

The Riverporter

PLEASE READ AND PASS ON

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue I95: 24 October 2025

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

COUNTY VOTE FOR OPTION A

On Tuesday, Cambridgeshire County Councillors voted by 31 to 25 for St Ives to be part of a unitary authority with the city of Peterborough and Fenland District, effectively creating a North-South divide and cutting St Ives' natural links with Cambridge.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is the process that the UK Government is using to reduce the number of councils in the country and try to simplify the way we all receive our services.

Tuesday's debate at Shire Hall was to choose an option to send to the Government as to how this can be achieved in Cambridgeshire.

It is important to say that the Government has suggested certain conditions and given little time for councils to do a well considered job, a point raised by several councillors during the debate.

All the local councils can contribute to the process, including the five district authorities and the two city authorities, all of whom might close should the proposals go ahead.

There is no guarantee that any of the 'districts' will agree with the county that Option A is the best one.

In fact it is highly likely that some councillors who are both county and district councillors may end up voting the opposite way when their district votes for an option.

It was suggested by the Government that the reorganisation should keep the existing district boundaries, and the County Council have stuck to that instruction, despite its obvious fault.

Although three options were originally put forward, see below, only Option A was chosen by Council leaders to vote on.



Proposal A



Proposal B



Proposal C

Lib Dems take advantage

The Lib Dem group, which is the largest on the council, effectively run the authority and they put their weight behind Option A. It would appear this was largely to ensure a Lib Dem majority in a future southern authority.

All but one of their 31 councillors, plus Independent Tom Sanderson, voted for Option A (1 abstained).

St Ives councillors vote against

The other 25 councillors who voted against, included all Conservatives, Reform and Labour councillors plus St Ives' Julie Kerr and Alex Bulat. Alex explained that this Option is bad for St Ives residents, 'Who are more likely to work in Cambridge and use the busway which is directly connected to Cambridge from the Town.'

She pointed out that none of the options worked for St Ives and with 60% of Huntingdonshire residents against Option A it isn't surprising that HDC are looking to go on their own. She also questioned the process that didn't supply business data for the other options and therefore couldn't be assessed.

A better solution?

One option, suggested by consultants but not considered by the Council, would be for the whole county to be the unitary authority. This could be the most cost effective solution, creating a large enough authority that already works with other suppliers of services, such as health, social services and education and creating big savings by doing away with the 7 'district' councils.

DIARY OF EVENTS

Please email: editor@theriverporter.uk

OCTOBER

Friday 24th - COSI lunchtime concert - by Nene Voices, features German Lieder and English Song. A free concert, 1pm St Ives Free Church.

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 5th - Cyber Crime and Fraud Awareness. 2pm - St Ives Library - Cambridgeshire Constabulary on cyber crime.

Sunday 9th - Remembrance Sunday 10am Market Hill, St Ives.

Saturday 15th - Christmas Market and Lights Switch On.

Saturday 15th/16th - BHF Candle Lighting in the Bridge Chapel. Light a candle for a loved one. 10am to 4pm every weekend until 7 Dec.

Saturday 15th - Bach Christmas Oratorio, St Ives Choral Soc. 7.30pm Free Church. Tickets from www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society.

Friday 21st - Civic Society - The Story of Wing Commander Baker DFC DFM. Helen Cooper delivers a presentation based on her grandfather's war diary. 7.30pm Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

Saturday 22nd - ArtsFEST exhibition. St Ives Corn Exchange, 10 am to 4 pm - to exhibit contact Pat-stivesnow@hotmail.com.

Friday 28th - COSI lunchtime concert - featuring a clarinet quintet. A free concert, 1pm St Ives Free Church.

Friday 28th - Chapel Arts Concert - Stella Hensley's Magical Colours St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Sunday 30th - The Amazing Technicolour Concert - St Ives Community Choir in the Free Church. 6.30 pm. Tickets £9 adults, £5 children.

DECEMBER

Wednesday 3rd - St Ives Foodbank. 2pm - St Ives Library - Donations

Saturday 6th - Christmas Charity Concert The Free Church 7pm.

Saturday 13th - Family Christmas Concert, St Ives Choral Society. 6.30pm. Free Church - www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society

Sunday 21st and Monday 22nd - Santa Arrives by Boat, plus Santas SnowFEST. Corn Exchange with Grotto and Giant Snowdome. 12.30 to 4pm.

JANUARY 2026

Friday 16th - Civic Society - Policing & Financial Crime in Regency London and Cambridge. A presentation by Susan Grossey author of historical crime fiction exploring the world of crime in Regency London and Cambridge. 7.30pm Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

5th Old Riverport Ukulele Festival is a sell-out

Welcome to The Old Riverport Ukulele Festival 2025

Whose side are you on?



The OR The
Mods

Rockers



250 Ukulele players enjoyed a day at St Ives Corn Exchange on Saturday 10th October. Fourteen groups from as far away as King's Lynn and Market Harborough took to the stage, while professional player, Matthew Quillian, held a workshop and performed a concert. St Ives Mayor, Julie Kerr, drew the raffle prize, a brand new ukulele, and presented the awards for the best dressed Mod or Rocker to Neil Gaskell of The Poole House Project from Hitchin and to St Ives' own Jane Westlake (see right).



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Confusion reigns over A141 Improvement Scheme

Proposals to improve the road network in St Ives, put forward by Cambs CC, CPCA and HDC, have caused total confusion for councillors, community groups and the public due to the lack of information in the latest presentation material.

It should be said from the outset that these are just proposals and may not see the light of day. However this latest iteration has some serious implications for St Ives. One of the main problems is that the rather crude map (right), showing a banned right turn into Needingworth Road from St Audrey Lane and a Bus Gate on Meadow Lane needed explanations that are not in the document.

As a result of the letter we received from Roger King (right), *The Riverporter* attended the first public event in Huntingdon to try to understand the proposals, in particular the:

- Exact location and function of the Bus Gate on Meadow Lane
- Improved capacity at B1040/ A1123/ Harrison Way roundabout
- Banning of right turn from A1123 into Needingworth Road
- Increased green time for A1123 at Ramsey Road junction signals
- Extra lane southbound on Harrison Way between A1123 and Meadow Lane.

We can report that the consultants told us that the Bus Gate would be located between the entrance to the Cattle Market Car Park and Needingworth Road, thereby allowing cars to enter the car park from Harrison Way.

It would stop traffic from both directions but it is intended to operate in the mornings only. The 'No Right Turn' is into Needingworth Road, only from the A1123 and that the extra lane on Harrison Way would be from the A1123 to just beyond the busway crossing at Station Road.

Here is Roger's letter which sums up some of the issues well.

Dear Editor,

I'm sure you will be only too aware of the proposed traffic changes in St Ives, seemingly aimed at reducing 'rat runs' and freeing up the A141. Hidden within these are dramatic changes to the traffic flow through St Ives, which can only damage trade and inconvenience residents. It may also be the death-knell for Waitrose and its car park.

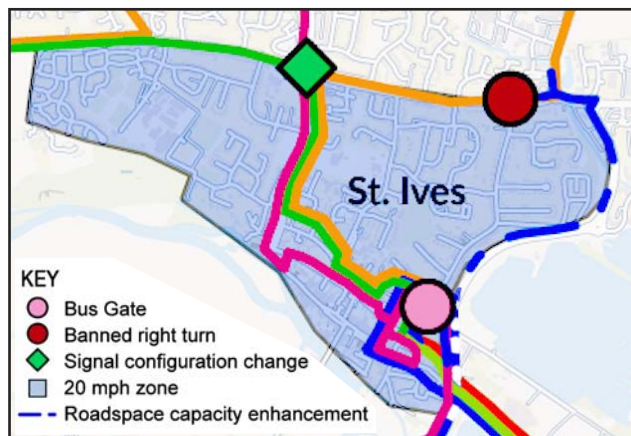
I have attached a copy of my response to the 'consultation'. I'm sure you know all about this - but I have found that a depressingly large number of St Ives residents do not. You are a great way to reach them! Regards **Roger King**

Here is part of Rogers response: To introduce a 'bus gate' at the Meadow Lane entrance, and exit, to this roundabout would be an absolute disaster for the traffic flow

in the town and its surrounding area. I have lived in this corner of St Ives for over 60 years and have yet to see any evidence of a 'rat run' on these roads: just a typical rush-hour build up of traffic at school times and early evenings, which is nothing compared with how it was before Harrison Way was built.

By far the biggest hold up on the roads around St Ives is the evening traffic build-up, mostly comprising north-bound traffic on Harrison Way. It is no coincidence that this appeared after the construction of the busway due to the inclusion of a pedestrian crossing into Station Road from the Park & Ride. This is where the traffic problems stem from - these proposals will merely move the queues up to the A1123. There is no 'rat run' worthy of the name in St Ives - we need a footbridge, that's all.

Stopping residents and businesses accessing the bypass at its closest point to the town will not achieve anything positive. Businesses will suffer (Waitrose lorries having to come right through the town from the other end, until Waitrose gives up the unequal struggle and closes), services will become even less accessible and emergency services will find access and egress very difficult.



Under these proposals I have calculated that my daily journey to the south of St Ives will change from 0.1 mile in 1 minute to 2.6 miles and 12 minutes! I will need to drive north to reach the A1123, both options for this involve having to drive down narrow residential roads with school crossings, putting young lives at risk.

The Riverporter did suggest that the people who drew up these plans didn't know St Ives and indeed that was confirmed by the consultant from Atkins, the company employed to do the work.

Of course it's not so long ago that the disastrous Master Plan for St Ives was expensively drawn up by consultants who knew little of the town and who thought St Ives could do with a pontoon on The Quay similar to one in Chicago.

Trying to be positive

It is good that traffic flows, active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport are being considered as the new Local Plan sees large increases in homes in our area and without better transport routes, the area will not cope.

It is important that residents offer their opinion on the proposals, which can be found at <https://yourvoice.cambridgeshire.gov.uk> Simply search A141.

If you missed Thursday's display of the proposals in the Corn Exchange don't worry as you can still see them at the Burgess Hall on Thursday 13th November between 2pm and 7pm.

Your voice will matter because without your feedback these proposals could get the green light unless enough people say why they won't work.

St Ives turned pink and blue



Alongside a Ribbon Memorial Display adorned with pink and blue named ribbons outside St Ives Methodist Church during Baby Loss Awareness Week (9th to 15th October), for the first time we saw the Town Bridge lit up in pink and blue during the Wave of Light at the end of the Week.

Also, with help and guidance from the wonderful team at St Ives Methodist Church, we hosted a special Remembrance Service - a touching reflective short service, culminating in lighting a candle for babies no longer with us.

Few experiences can compare to the trauma and pain of baby loss.

Currently in the UK, 13 families a day suffer the heartbreak of losing their baby before, during or shortly after birth. And at least 15% of pregnancies end in miscarriage.

Councillor Laura Thompson from St Ives Town Council (pictured above in front of the display of ribbons), the volunteer who has organised the events, said: 'Turning St Ives Town Bridge pink and blue, especially on the 600th anniversary of the bridge this year, sparked conversations about the impact of baby loss and let local bereaved parents know we stand with them. It has impacted so many people in our local community. The beautiful ribbon memorial display once again showed people that they are not alone and gave them an opportunity to remember their precious babies.'

You can donate to the St Ives page raising money for baby loss here -

www.justgiving.com/page/stivesbabyloss

For further information contact: Laura.thompson@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk

More bars and coffee shops on the way

There is a feeling that St Ives is fast becoming the café capital of Cambridgeshire, as more such businesses open.

Philip Lloyd, who until recently was landlord of the White Hart has opened his new pub, The Barn, in Bridge Street and nearby, in the old Mountain Warehouse shop, shopfitters are working on another coffee shop, this time it's Café Nero.

In the Broadway, Wadsworth's wine and whisky shop that closed in January 2024 will open today as the Broadway Cellars, with more than 350 wines available.

'It's going to be an excellent bar with a mixture of seating, and somewhere people can have a drink of their choice, hang out, have some good service and great wine,' said Broadway Cellars' Jack Baldock. They hope to go beyond serving people wine, but educate people on it too, 'It's going to be a place for people to discover things and test their boundaries, and we can show them something new', he said.



Busy Booze in the Pews

A Riverporter reader, who attended this month's beer festival sent us this picture with the simple comment WOW! It certainly seemed popular with 30+ draft beers, 10+ ciders, a range of gins and food available. The Parish Church say the next one will be on 5-7 February.

Don't forget the 600 draw, for the fabulous prizes below, will take place at The Oliver Cromwell Pub on Thursday 20th November at 7.45pm

- ❖ A 1 hour Self-Drive Hire boat trip - courtesy Elec. Riverboats
- ❖ A meal for two including wine - courtesy of The Oliver Crom.
- ❖ Afternoon Tea for two - courtesy of The Golden Lion Hotel.

Tickets are still available from The Oliver Cromwell at just £2 each.





Milly and Tilly love your letters.



having your say ...

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

PLEASE NOTE: Letters are reproduced as presented by the writer. Editing is confined to grammatical corrections or minor trimming to fit the space. *The Riverporter* neither condones or condemns the opinions expressed.

Dear Milly and Tilly,

I recently saw in *The Riverporter* an advertisement for 'TWIG' - the Thicket Woodland Improvement Group.

I cycle and walk along the Thicket almost every day throughout the year as do many others. To do so is to be transported back into history: the Thicket Woodland Path is over a thousand years old the ancient woodland is shown on OS maps going back to the early 19th Century. It is real nature in the raw and its seasonal changes are a delight.

The idea that it should be partially cleared and planted with bulbs is abhorrent. I assume that it is only the area close to the path that would be cleared and planted but, nevertheless, such action would seriously affect this ancient woodland.

Equally, I again assume that the 'beautiful spring bulb display' would be of daffodils, flowers have no place in an ancient woodland. Indeed, daffodils are a southern European and North African flower first brought to the country by the Romans. Perfect in suburban gardens but not in ancient woodland.

The thicket has its own simple beauty all year round, please let it stay the way it has been since the early 1800s.

If the proposers want to see a beautiful display of bulbs they should visit their nearest suburban park.

PLEASE LEAVE THE THICKET ALONE.

Yours sincerely

Robert Metcalfe (A TWIG - Anti the Thicket Woodland Improvement Group)

Dear Rob,

Thanks for your letter. Tilly and I would be interested to hear from anyone else who thinks the same way as you, especially as TWIG has the support of the Civic Society, HDC and Houghton & Wyton Parish Council. **Milly**

Hello Milly & Tilly,

You certainly missed a good one - October's Eco Café - thinking ahead to make Christmas greener this year, with crafts and a Swaps Table of items for decorating, too.

What's more, we had Fran & Shaun from Cambridge Carbon Footprint to tell us about the free training we can have plus loan of a Thermal Imaging Camera to see how cosy our homes are this winter - or where the cold spots are - and how we might improve these. Did you know that reflectors behind radiators are so much simpler to install these days and really make a difference? But perhaps you've worked this out for yourself, finding the best places to curl up!

Our next Eco Café is all about Our Water with a speaker to help us save money; might we see you there? Sat 8 November: 10.00 - 12.00 at St Ives Library. Join our mailing list for more news: stivesecocafe@gmail.com

Dear Milly and Tilly,

The Taproom has launched its live music on a Sunday, called *Jazz & Blues Sunday*. Next Sunday, at 3pm, sees the Doc K Blues band, featuring Dr Ika. Born in Soviet Georgia, Ika was twice honoured as Russia's best guitarist and has played the Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival a number of times with his 'Hendrix' style band, Dr. Ika's Pharmacy.



The Riverporter

To listen to the latest **Riverport Radio Podcast** go to <https://riverportradiopodcast.buzzsprout.com>

OTHER NEWS

A Dakota Flypast for Ed

Residents witnessed a Dakota aircraft circling the town a week last Monday, following the funeral of Ed Kelly at the Parish Church.

'It was a wonderful and fitting occasion' according to The Mayor, Julie Kerr, and as expected was full with people keen to give their last respects to a special man.



Investiture

On Friday, the 10th of October, the quayside was buzzing with activity from the St Ives Sea Scouts. The occasion was the Investiture of the group's new trainees and the whole squad, along with eight investees and lots of proud mums and dads, were brought to The Quay under the guidance of Captain Megan, who told *The Riverporter* that the name the Sea Scouts call her is 'Bumpkin'. Bumpkin explained that she had thought it a good idea to hold the ceremony with our famous bridge lit up as a superb backdrop, the squad, however, were out of luck because, for the first time we can remember, the lights never came on. But never mind, they all had a great evening with smiles and smart uniforms everywhere.



Grove Medical Practice receives Gold

Grove Medical Practice, St Ives was honoured to receive a Gold Award from the LGBT Foundation Pride in Practice programme. The award reflects the practice's commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ patients and staff. The Gold Award is the highest level of accreditation offered by Pride in Practice and this prestigious recognition reflects the exceptional commitment everyone at Grove Medical Practice has shown to deliver inclusive, affirming, and equitable healthcare for LGBTQIA+ patients.

Fencing work starts on Busway

The work to install fencing next to the Busway has begun and will take place between 9am and 4pm Monday to Fridays. It will take until the end of next year to be completed. With the temporary speed limits in place passengers should allow for extra travel time.

Police stop and search at the Fair

The force attended St Ives Fair for three days, where they not only carried out 32 stop and searches, but also confiscated alcohol from a group of teenagers. They also prevented two individuals from smoking cannabis, engaged with numerous residents, and helped someone in need of medical attention. A spokesperson for the police said: 'Being visible at events like this helps us build community relationships.'

EA secures funding for St Ives staunch

Following the report in *Riverporter* issue 193 from Jones Boatyard, about only one of seven sluice gates working, the EA say they have secured funding for modernisation to be delivered in 2026, following temporary repairs to restore two gates for this winter. However there is currently no funding for Brownhill Staunch at Earith, which has one gate working and this could cause serious flooding problems should we experience a wet winter.

Vicar to leave All Saints Parish Church

Father Mark Amey, who became Vicar of St Ives in January 2011 has been appointed as Vicar of Prees, Edstaston & Whixall in the Diocese of Lichfield, where he will be instituted on Tuesday 17th February 2026. When he leaves he will have been Vicar here for 15 years and two days.

Government launch Pride in Place

The government has launched the 'Pride in Place' programme, a new £5 billion initiative to revitalize declining high streets by funding community-led improvements and giving local communities more power.

This includes new powers to acquire derelict shops, protect pubs and libraries, and a focus on community involvement in decision-making for local projects.

This program builds on previous government

efforts like the Future High Streets Fund, which aimed to support structural changes to high streets through funding schemes.

Whilst we are not yet informed if St Ives can benefit from these plans, under a recent initiative, Huntingdonshire District Council has arranged for some long-term empty High Street premises to have graphic panels

applied to the windows in an effort to improve the look and amenity of our shopping areas, and a great improvement it is! (See the old pet shop in Station Road left, and Genesis in Crown Street, top right).

St Ives probably ranks among the better town centres with fewer empty shops and premises than many, but as *The Riverporter* roamed the town this week to see what's going on, it couldn't help but notice (right) that there is still so much we can do to maintain the appeal of our town.



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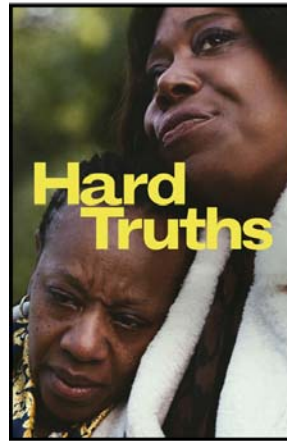


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Hard Truths

Thursday 6 November 2025 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Mike Leigh, 97m, Cert: 12

Synopsis: Hard Truths is a 2024 comedy-drama film written and directed by Mike Leigh, starring Marianne Jean-Baptiste, Michele Austin, and David Webber. Set in London, its plot follows the plight of a depressed and nay-saying woman (Jean-Baptiste) and the relationship with her jovial sister Chantelle (Austin). Two polar opposite sisters navigate the world in different ways in the wake of personal hardship. This contemporary British tragicomedy tackles serious topics such as grief, family disputes and healing.



Opera: Puccini's La Bohème

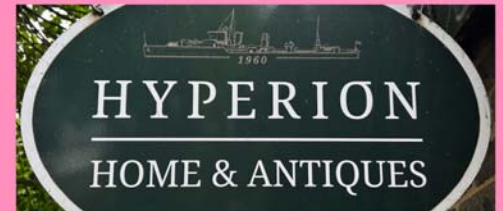
Thursday 20 November 2025 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £10
Director: Richard Jones, 118m, Cert: N/A

Synopsis: A Royal Opera House Production. Sonya Yoncheva and Charles Castronovo lead an award-winning cast in Richard Jones's acclaimed 2020 production of Puccini's most heartrending opera. Emmanuel Villaume conducts the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House and the Royal Opera Chorus in some of the composer's most luscious and memorable music. Spectacular designs by Stewart Laing for this Royal Opera production set the passion, friendship, comedy and tragedy in late 19th-century Paris. The production evokes the vulnerability of youth amid the harshness and glamour of the big city, and contrasts the poverty of the bohemians's attic home with the splendour of Paris's shopping arcades on Christmas Eve.

Tickets at screenstives.org.uk or in the Corn Exchange



Auction day - Saturday 25th Oct



Join Us from the 24th Oct- 26th Oct for our Wear It Pink Fundraiser to Support Breast Cancer Awareness



Its auction day too! On Saturday starting from 10am we will be hosting our auction to include, jewellery, home interiors, and much more!
Come along to Station Road in St Ives, have a browse around our auction, enter our fun activities in the Courtyard, and grab a coffee and cake from our Antiques Centre! Its all for a great cause and we'd love to see you there!

How can you get involved?

Wear Pink!

Show your support by wearing pink throughout the event. Whether it's a t-shirt, a scarf, or even socks, your physical support is very much appreciated in any way you can.

Make a Donation

Every donation counts. In our Courtyard and Antiques Centre, there will be donation pots for you to donate into. On the days of the fundraiser, all of the proceedings of the activities such as the cake stall, tombola etc, will be going to Breast Cancer Awareness!

Spread the Word

Help us grow our community by sharing event details with your friends and family. Use your social media platforms to encourage others to join us. Tag us @thecourtyard, @hyperionauctioneers and @hyperion_home_and_antiques on Instagram and Facebook, we would love to see your help spreading the word!

