

# The Riverporter

IT'S OUR 200TH EDITION WHOOPPEE!

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue 200: 16 January 2026

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## Huntingdonshire votes for elections

**On Wednesday evening, in St Ives' One Leisure Indoor Centre, our District Councillors decided to go ahead with their council elections on 7th May.**

This extraordinary meeting was called following the Government's suggestion that local councils could decide whether to hold elections this year, when some of those councils will be scrapped as a result of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in 2028.

Although councillors debated the issue on Wednesday, the issue had been fiercely contested on local Facebook pages for days before. Predictably there were negative comments and reading them one realises that being a councillor isn't an easy job, when many of the electorate are only interested in criticising councils and councillors. Fortunately there were also many comments from people, including councillors, explaining what the issues were and encouraging the public to attend the Council meeting to see how their councillors made the decision. Among those opposed to cancelling the elections was MP Ben Obese-Jecty and our very own Bishop, St Ivo, whose post attracted a lot of comments.

In his inimitable style Ivo said ...  
'Lo, Saint Ivo watches, and he asks that councillors vote for democracy, not for themselves.'  
St Ives North, Town Councillor Keith Brown posted.

Just to clarify what's actually happening. Residents are not being 'stopped from voting'. The council is deciding whether to recommend

*to Government that the May 2026 district elections go ahead as planned or be delayed as part of LGR. Any change requires national approval, it is not something the council can impose on its own. Town and parish elections would still go ahead as scheduled. It's a serious decision, which is why it's being debated in public. I'd encourage people to watch the meeting or read the papers so views are based on what's actually being decided, not on assumptions.*

**Hemingford Grey & Houghton Cllr David Keane posted ...**

*I don't think anyone is disputing the statutory process, but substance matters as much as form. A recommendation to delay may be advisory, yet it is decisive in practice, it removes the only opportunity for residents to pass judgement on this council. The officers' report is clear, there is no legal or operational barrier to holding elections. Asking if residents should still have their vote isn't rhetoric, it's the central democratic question.*

As elections for parish councils will go ahead anyway, overall financial savings are small. Without district elections, town councils, such as St Ives, would pay more.

Forum party members have criticised Labour for wanting to delay elections for fear of losing to their candidates. But one local councillor told *The Riverporter* that Reform winning seats in May, may not be a bad thing as the public will see how poor they are over the next year and not choose them when the more important unitary elections are held in 2027.

*The Riverporter* holds the view that the LGR process has been flawed from the beginning, Government turned a difficult decision into an impossible one by imposing such a short time frame to the task. Huntingdonshire District Council has worked hard to comply with the LGR process, but as just one of six district authorities it has no idea what the arrangement of the new unitary authorities will be in Cambridgeshire until the minister decides this summer!



## DIARY OF EVENTS

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

### JANUARY 2026

**Friday 30th - Chapel Arts Concert - GET NOT GOT.** Funky blues at St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 online or on the door. [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Saturday 31st - St Ives Corn Exchange - Soul City Walkin'** 7pm til Late. Classic Motown and Northern Soul Tickets £7.50.

### FEBRUARY

**Wednesday 4th - Engage Talk: Riots, Rebellion and Resistance- Trouble In The Fens - 2pm - St Ives Library** (donations welcome).

**Saturday 7th - St Ives Corn Exchange - Silent Disco** 8pm to Midnight. Featuring Motown, Disco and Rock playlists. Tickets £7.

**Friday 20th - COSI lunchtime concert** - featuring a wind quintet. A free concert, 1pm St Ives Free Church.

**Friday 20th - Civic Society - St Ives Historic Houses through time.** With local historians, Keith Grimwade and John McKinnie. 7.30pm at the Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

**Friday 27th - Chapel Arts Concert - Kim & Lee.** Eurovision winning musician and songwriter. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the venue or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Saturday 28th - St Ives Corn Exchange - The Tomb Raiders Band** 7.30pm. A night of blues in the Riverport Café. Tickets £10.

### MARCH

**Wednesday 4th - Engage Talk: Women's Suffrage in Cambridge** 2pm - St Ives Library (donations welcome)

**Friday 20 March - Civic Society - The Enduring Art of Stained Glass in Huntingdonshire.** A presentation by local author Reverend Stephen Day. 7.30pm at the Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

**Saturday 21 - St Ives Choral Society concert** - Schubert Mass in G and Rutter Magnificat, Free Church 7.30pm.

**Friday 27th - Chapel Arts Concert - Marina & Johnny.** An evening of Country music. St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the venue or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

### APRIL

**Friday 17 April - Civic Society - Mayflower Pilgrims & Links with Fenstanton.** A presentation by Adrian Moss about Fenstanton's links with the Mayflower. 7.30pm, Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

**Saturday 18th - St Ives Corn Exchange - Stand Up Comedy** with Arthur Smith 7.30pm. In association with Jubado's Comedy. Tickets £18

**Friday 24th - Chapel Arts Concert - Lift Music Collective.** Old music done in a new way - U2, Talking Heads, Stranglers and more re-imagined as movie themes - St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the venue or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

**Saturday 25th - St Ives Corn Exchange - Ceilidh Night** with Frog on a Bike 7.30pm. Tickets released early due to popular demand. £12.

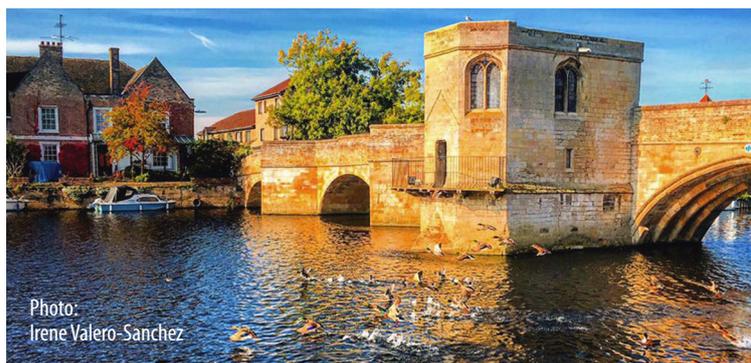


Photo: Irene Valero-Sanchez

## Another 600 Anniversary

2026 is the 600th anniversary of the St Leger Chapel on our bridge, consecrated in 1426. The Norris museum is planning to celebrate this milestone but as yet no details have been released. The Town Team, which organised last year's celebrations, are arranging a series of concerts and events in the Chapel, which will include a quartette (a choir of 4 singers) performing ancient music, Ranjan Vasudevan (one half of The Lightwaves) playing sitar and a concert featuring a vibraphone. There will also be an exciting opportunity for the public to perform. Think of Channel 4's The Piano. More details on page 2. Also in this issue ... introducing our new scribe, Jeffery (right) on page 3.



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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# Christmas Day Lunch 2025

The St Ives office of Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre (HVC), in partnership with the Free Church, hosted a Christmas Day lunch for over 40 guests who would otherwise have spent the day alone.

Guests enjoyed a two-course meal followed by coffee, mince pies, and mints. The event began with a welcome from HVC Chair Mike Baker, joined by Mayor Julie Kerr (right), and carols accompanied by organist Shalom and guitarist Shree.

This celebration was made possible through generous contributions: food from The Buckingham Emergency Food Appeal, cash donations from members of the public, crackers and tableware from Ken Booth & Co and drinks provided by Morrisons and Waitrose.

Pat Jones our dedicated cook and her team prepared the meal, while volunteers decorated the hall and set the tables to create a festive atmosphere. Over 40 raffle prizes were donated by Wards of Warboys



and volunteers. Thanks to Adams Cook & Pearce and Simon Hephper for providing the televisions so our guests could watch the King's Speech before departing with gift bags prepared by Michael and his family, featuring homemade jams and chutneys by Pat with other treats.

We are grateful to the volunteers who gave their time to welcome guests, serve meals, and provide transport. Their commitment ensures this event runs smoothly each year. Thank you for your kindness and support—we look forward to celebrating together again next Christmas!

Following an excellent 2025

Cheers from FES for the Summer!

Picnic in the Park (Warners) will be on 21st June

Music on the Waits in July and August



## 2026 is going to be a great year for live music

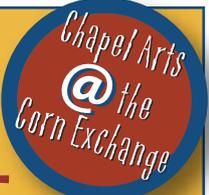
Starting with a series of intimate concerts by excellent musicians



FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY

**GETNOTGOT**

Having become one of the most popular bands at The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival, GETNOTGOT's funk-fuelled musical energy is the perfect start to a new season of concerts.



Concert starts at 7.30pm in The Riverport Bar, St Ives Corn Exchange

Tickets just £10 from the venue or online at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents).

# Chapel 600 Anniversary

The following concerts will take place in the chapel . . .

From 4th to 10th May:

'The Piano' comes to St Ives

Your chance to perform in the Chapel as during this week, starting on the May Day holiday, there will be a piano installed that anyone can play. Musicians - bring your friends (and instruments) along and hold an impromptu jam session in this unique setting.

The Town Team, working with Akcentmedia will be publishing details nearer the date.

Please note: concerts are free to attend in the Chapel but due to limited space tickets must be booked in advance from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/eventsstives).

Evening concerts from 7.30pm

**13 June - Les Moutons Noir.** This 4 piece choir will sing music of the mediaeval period.

**26 June - Dan plays Radiohead** Pianist, Dan Ecclestone, accompanied by friends will re-interpret the music of Radiohead.

**17 July - Kaveri Blues** (classical Indian music) Ranjan Vasudevan, accompanied by Mridangam (drum) and violin will play a Carnatic concert.

**31 July - David Youngs-** one of the very best performers of percussive fingerstyle guitar will amaze you with this atmospheric music, suitable for reflective meditation in the Chapel.

**28 August - An evening of percussion** Percussionist Derek Scurl will play a range of instruments, including vibraphone.

## That's not all folks!

The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival is holding two fundraising concerts in St Ives Corn Exchange. Tickets are available from the venue or [www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents)

Friday 29th May

**THE HOUNDGOS**

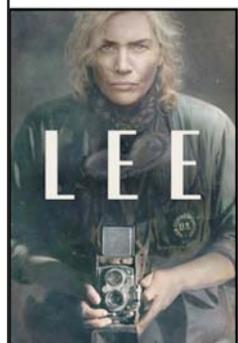
Saturday 4th July

**FRED'S HOUSE and THE 29TH FUNKTION**



**The Phoenician Scheme**  
Thursday 5 February 2026 at 7:30pm  
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7  
Director: Wes Anderson (2025), 101m, Cert: 15

The plot of Wes Anderson's **The Phoenician Scheme** centres on wealthy businessman Zsa-zsa Korda (*Benicio Del Toro*), who, after surviving numerous assassination attempts, appoints his daughter Lisel (*Mia Threapleton*), a nun, as his sole heir to his estate and a massive infrastructure project called the "Phoenician Scheme". The film follows Korda and Lisel on a journey to convince investors to fund the ambitious but ethically questionable plan, which involves manipulating agricultural markets to cause famine, and depicts their evolving, complex father-daughter relationship amidst the chaos.



**Lee**  
Thursday 5 March 2026 at 7:30pm  
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7  
Director: Ellen Kuras (2023), 117m, Cert: 15

**Lee** tells the story of American photographer and war correspondent **Lee Miller** (*Kate Winslet*), who was determined to document the truth of the Nazi regime during World War II. Defying expectations for women at the time, she travelled to the front lines for *Vogue* magazine, capturing some of the most significant and horrific images of the war, including the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. The film, a passion project for star *Kate Winslet*, explores her journey from a celebrated fashion model to a fearless photojournalist and the immense personal trauma she endured from what she witnessed. The narrative is framed by a later-life interview as Miller grapples with her past and the price of bearing witness to history's atrocities.

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



having your say . . .

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

Introducing Jeffery, our new News Hound. Milly and Tilly are hoping Jeffery will soon be mature enough to read 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 or condemns the opinions expressed.

**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

Just a thought. 1963 winter was halfway between 1900 and today. 2 years after, Beeching reduced our rail transport links. In the first 3 months of that year, we were blanketed with frozen snow, and I even had a frozen hot water bottle in my bed at one point. Diesel trains couldn't run. We relied on steam. We did not rely on cars. Houses were heated by coal fires. Electricity was sourced from coal.

Today we rely on solar and wind for electricity. The energy we are told, we should rely on, for heating, lighting and personal transport.

A repeat of 1963 would shut down life as we expect it to be. With the world political situation as it is, even offshore wind farms are vulnerable.

Snow blanked solar PV panels out of action, and what then ...

Thoughts please.

What contingency plans do you have  
Kind regards **Philip Noble**

**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

I was very surprised to see there was no lighting in the Waitrose and main St Ives car park when I visited after 4pm.

It makes the car parks very dark and in my view [it] is a safety risk for pedestrians and users of the car parks. Was there a power cut or are HDC saving money again? I enjoy reading your newspaper when I can get hold of it. Regards, Lulu.

**Dear Lulu,** We have increased our print run so you should find it easier to get a copy. **ED**

**Dear Milly & Tilly,**

The conversion of the old Barclays Bank into apartments was started ages ago, yet day by day, week by week nothing appears to change. It feels like Ground Hog Day in St Ives. Throughout there has been a sign on the hoardings stating 'Coming Soon'. What does 'Soon' mean? 2030? 2040? Maybe it is being converted under one of the UK Government's many Ten Year Plans.

**Anthony**

## TALKING TOGETHER

### Jan to March programme

#### MONDAY AFTERNOONS

Mondays 1.15pm starts 26 Jan - 6 weeks

#### Let's look at paintings

Mondays 2.15pm starts 26 Jan - 3 weeks

#### Charles Darwin - a life in letters

Mondays 3.15pm starts 26 Jan - 6 weeks

#### Medicine in the medieval world

#### THURSDAY AFTERNOONS

Thursdays 2.15pm starts 29 Jan - 6 weeks

#### The Land of Sweet Forever, Harper Lee

Thursdays 3.15pm starts 22 Jan - 4 weeks

#### Mythology at the Museum of Classical Archaeology

Please register your interest by Monday 19 January 2026.

To register: phone the COPE office on 01223 364303 or email:

copetalkingtogether@hotmail.com

## Langley Bread

The annual St Ives tradition of the Langley Bread distribution was held at 10am on Wednesday when 96 grocery bags comprising bread, jam, teabags, sugar and biscuits were given to St Ives pensioners. St Ives Mayor, Julie Kerr, is pictured below with two of the recipients.




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Email: [info@u3aivo.uk](mailto:info@u3aivo.uk)

Phone: 07458 197372



# The Riverporter

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## OTHER NEWS

### Praise for Ben for fixing staunches

Jones Boatyard posted - *Well done Ben Obese-Jecty and everyone that wrote to their MP.* It appeared that the intervention by Ben resulted in Emma Hardy, Minister for Flooding, confirming that major on-site works are scheduled to commence in Summer 2026 with funding secured through to March 2027. Ben said on his post 'I will continue to push DEFRA and the Environment Agency to ensure work is funded until satisfactorily completed and the sluice gates are fully operational.'

### Riverporter will not amend report

On another matter, Ben posted on *The Riverporter* Facebook page that he didn't call any local councillors 'traitors' (see RP199) and asked us to check Hansard (the official record of speeches in Parliament). He also asked us to remove the reference from our paper as it wasn't accurate. We didn't check Hansard but we did watch his speech again, which you can see at <https://www.facebook.com/watch?v=1428217415443653>.

He was quite right he didn't call any local councillors 'traitors' (by name) but at the end of his speech he did say [that any councillor who voted] 'For anything other than option E is to vote against Huntingdonshire' and added that 'whether they considered themselves a faithful or a traitor I'm sure they wouldn't want to make their last action of note, as an HDC councillor to throw Huntingdonshire under the guided bus.'

Considering several councillors didn't vote for option E then Ben's comment might be considered to have labelled them as traitors and that is probably what they thought.

### Carnival would love your input!

The Carnival committee is looking for your help in deciding what happens due to World Cup quarter finals happening on Saturday 11 July. They want you to choose between ...

**Option 1** - Music Festival on Saturday and Family Carnival on Sunday.

**Option 2** - Keep the family Carnival on Saturday and the Music Festival on Sunday

You can make your choice on the Carnival & Music Festival Facebook page.

### Ex Town Clerk resigns from post

Matthew Price, former Town Clerk at St Ives who was dismissed from that role in November 2023, has resigned from his latest position. Mr Price was appointed as Clerk to Kings Langley Council in early 2024 and has recently resigned. No reason has been given yet, but *The Riverporter* did raise concern about references given to Kings Langley.

## Continuing Learning for Adults in St Ives ("CLASI")

We are a group of between 20 and 30 people who meet in the Methodist Church Hall on The Waits, St Ives on a Thursday. Our courses start at 10.30am and finish at 12.15pm

### 2026 Programme

Course Title: **The River Great Ouse**

Course Description: All aspects of this mighty river.

Tutor: Keith Grimwade

Date: 15/01/26 No. of Weeks: 5

a lot about Japanese culture and politics, resilience, folklore and superstitions and ultimately how some positive effects have come from the recovery and where Japan is now. Tutor: Julian Sedgwick  
Date: 09/04/26 No. of Weeks: 5

Course Title: **Lectures on some historical aspects of St Neots and Huntingdonshire**

Course Description: Victorian Medicine, Victorian Christmas in Huntingdonshire, Crime & Punishment in Victorian St Neots, Regency St Neots in time of Jane Austen, The Kimbolton Iron Age Coin Hoard. Tutor: Liz Davies  
Date: 26/02/26 No. of Weeks: 5

Course Title: **Mud, Blood and Bandages**

Course Description: Military medical services and innovations in WW1 - introduction of steel helmet and nurses gas masks, chain of evacuation and introducing X-rays, blood transfusions etc.  
Tutor: Ian Langworthy  
Date: 21/05/26 One Day course.

Course Title: **Introduction to Japanese history and culture**

Course Description: Showing how the 2011 Tsunami and Radiation disaster in North East Japan tells us

Tea/Coffee and cake provided by the Church for a donation. For further details:  
Tel: 01480 493895  
Mobile: 07980 864 543  
E-mail: [peter.german@ntlworld.com](mailto:peter.german@ntlworld.com)

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Join our  
'Big Dementia  
Conversation'  
event

Staying connected:  
A guide to dementia-  
friendly conversations

Friday 6th February 2026  
2.30pm - 4pm

Join us as we explore how to communicate more effectively with people living with dementia. Together, we'll learn simple, practical ways to stay connected - helping to build understanding, ease frustration, and create more meaningful moments in everyday life.

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beverley.tyrrell@careuk.com

care UK

HYPERION

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Rolex Oyster Speeding with  
second sub dial and numeral face  
**Sold £1,000**



Rare Olympics: Tokyo, 12th  
Olympics Games 1940,  
(cancelled) **Sold £950**

Rare Jérôme Thibouville-Lamy & Cie  
19thC guitar **Sold £650**



A Violin by Francois Breton, Labelled: F.  
Breton **Sold £900**



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