

# The Riverporter

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

PLEASE READ AND PASS ON

Issue 217: 18 September 2026

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Disclosures create more anger

**I**nformation published by HDC last week about the Capital & Centric contract has failed to answer many of the questions the public need answers to. And worse than that the accounts show that the money spent was far more than expected.

In our last issue we reported that the Leader of the Council, Sarah Conboy had survived a No Confidence Motion and had promised to give full detail of what had transpired and the costs involved. On 7th September, HDC published details, including a breakdown of the spend so far. When the Scrutiny Panel queried the use of £1m of reserves for Phase 1 they were informed that it was a maximum amount and likely to be less.

However that turned out not to be the case as £1,058,720 has already been spent - over half on Architectural and Development Management fees alone.

**You can see the current expenditure on HDC's website.**

The Riverporter believes that a sensible approach to transform a town centre would be to ensure that the residents approved the concept first before committing to frankly outrageous Architect and management fees.

The Riverporter contacted Michelle



Sacks (left), HDC's Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Council. We asked her a number of questions including:

*Do you as Chief Officer accept any responsibility for what has been a series of poor decisions and a*

*waste of taxpayers money, that has resulted in the Council's credibility being questioned and its reputation severely damaged?*

She neatly sidestepped the questions saying:

*A review of the matter was agreed by Council on 9th Sept. A number of the points you raise will be considered as part of the review. It would therefore not be appropriate to pre-empt that process or its findings.*

Meanwhile no councillor has accepted responsibility. They have been blaming each other on-line and no new information is likely to surface until the review is finished. It will be interesting to see if the review is thorough, impartial and finds anyone responsible.

## Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival Rocks

**T**his year's Festival saw the town centre buzzing and busy last weekend as footfall figures showed that over 57,000 people were in town during the 4 days of the Festival an increase of more than 3% on last year and 7% on 2024.

Of course the Festival coincides with Heritage Open Day on Saturday, which sees crowds enjoying our wonderful old buildings as well as the music.

As if to mark this yearly occasion the Red Arrows flew directly over our bridge just prior to GETNOTGOT performing on The Quay in glorious sunshine.

Below: The Barefoot Doctors healing souls on the Sheepmarket on Saturday morning. See more on Page 2.

## DIARY OF EVENTS

Please email: [editor@theriverporter.uk](mailto:editor@theriverporter.uk)

### SEPTEMBER

**Sunday 20th** - Civic Sunday - Service followed by Parade.

**Friday 25th** - Cusi lunchtime concert with Nene Voices - St Ives Free Church 1pm Free entry.

**Friday 25th** - Summer Proms at St Ives Corn Exchange with the Somersham Town Band 7:30pm. Tickets £10

**Friday 25th** - Chapel Arts Concert  
**Richard Exall & Art Toper** -

An evening classic Jazz with two of the very best musicians around.  
St Ives Free Church at 7.30pm.

Tickets £10 from  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).



**Sunday 27th** - Last Flea on The Quay for 2026 - 10am until 1pm.

### OCTOBER

**Wednesday 7th** - 'Home Energy - Conservation and Advice' Engage Talk - 2pm, St Ives Library (donations welcome).

**Monday 12th - 14th** - Michaelmas Fair - in the town centre.

**Saturday 17th** - Huntingdonshire Philatelic Society Stamp and Post Card Fair Corn Exchange 10am Free admission. 01480 468037.

**Saturday 17th** - Repair Café - St Ives Methodist Church 1-4pm.

book by email: [stivesrepaircafe@gmail.com](mailto:stivesrepaircafe@gmail.com) or phone 07377 014401

**Friday 30th** - Chapel Arts Concert - Stella's Musical Amigos Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

### NOVEMBER

**Sunday 8th** - Remembrance Sunday service - Market Hill.

**Saturday 14th** - Christmas Lights Switch On - Market Hill.

**Saturday 21** - St Ives Choral Society. Verdi Requiem. Free Church 7.30pm. Tickets from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society).

**Friday 27th** - Chapel Arts Concert - The Lightwaves - St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).



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

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Screen St Ives

Community Cinema

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**The Christophers**

Thursday 1 October 2026 at 7:30pm  
Doors open 7:00pm. Tickets £7  
Director: Steven Soderbergh (2025), 100m, Cert: 15

The Christophers (2025) is directed by Steven Soderbergh and written by Ed Solomon, starring Ian McKellen and Michaela Coel. Julian Sklar is a well-known painter based in London, elderly and eccentric, whose reputation has faded with age. His estranged children hire a skilled art forger to complete an abandoned series of paintings so they can sell them for profit once he dies. A sharp, character-driven black comedy blending art, family dysfunction, and deception, anchored by a standout McKellen performance.

Tickets at [screenstives.org.uk](https://screenstives.org.uk) or in the Corn Exchange

## It's important to live your life your way

**A**t Care UK's Field Lodge in St Ives, every resident is supported to live their life the way they choose. Our experienced team takes pride in offering quality residential, nursing, dementia and respite care.

Mary, a Care UK care home resident, shares how the home's excellence in care quality has made her feel cared for and secure after a life-changing fall shook her confidence.

### They're trained to a very high level

Mary moved into a Care UK care home after experiencing a life-changing fall. She recalls being met with tender care and concern. *'I feel safe with the care team and other colleagues. I trust them implicitly,'* she says. *'They set very high standards of honesty, and I also feel that they're trained to a very high level.'*

Care UK demonstrates its excellence in care quality through its achievement of some of the highest quality ratings of the UK's larger care providers, and its status as the most awarded care home group. In Mary's experience, high-quality care has been the standard from day one. *'It's good having a team around me to know that if I'm in trouble they will come.'*

But beyond this, a warm, family feeling is what makes it feel like home. *'The team become friends, which is wonderful because you leave your home, and life is totally different,'* Mary says. *'They're all so friendly and caring.'*

### A wonderful, safe feeling

At 88, Mary lives with COPD and has difficulty walking, but she manages well because of the dedicated team's round-the-clock support. *'It's a safe feeling.'*

*'At home, there wouldn't be anyone around because I was alone. Here, I get a feeling of security.'*



Mary's family feel she is in good hands too. Her two children who live abroad don't have to worry about her living alone anymore, and her daughter who lives nearby is also kept up-to-date and enjoys popping into the home frequently. *'Everybody is incredibly happy that I'm here.'*

### Trust us to care

We work hard to support residents to keep connected with their loved ones. We help families and friends to continue sharing special experiences whether that's in the home, through special trips and outings, or maximising technology so that distance is no longer an issue.

Care UK is a leading independent care home provider with some of the highest quality ratings of the UK's larger care providers, and over 40 years' experience of delivering high-quality care to older people.

For more information about Field Lodge in St Ives, call 01480 710673 or visit [careuk.com/field-lodge](https://careuk.com/field-lodge)

THE OLD RIVERPORT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL 2026

## Quality of music the best yet

There were too many highlights to mention, with 31 outstanding concerts over four days. With ten new acts there was something new to see every day and one of those was 15-year-old Stan Wright, whose Saxophone playing on the Chapel Balcony brightened the day and the Quayside for boaters.

On Saturday the Mayor, Alex Thompson, presented Riverporter Editor, John Souter, the Freedom of St Ives (right) in the Corn Exchange before the 9 piece, Soul band The Gray Project delighted the audience.



Left: The Blues Boy Kings rocking in the Golden Lion. Pic Ian Merchant.

## Support for carers of those living with Dementia

It is becoming apparent that there just isn't enough support in our communities for the carers of those living with Dementia. Well more help is on hand at Devika Dementia Day Centre at Ferrars Hall Care Home in Huntingdon. Every Wednesday of the month between 10am and 3pm they provide dementia-friendly activities on a secured floor plus a light lunch and refreshments. They have at least one carer for every three people.

To enquire call 07760 357 095 or email: [carolineignatius@devikacarecompany.co.uk](mailto:carolineignatius@devikacarecompany.co.uk)



SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2026

PARADE SETS OFF FROM WAITROSE @ 11AM  
SERVICE AT THE PARISH CHURCH  
PARADE RESUMES @ APPROX 12.10PM

CIVIC  
SUNDAY  
PARADE AND  
SERVICE

FEATURING  
THE RAF AREA  
VOLUNTARY BAND

PLEASE JOIN US AND ENJOY THE  
PARADE WITH THE MAYOR OF ST IVES  
CLLR ALEXANDER THOMPSON





having your say . . .

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

Milly & Tilly love your letters.

**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 nor condemns the opinions expressed.

**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

The new benches on The Broadway are obviously getting a lot of use. Unfortunately that has resulted in the paving and benches getting covered in a dirt and grease.



Who is responsible for this? HDC, Cambs County Council or the local takeaways? Something needs to be done about it soon!

**Gordon Walker**

**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

Don't all jump on me at once but everyone has agreed that the idea of building on parts of the current car park is a not a good idea. I know nothing about this but could the council build on the hideous Barclays Bank site instead? We, who come into St Ives a lot, in my case from Fenstanton, have been forced to see this site every time we visit. As for people who actually live in the town it must be an unwelcome sight for them too.

Come on council you need to be seen to be doing something. **Betty Brown**

**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

You will be delighted to know that the perseverance of the people of Fairfields has resulted in 2 street lights being reinstalled in Fairfields on the 16th September. Although this will help to relieve the gloom and encourage others to pursue the same cause, it does little to comfort the rate payers that their money was wisely spent in the large scale removal exercise of a few years ago.

**Fairfield Mick**



**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

Regarding your report about the graffiti in St Ives this is the response from HDC following my complaint. Hopefully, with your involvement something will be done.

**Dear Hazel,**

Thank you for contacting Huntingdonshire District Council regarding the graffiti in your local area.

I am writing to let you know that we are unfortunately unable to assist with your request to clean this graffiti. Our inspection confirmed that the affected surface is on private property. Because of this, it falls strictly under the remit and responsibility of the building owner to arrange for its removal.

We understand this is frustrating and sincerely apologise for any inconvenience or disappointment this causes.

Yours sincerely

**Simon Leaver**

I also complained about the dreadful state of the benches and pavement areas on Broadway, perhaps that can be addressed as well. Thank you to *The Riverporter* for highlighting this issue.

**Hazel Hardy**

**Dear Hazel** *The Riverporter* contacted our local Police about the spate of graffiti in town and this is their response.

We received a report of graffiti sprayed on the side of a building on London Road, St Ives, on 30 August. A crime was raised for criminal damage. Unfortunately, we don't currently have enough information to pursue a prosecution on this matter, and the case has been filed. However, if anyone has any further information that could assist the investigation, we encourage them to report it on 101 or via the force website by quoting 35/66957/26.

We continue to encourage all residents and members of the public to report any issues such as antisocial behaviour by calling 101 or on our website so we can plan patrols and priorities accordingly.

Many thanks

**Nat. Cambs Police**

**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

I would like if possible, through the pages of your excellent newspaper, to thank the people who came to my assistance two weeks ago when I overbalanced and fell opposite the Town Hall, breaking my wrist in the process.

Two passing ladies and Town Hall staff, including the Town Clerk and Phil Pope, gave me much appreciated assistance. Many thanks once again.

**Christine Mainwaring**

# The Riverporter

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

## OTHER NEWS

### Calling all artists . . .

Any local artists wishing to exhibit and sell their work at the **ArtsFEST Exhibition** in St Ives Corn Exchange on Saturday 21st November 2026, please email Pat Morgan at [pat-stivesnow@hotmail.com](mailto:pat-stivesnow@hotmail.com) for more information

### £72k transforms learning at St Ivo

St Ivo Academy, part of Astrea Academy Trust, has been awarded 'match' funding by the Savoy Education Trust to update their food and nutrition area. The school applied for a £36,000 grant to match the same amount already contributed by Astrea. This means the school has been able to refurbish two student food rooms, each kitted out with 10 electric ovens, new sinks, taps, worktops, a TV and new utensils.

Students and their families set up fundraising through their house systems at school lunch times, with activities running weekly, including staff darts, cakes, a book sale, 'where's wally' and more. These funds went directly to help buy new equipment, which will support student learning and understanding of the hospitality industry.

The refurbishment took place over the summer holidays and the school would like to thank Octavius for donating aprons and pasta machines, HBC Kitchens and Bathrooms for supplying the kitchens and The Cambridge Sign Company for the new signage.



### Fantastic response for St Ivo film

Following our article in the RP216 Paul Jibson has told us that they had a fantastic response at the launch event. The momentum from the night has been great, so we just launched a crowdfunding page to help get the film into production.

"I AM / WILL" is an ambitious short film that will proudly put St Ives on screen in a cinematic way it has never been captured before. The only intention is to create something with a lasting legacy: an incredible experience of making a film that provides opportunities for everyone in the town to be involved whilst taking the town's story worldwide - bringing the myth of St Ivo into the modern day.

Here's how you can be involved:

- Spread the word: tell anyone you think would care about this project.
- Donate to the crowdfunding campaign at <https://www.planninepictures.com/iamwill>. Every contribution counts.
- Offer practical support: locations, accommodation, catering.
- Be part of the film: as an extra or a runner on production days.

This is a rare opportunity to be part of something that will put St Ives on the cultural map and give the town's extraordinary history the audience it deserves. A film made here, rooted in this land, with serious festival ambitions and the community of St Ives at the heart of it. For more information contact: [iamwill@planninepictures.com](mailto:iamwill@planninepictures.com)

### Police are seeking information

Cambs police are appealing for information following a burglary at St Ives golf club at 10.30pm on Friday, 11 September. Offenders forced entry to the premises, causing damage to a gate and glass doors and stealing more than £100,000 of golf equipment.



Officers would like to hear from anyone who witnessed suspicious activity in the area, or who may have dashcam, doorbell or CCTV footage that could assist the investigation. They are keen to hear from anyone who saw a Land Rover in the area at the time. Anyone with information is asked to contact the police via 101, quoting reference 35/70616/26 or anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

### Merryland fighting update (See RP216)

Six people have been arrested after violent disorder left two men with serious injuries. Two 19-year-old men, from Hartford and St Ives and a 29-year-old woman from Wyton have been arrested on suspicion of a public order offence. A 20-year-old man from Huntingdon has been arrested on suspicion of a public order offence and possession of drugs. Meanwhile, a 19-year-old man from Whittlesey was arrested on suspicion of assault occasioning grievous bodily harm and a sixth person, a man from Chatteris, was arrested on suspicion of a public order offence but has been released without charge.

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## 2026 Shoebox Appeal

My name is Rob Jarrett, and I am supporting Beccy Roberts and the St Ives Rotary Club International Committee with our Shoebox Appeal for Moldova and Ukraine. Last year, thanks to your generosity, over 300 shoeboxes were delivered to children and families in need. Each box provided practical support, comfort and hope to people facing poverty in Moldova and the ongoing effects of war in Ukraine. We are asking for your support once again. A donated shoebox can make a real difference to someone's life and remind them that they have not been forgotten.

### Shoebox Packing Suggestions:

- Find a medium sized shoebox. Wrap it, covering the box and lid separately.
- Label the top if it is for a male/female and what age it is suitable for.
- Fill your shoebox with gifts. Suggestions include: **Toys:** Cuddly toy, Football and pump, Toy car, Doll, Yo-yo, Skipping rope, Fidget spinner. **School Supplies:** Pens, Pencils, Crayons, Ruler, Eraser, Notebook, Solar calculators. **Personal Care Items:** Comb, Hairbrush, Toothbrush, Flannel, Sponge, Stick deodorant. **Winter garments:** Hat, Gloves, Socks, Hair bows or clips, Small backpack/handbag
- **Please do not include any of the following:** Soap, Toothpaste, Sweets, Lotions and Liquids; used or damaged items; war-related items (e.g. toy guns, model soldiers, military vehicles etc.); seeds, gum, chocolate or food items; religious or political literature; medicines, aerosol cans, knives, sharp or fragile items.

### For collection arrangements, please contact:

Beccy Roberts: 07714 235612 rroberts@stivesrotarycambs.org.uk

Rob Jarrett: 07814 767890

*Thank you for your continued kindness and generosity. Together, we can make a meaningful difference to the lives of others.*

**Rob Jarrett, St Ives Rotary Club**

ADVERTORIAL

## Hyperion Home & Antiques Centre

**S**ince 1995 there has always been an opportunity to browse a wide range of antiques in St Ives town centre. As well as buying at auctions the Antique Centre offers collectors plenty of choice.



The Centre has over 30 experienced dealers with years of knowledge in silver, jewellery and fine art alongside many more interesting antiquities and collectables.

With its wide-ranging selection and ever-changing displays, Hyperion Home and Antiques Centre promises to both surprise and delight you. Come and see for yourself!

Nestled in the heart of St Ives' historic and bustling market square, next door to the bus station and main Cattle Market Car Park, Hyperion Home and Antiques Centre extends a warm welcome to every visitor.

The centre is open from 9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday and from 10am to 4pm on Sundays.

### Auction dates for the rest of the year.

|           |                      |          |                       |
|-----------|----------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| 19th Sept | Antiques & Interiors | 28th Nov | Fine Art & Design     |
| 10th Oct  | Antiques & Interiors | 12th Dec | Antiques & Interiors. |
| 21st Nov  | Antiques & Interiors |          |                       |

Some of the 30 dealers displays.

