## Wearing a face covering on the bus

Stagecoach has sent us these details about how to travel on their buses.

As we're sure you'll know, it's now mandatory to wear a face covering on public transport in England. This added layer of protection will help to keep you and others safe when travelling. We know you've probably got a few questions about this, so please see below the most common Q&As:

**Q: What is a face covering and where can I get one?**

A: There are lots of different options for face coverings, it doesn't need to be a mask. Keep it summery with a brightly coloured bandana or scarf. As long as it covers your nose and mouth and ties snugly behind your head, you should be able to breathe comfortably when wearing it. You can buy a face covering but the Government has put together a guide showing you how you can make your own. Check out the Government guide.

**Q: I'm exempt from wearing a face covering, how can I prove this to my driver?**

A: Please don't worry that you won't be able to travel just because you're unable to wear a face covering. Your driver knows about the Government exemptions and that some people won't be able to wear a face covering.

**Q: Will my driver be wearing a face covering?**

A: Your driver doesn't need to wear one when sitting in their cab because they've got a clear protective screen that acts as a barrier. If they need to get out of their cab to help you or another customer, they'll sanitise their hands and wear a face covering for added safety.

**There are also other social distancing measures in place for added safety.**

## More service enhancements from Sunday 28th June

Please note that timetables are being updated more frequently than usual at this time, so please check our latest temporary timetables at [www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com).

In issue 53 of *The Riverporter* - 21 February this year we wrote the following.

## George Yard

An application has been made to the Town Council to consider the passage, known as George Yard, to be designated as a Public Right of Way. Various complaints have been received regarding the condition of the passage including overhanging trees, potholes and loose metal gratings. but it seems the Council cannot improve or maintain it without a modification order to have George Yard added to the town's definitive map. However at this time the Town Council decided to undertake further research before making any move on the issue.

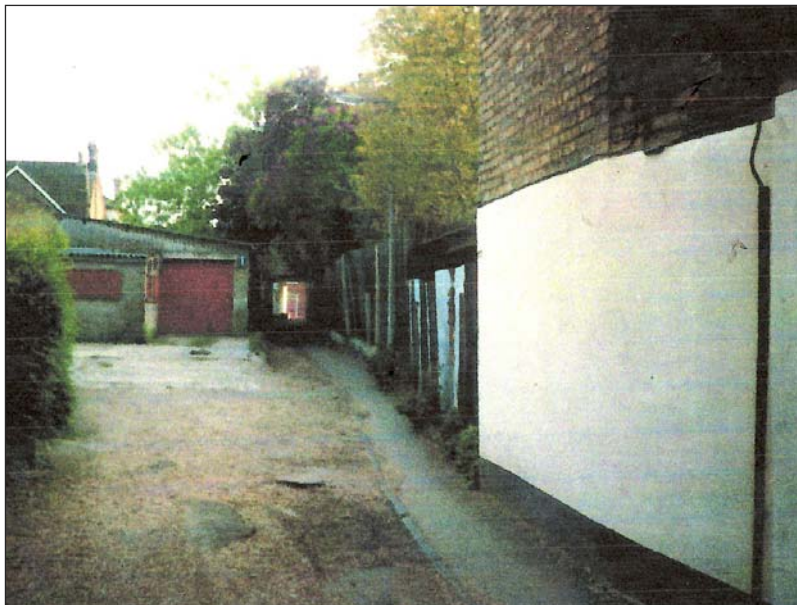
We received this letter this week.

Dear Erik,

I have solved the George Yard riddle as reported in *The Riverporter* February 21st. George Yard has always been a public right of way. It was part of the George Inn, which took in three buildings, from the launderette to Constitution Hall (now the Mosque). The stables stretched through to West Street. The George closed in the 1860's. George Yard was updated with HDC's environmental scheme in 2001/2 that covered Bridge Street, Crown Street, The Broadway and Cow & Hare Yard and included a [financial] contribution from a planning application from Hephher's. Street lights were included in the work. The only complaint I have with George Yard is [with] the toilet and water pipes that are on the outside of the property. These should be on the inside of the property which faces West Street. It is an HDC planning issue.

Peggy Seamark

*George Yard in 2008. The building on the left was used as a woodworking factory for many years until it became a fish & chip shop and now a Turkish restaurant which has resulted in refurbishment and a more attractive appearance.*



Dear Erik,

I was wondering if the town could take advantage of the lockdown to reclaim some of the roads in and around town for family dining, cycling, and walking. As the town is becoming a tourist hot spot maybe it would be wise to cut down non-essential traffic (disabled and loading only)

Why not add a few trees to make it more pleasant to hang out in the summer months? As shoppers start to turn to the internet and out of town shopping it would make sense to turn our town into a destination for cafe and outside dining. The press would love it! Fit all major routes into town with family friendly bike routes and make the cars go around ...!

Yours hopefully

Rebecca Chapman

Dear Erik,

I am writing to you to apologise to Mr Colin ~~Sunderson, Sanderson~~, Saunderson for spelling his name wrong in the last issue of *The Riverporter*. Apparently I keep spelling it wrong - my apologies.

My only excuse is that it often happens to me. When, as a young athlete, in the days when the Hunts Post was a broadsheet and reported everything in detail, it used to list all the results of School Athletics days.

The report of one such day from Huntingdon Grammar School in the mid 1960s featured my name five times. It was spelt differently on each occasion and of course only right once.

I can recall being a little miffed by this because it looked as if there were five different people competing, all with a similar name.

John ~~Sewter, Suter, Sotar, Soter~~, Souter

Editor

## DO YOU USE A HEARING AID?

**or find yourself hard-of-hearing . . . or does someone in your family?**

If so, please join the new 'Cambridgeshire Hear for You community' group. This is a new way of keeping in touch and to exchange views and ideas, whether it's about hearing loss, or just your news, ideas and messages about literally anything!

The group has been set up by local charity, Cambridgeshire Hearing Help, which maintains hearing aids, runs workshops on hearing loss and teaches lip-reading. The charity also runs 'Hear for You' social groups, which are suspended because of current restrictions - so they're going online for members old and new!

Many people have used social media to keep in touch with family and friends in recent times. This is a chance to make contact with more people locally, who share your interests.

It is being established on Facebook and is a 'closed group', giving members the extra safety and security, that only other members will be able to see your comments. It is also completely free. You can join the Facebook group NOW by going to the 'Cambridgeshire Hearing Help' page on Facebook, click on 'Groups' then on 'Join'. If you have any difficulty, simply enter the following link in your search engine:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cambridgeshirehearforyoucommunity/>

If you are new to Facebook, the charity has produced a simple guide of how to join the group, which is on its website. Or contact them at [enquiries@cambridgeshirehearinghelp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cambridgeshirehearinghelp.org.uk) Cambridgeshire Hearing Help is launching the new group at 11am-12noon on Tuesday 30 June. You can join at any time, but then please try to log-in during that hour, and take part in the initial messages between us.

**It's a new and excellent way of keeping in touch - let's all use it!**

## A different AGM for Friends of Holt Island

The 'Friends' have decided that the best way forward is to 'meet' by email, or post for those who do not have email.

### THIS IS HOW THE AGM WILL WORK?

1. Today we ask you to send in your nominations for the Committee. The nomination must be by email/letter. If it is by email then the nominee must confirm their consent in a separate mail. If you receive our communications by post, your nominee can consent either by email or letter.
2. July 1st - All nominations to be returned to the Membership Secretary, Julian Limentani by this date. - [membership@holtisland.org](mailto:membership@holtisland.org) or 4 Links Way, St Ives, Cambs PE27 6DW
3. July 7th - Our 2019-2020 reports will be sent to you, along with the names of the nominees for the Committee, and those who are standing as Officers.
4. July 15th - Please return your votes for the Committee members and Officers, also send in any questions arising from the reports by this date.
5. July 29th - We will send out the results of the election, together with any questions answered to the best of our ability.

Please send us in the names of anyone you wish to nominate to sit on the Committee, to arrive on or before July 1st.



# Heidi and the Swans

Darlings, I'm back! I know you've been worried. I've had a bit of an upset but the Editor said take some time to compose yourself. So I did – and four weeks later I'm nearly better. He's not so beastly after all. Just now and again . . .

Anyway dears, a lovely old friend of mine has been in touch (no, not like that). He's worried about our lovely swans. 'Heidi', he said, 'do me a favour?' I gulped but he pressed on, 'I think we're feeding them too much bread. Can you tell your readers?' So this is what he sent me. He's taught me a lot about birds so I'm happy to oblige. I usually do don't I?

In early May we were delighted to see 'our' swans presenting their new family of 8 cygnets. Here's a reminder of them then.

She successfully raised a similarly large brood last year all the way through to adulthood, which was a fantastic achievement. Sadly, however, this year I must report that very recently, and one by one, she lost three of her cygnets, reducing the family to five. These remaining five appear to be growing well (as seen here just over a month later), as were the three that have been lost.

It is not unusual to suffer casualties, albeit they had arguably passed the extremely dangerous stage when they could easily have been predated by corvids (crow family), mink or pike, for example. Alternatively they may well have been predated by foxes, or even otter, or may just have succumbed to illness.

Dare I even suggest that maybe they suffered from too much 'love' from their admiring public, perhaps by consuming far too much unhealthy bread!

Like us humans, ducks, swans and all bird life need a balanced diet and too many carbohydrates is not good for them, providing little nutritional value – equivalent to junk food for birds! They need a varied diet – natural plants and insect proteins – to mature properly. It is too easy for ducklings, cygnets and the like to get an easy meal from bread handouts, which may make them reliant and does not encourage them to forage for their important nutrient foods.

It's wonderful to see the ducks and swans with their young and a real joy for the children to be with them and to feed them, and I certainly do not wish to discourage this in any way.

But, perhaps, we should just think about what they are being fed. Maybe, reduce the size and quantity of bread, and consider alternatives such as floating duck pellets, crushed biscuits, cereals, oats, bird seed, sweet corn, and even defrosted peas and shredded lettuce leaves – they all go towards providing a balanced healthy diet for our avian wildlife.

This is just a thought for you – and we all I'm sure, wish all our birds well, including of course 'our' swan family, and so please, please continue to enjoy them.

Note you can get floating duck pellets from Just Cards in Bridge Street.



Now, isn't he lovely?

I haven't given his name because he will be embarrassed if I do. But isn't it interesting? We may be killing our lovely swans with kindness. No-one wants to spoil the fun but try the swans and ducks with some pellets instead, or even a few peas!

Bye!

**Love, Heidi x**

## ADVERTORIAL

# Property asking prices are up by 1.9% compared to March



The latest sales reports show a renewed sense of optimism returning to the market with asking prices almost 2% higher than when lockdown started in March. According to information from Rightmove, the average house price for properties coming to market in England is up by almost £6,266 to £337,884. The price of property coming to market is usually an accurate early indicator of pent-up demand and there has been an impressive recovery in the number of reported sales (40,000) since the market re-started on the 13th May.

We've seen increased numbers of new instructions and buyers registering since the middle of May. Rightmove reported a record number of property views on their pages and on the 6th June home movers spent over 955,000 hours collectively looking at their web-pages. The number of viewings has also increased for both sales and rentals. This information is likely to be great news for the government which needs the economy to pick up as soon as possible.

We're working harder than ever to get the best possible prices for our sellers as buyers return to the market and our expectation is for there to be a strong finish to the year. There is always

a rush to get property transactions completed by Christmas.

With this renewed sense of optimism, we are encouraging anyone thinking of selling to take advantage of the activity in the market and put their properties on the market as soon as they can.

There are some great fixed rate mortgage deals around and a good selection of both new and resale properties.

To register to get news of properties coming on to the market or to get a valuation, please call your local office or email [info@elliswinters.co.uk](mailto:info@elliswinters.co.uk)

**ellis&co  
winters**

**RECENTLY SOLD**

**Hemingford Abbots**

**£1,500,000**