

The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Issue 71: 30 October 2020

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

A secure future for our Corn Exchange

The Arts Council has awarded The Corn Exchange £50,000, as part of the 1.57 billion pound Government Culture Support Package to help the venue recover, when the Covid restrictions end.

This year has been difficult for everyone and it's certainly not over yet. When the restrictions were starting to lift, the directors of the Community Interest Company that run St Ives Corn Exchange, thought it time to plan a route back towards normal, but the dreaded virus had not finished yet.

Although the doors were opened, many of the regular users, the main source of income, were still either restricted by numbers or not in a position to get together again at this time. The result for the Corn Exchange has been a severe and unsustainable drain on resources resulting in tough decisions having to be made.

Great news

The Corn Exchange's volunteer directors have been working hard to raise the much needed financial support and last week they were rewarded.

The Arts Council, as part of the £1.57Billion Government Culture Support Package has awarded the Corn Exchange £50,000 to re-launch their planned events and community projects as soon as restrictions allow. The directors announced that this is truly fantastic news for the future of the Corn Exchange and will help them support a whole new range of events and community entertainment planned for next year.

Thanks to the government's #CultureRecoveryFund we can continue to be #HereForCulture



St Ives Book Jam



Chairman, Ron Westrip said 'The grant can only be used to help with projects going forward so many of the short term cut backs we have made will have to stay in place for a while. However we are now in a position to ensure that most of our markets and craft fairs will be open in the run up to Christmas and we hope that town residents will turn out to support these traders and crafters as they deal with Covid restrictions'.



Left: The Snow Dome was a great attraction in the Corn Exchange at the 2015 Snowman Festival Craft Day.

Frogmen are Quay to inspection . . .

Passers-by on the Quayside this week were entertained by a team from Durant Diving services who have been contracted to survey the full length of the Quay wall from underwater. The 5 man team of professional divers use a specially equipped mobile control centre to monitor the divers progress at all times while in the water.



Our historic town Quay is pretty old and well used by boaters. Every few years it has to be inspected for damage and erosion.

The team spent several hours undertaking their task and were certainly doing a thorough job even in the fast moving cold water.



Flue trouble is less secure!

Tuesday 27th October saw Bridge Street closed for several hours while scaffold engineers constructed a huge structure to give builders access to the Grade II* building that houses among others the Zzohanna restaurant and Solanki's opticians. It appears that the large chimney stack above these premises has developed a lean and was declared unsafe. The businesses and residents in the immediate area had to close and leave for safety reasons and builders will now decide what is the best way to save and secure the heavy structure.

One of the workers on site described the problem to our reporter as very dangerous and that the structure no longer had any proper support below it. No doubt the scaffold could be a Bridge Street feature for some time and add significantly to the problem with parking and turning around without driving over the bridge, which of course is not allowed for cars.



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Police Community Support Officers to be cut in half?

The Chief Constable has announced plans, which include cutting the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) by 50% and to 'redevelop' Cambridgeshire Constabulary's neighbourhood policing model to reduce costs in order to meet next years budget.

The plans, announced on Wednesday 21 October include the reduction of PCSOs from 80 to 40, the closure of nine enquiry offices (NOT the police stations) resulting in a reduction of enquiry officers from 17 to 11 and the removal of the community safety role across the force, which will all assist in saving £1.7 million in 2021/22.

A very rare sight

This will mean that the St Ives & Ramsey Team will have only half the number of PCSOs currently available, meaning that seeing one will become a very rare sight indeed! Watch out there may be twitchers crowding the streets if one is seen! PCSOs were originally introduced in 2002 to help tackle the fear of crime and provide back-up forces and save money, as they are less expensive to employ than police officers. While their role has become well established since then, it is clear that many forces relied on PCSOs more as police officer numbers declined. It doesn't seem that long ago that we all were charged an extra £12 p.a. on our Council Tax bills to pay for

additional Police Officers, a plan proposed by the then Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) Jason Ablewhite.

Last year the Government announced plans to boost police numbers by 20,000 across England and Wales in the coming years. Cambridgeshire Constabulary will receive a proportion of this so it is disappointing that the force still needs to make considerable cost savings to avoid using financial reserves.

Chief Constable Nick Dean said: 'We have had to make some incredibly difficult decisions over the past 12 months when considering how we balance the needs of the community and the policing service we provide – we simply could not continue with the existing neighbourhood policing model with the budget constraints we currently face, and are likely to have in the coming years. These proposals were due to be announced in April 2020, however, due to Covid-19, it was put on hold. We are very aware the timing of this announcement in the current climate is not good, however, in order to meet budget

deficit demands, there is no alternative.'

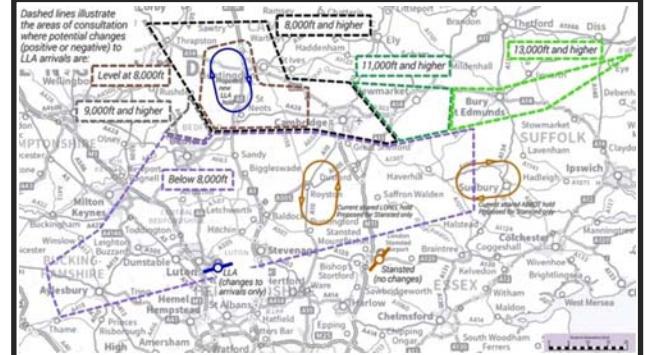
Since 2018, the number of police officers across neighbourhood policing teams has risen from 57 to an anticipated 132 in April 2021, achieved by savings from the Local Policing Review and the precept increases.'

Chief Constable Dean added: 'We believe deploying officers out into the community is a far more effective use of resource. We are absolutely committed to neighbourhood policing, tackling crime in our communities and keeping the people of Cambridgeshire safe.'

The initial period of staff consultation will last until 20 November.

ED's comment. It seems a complete u-turn for police officers to be back on the beat, after they have been locked away for years, either in police cars or dealing with cyber-crime.

Another question unanswered is why the current PCC, Ray Bisby, who is responsible for the Police budget, didn't announce these changes?



Will we hear them circling?

A public consultation to help determine new arrival routes for flights into London Luton Airport has started, which could see planes circling above our quiet and peaceful Ouse Valley.

Luton airport currently shares arrival routes and airborne holding areas with Stansted in Essex, in the skies above Royston in Hertfordshire.

The proposed new holding area would be above the A1 between Alconbury and St Neots.

The map above shows the suggested new area which 'touches' the western edge of St Ives.

Neil Thompson, operations director at London Luton, said it was important to 'hear from the wider community'. Any airspace change can have impacts for a wide variety of people. Local communities may be affected by noise, airlines will see a change to the routes that they fly and local airspace users may see changes too.'

Airports are assigned holding zones, which are areas in the skies where planes can circle if they have to wait to come in to land.

Luton and Stansted currently use zones above Royston, and above Sudbury in Suffolk, at about 8,000ft. Lee Boulton, from NATS, a firm which provides air traffic services for Luton, said: 'The number of flights into Luton has increased significantly in recent years and our controllers have had to delay aircraft and manually manage each flight to ensure safety. This proposal is all about ensuring safety and the consultation is a great opportunity for people to give us their feedback.'

The proposed changes will create a new holding zone for Luton arrivals, to ensure that operations for Luton and Stansted do not have an impact on each other.

For more information go to mediahub.london-luton.co.uk/ This consultation runs until 5 February 2021.

From our environmental correspondent Heidi N. de Tries

HEIDI GETS SWABBED!

Well, you could have knocked me down with a feather. I do like feathers actually, especially the long tickly ones, but that's another story (stick to the point – Ed). Through the letterbox plopped an invitation – would I take part in a survey? Ooooh yes, I don't mind answering questions you understand. Of course you do. But this is more than a few quick questions. It is to help the powers that be to find out more about this beastly virus. Somebody would call on me four times in the first month, then monthly thereafter, and wait while I swabbed myself.

Yes, I know. I've agreed to do a few unexpected things in the past but nothing quite like this. So, my movements are recorded (not those movements silly, I mean the people I have socially distanced with) the swabs are tested, and all this helps those lovely people at the University of Oxford learn more about how and why the infection is spreading. Imagine – they chose little old me for something this important. Perhaps they read *The Riverporter*?

Anyway, I hope you are proud of me – I am! Byeee – and stay safe! Heidi x



How many accidents does it take to get a stop sign put up?

Yet another person has been killed in an accident at the now notorious Wheatsheaf junction on the B1040. Local residents who visit the recycling centre, may know the junction as Poo Corner from the days when Hembsy Compost occupied the adjacent site.

Police confirmed that the driver of the car, 72-year-old John Burton of Huntingdon, was taken to hospital

but died later from his injuries following the collision with an HGV vehicle at around 5.15pm on Thursday, October 22.

This fatal accident follows another last November when a minibus with 22 people on board was struck by a VW Golf. Over the past year there have been a high number of accidents at this junction and four people have been killed.

The St Ives & District Road Safety Committee, one of the few left in the county, have been pressing for action for years.

A spokesman for them asked: 'Just how many deaths are needed before effective action is taken?'

The County Council has been promising something will be done but their solutions have tended to be highly expensive and are never

actioned because of the cost.

Regrettably the police do not support this section of the B1040 having a speed limit of 40 mph. That measure, along with replacing the give way signs for illuminated stop signs on the two side roads, as suggested by St Ives & District Road Safety Committee could help reduce the number of accidents at a reasonable cost.

However the authorities seem reluctant to put up stop signs despite the County having a very high 'Killed & Serious Accident' record, mostly on country roads. The circumstances of the collision are being investigated and the police are requesting that anyone who witnessed the collision should call 101 or visit: cambs.police.uk/report quoting incident 339 of October 22.

Did you know apparently there are more Food Banks in Britain than MacDonald's? Although I'm pleased about the lack of MacDonald's in our country it is an absolute disgrace that so many people, even those in work, need food banks in such a wealthy country.

When we rely on a young sportsman to show us what is important then we must question if our politicians have got their priorities right. Sandra.

having your say ... The Riverporter



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

Dear Erik and Millie,
Ref: Christmas Shopping

Time again for some tugging at trousers and skirts and dragging of our masters into the shops in St Ives.

Keeping the Christmas gifts, food and goodies bonanza in our town is just plain common sense.

In the end it's good for everybody.

Let's hope, this year in particular, the penny has dropped and we don't have to do too much tugging and nudging.

Schnauzer's up for it too, if necessary.

Doberman



Hi Erik,

Ref: Toilet update

Contrary to your update in issue 70 the toilets are not open. Did the drain works fail so soon? Or have you been precipitous?

Regards, **Brian**

Dear Brian,

As it happens *The Riverporter* was not precipitous with its comments - the toilets did re-open but the problem with the drains had not been fully resolved. The work carried out recently made a difference but not enough to stop them blocking on a daily basis when they reopened. We are informed by the Town Clerk, Alison Benfield that the company appointed to establish what the problem is, has now 'seen' at first hand the problem and are putting together a permanent solution.

Unfortunately, they will now remain closed until this work has been completed. It will mean that excavation around the toilets will be necessary and any disruption, as a result of this work, will be kept at a minimum when it does start. **Erik**

Dear Erik,
Re-opening of the Marsh Lane gravel pits in Hemingford Grey

The new pit lies between the Lake Ashmore (Liquid Skillz) and the A1307 (old A14). Lorries will access via the A1096 London Rd and Marsh Lane (with a terrible junction!). The immediate effect on local dog walkers, bird watchers and the London Angling Association will be restricted access to the track/path around the existing fishing lake.

We will only be able to access the lake on foot from the existing Marsh Lane pedestrian accesses (near Sadlers Way) and will not be able to access the east side of the lake. Circular walks will no longer be possible.

Robin Waters

HDC's Planning Department criticised

The soon-to-be completed build at the Cromwell Surgery is not without controversy. HDC has apparently not been concerned at the ignoring of many of the conditions attached to the build until forced to by public pressure. The most glaring is the condition on site access- Condition 8. This required an agreed Transport Plan to be in place before any demolition or any building could begin. It is that clear.

Between December 2018 and October 2020 it was ignored as the site was cleared and

building began, in spite of representations to HDC. Belatedly, a plan was finally agreed; 22 months on, way after building began. Why the delay, and why HDC was unbothered, is unclear.

Why have Planning Conditions if they are designed to be ignored?

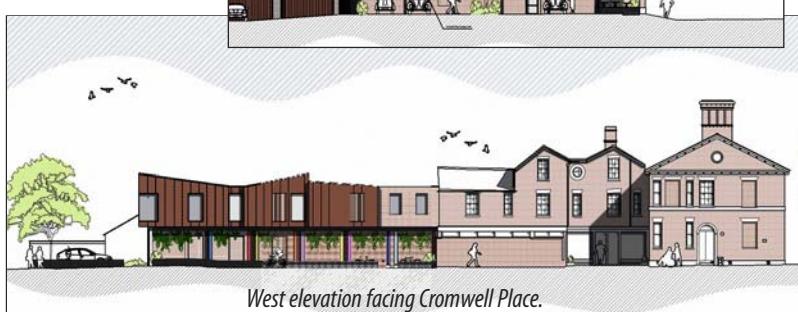
Almost 13 months ago, a large (2.9m tall) Air Conditioning Unit (ACU) was moved, without planning permission, close to neighbouring gardens and 30cm from a shared path.

Permission was applied for later. It has yet to be granted. In spite of protests there is no action on this permission, and the most immediate neighbours are being ignored.

HDC will not say what it is actually doing to resolve the ACU problem 13 months on.



North elevation facing Needingworth Road.



West elevation facing Cromwell Place.

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

NEWS UPDATE

Where there's smoke . . . there may be no engines

We saw an article recently regarding our St Ives fire station. It has been suggested that the current station, situated in Ramsey Road may be offered for sale for housing.

The sale would depend on the fire service gaining firm approval for a new station and training area in Huntingdon in the near future. The Chairman of the Fire Authority, St Ives County Councillor, Kevin Reynolds would only say that the idea was being looked at but would give no firm commitment.

He went on to say that the fire service would look for a site towards the edge of town in order that appliances may have better access to a greater road network.



Would a triple bypass work for St Ives?

The Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Mayor, James Palmer has been talking about the new bypass around Huntingdon which is part of the A141 upgrade, which it is hoped will relieve some of the pressure on the roads in our area.

The map below shows the suggested route for the new bypass that follows around the outside of the old bypass from Spitals A14 junction to Hartford and on to the A141 by Wyton airfield.

It will be interesting to see what happens next. The map seems to suggest that the road continues East (off to the right on the map) towards St Ives. Creating new roads tends to create traffic. I know it sounds odd but it really does, especially if the new bypass allows more traffic to move more quickly. Will this mean that St Ives roads will fill up more quickly?



Does this suggest another route around St Ives will be needed? Hill Rise and Marley Road, when built was our bypass and like Harrison Way, our second bypass, are now considered just local roads. So is a triple bypass on the cards? Around St Ives and on to Bluntisham and beyond? I'm sure if money was no object it would have happened by now. Perhaps the current Covid crisis has seen that we don't need to travel quite so much in cars and we can work from home more, shop locally and encourage everyone to walk and cycle more especially going to school and college. A really good public transport system would help and so perhaps Mayor Palmer's Metro plans could be just what St Ives needs.

What could have been!

A visual of what The Octagon could have been if community plans had been supported.

It's nearly 5 years since £50,000 of tax payers money was spent on The Octagon and District Councillors Angie Dickinson and John Davies said in their election leaflets that they had 'Saved The Octagon' for the community.

Sadly they failed to work with the community and it remains a bin store.



The heavily criticised Prospectus for Growth plans to revitalise the Town Centre failed to mention what might become of this iconic building. We wait to see what will happen.



**Entries
Invited for
Our Winter
Fine Art & Antiques
Sale on 21st November**

To Include a Good Collection of Militaria, Coins, Ceramics, Furniture, Local & International Art
Sold In Our Last Fine Art Sale

18thC Irish Silver Salver with chaised decoration and scroll rim supported on 3 pad feet **Sold £750**



L. S. LOWRY RBA RA (1887-1986). 'The Pond' Lithographic print, with Fine Art Trade blind stamp **Sold £2800**



WW1 German Artillery Luger snail drum magazine. BN marked
Sold £450

**Next Antiques & Interiors Sale:
Saturday 7th November starting at 11am**

Hyperion Auctions, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH
www.hyperionauctions.co.uk 01480 464140 



The second contribution from our history correspondent Daniel Wiseman

What a picture!



At first glance, this may appear to be a digitally-enhanced photograph but it is in fact a painting by William Fraser Garden from 1895. He lived in the Fens and painted lots of village scenes, including the Hemingfords.

This one depicts the chapel in a rather sorry state - one of the windows is boarded up. He has done a marvellous job making this look as realistic as possible and has practically done the painting twice because he had to reflect everything in the water. You can also see the different stone used for the additional, upper levels of the chapel, which was at that time a private residence.

William Fraser Garden came from a family of painters. Sadly he was declared bankrupt in 1899. His wife left him and took with her their six children, leaving the artist to live in a room at The Old Ferry Boat Inn, in Holywell, until his death in 1921.

The chapel returned to the way it looks today in 1930 when the top two floors, which were added in 1736, were removed to reduce the weight on the foundations.

As seen in reddit.com. The original of this remarkable painting is in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

ADVERTORIAL

NO TRICKS, JUST TREATS!



With property sales up ... kickstart your moving plans now and be in your new home in time for winter!

While it's clear Halloween will look different this year, we're on-hand to provide our own seasonal treats and suggestions, including how you can reap the benefits of autumn's staggering market activity.

If you've been considering moving, or you simply want to browse what's currently on offer, we'd like to present you with our hauntingly stunning properties for sale and let on our website.

**ellis&co
winters**

What do you need to bear in mind this Halloween season?

Like the rest of the country, we take government advice very seriously on social distancing measures; making sure we keep our clients and colleagues safe at all times.

So although it's likely that trick or treating will be ruled out this year, you can still have a hair-raising time with your loved ones.

Introduce 'ghosting' into your Halloween itinerary, whereby you can give back to your neighbours, friends and family with a giftbag of goodies left on their doorstep.

For more activities see our website.

Finally, if you do decide to bring your home to market, make sure you have photos of your property taken before the decorations have gone up to avoid dating your listing!

