

The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Issue 80: 5 March 2021

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Will Click Local save our High Street?

From Tuesday last, residents in Huntingdonshire can use Click it Local, enabling them to purchase everything from one marketplace – from weekly food essentials, gifts and treats from any independent businesses signed up to the platform.

In partnership with HDC the online retail platform 'Click It Local', will enable independent shops in towns across the district to offer a range of products for customers and have them delivered on the same or next day.

St Ives Mayor, Jonathan Pallant said, 'A slick on-line store, offering doorstep delivery of high-street produce from across Huntingdonshire, could be exactly what our local shops need and I would urge all our local retailers to look at these new ways of reaching customers. I also call on residents to make sure they #ShopLocal wherever they can, so that their High Street is still there for them when this crisis is over.'

The Riverporter spoke with Corrine Harwood of La Muse who has signed up to the scheme and our initial attempts to use the facility show



that it could be good for shoppers and local stores.

The simple concept is that you can chose items from many different shops within an order, with one payment and one delivery fee (up to a maximum charge of £6).

There is little doubt that how people shop has changed. This system may help smaller, local stores to compete with on-line companies.

Visiting your local high street will return sooner or later but probably

not quite in the same way we saw before the virus and for those people who are still unsure about the safety of visiting shops this could be a solution.

Click Local told us that they have already signed up 45 businesses and that numbers should grow as the scheme gets underway.

If you are a business interested in finding out more about signing up with Click it Local, please contact hello@clickitlocal.co.uk.

Confusion over donations to food banks at Morrisons

Several people contacted the Riverporter over food donations at Morrisons. Concern was raised about the confusing labeling of the donation boxes and that some items were not reaching their intended recipient.

We spoke with several people about this and there did seem to be a problem. St Ives Food Bank, were receiving much larger donations from Waitrose and the Coop than from Morrisons. Part of the problem was the confusing labeling of the boxes, which we referred to in Riverporter 79.

More worrying was that items clearly intended for St Ives Food Bank seemed to go astray after being put in the correct box.

Morrisons were contacted about this but a response was slow to come, that is until the Mayor Jonathan Pallant took up the matter and wrote to the store.

We are happy to report that the store has made changes and the trolleys are better labeled as the picture shows. We hope that all the donations, which the public have paid for and decided to give to a good cause, reach the intended organisation.

One question remains ... why the

third (yellow) trolley does not say who the recipient is? When you decide to donate here please ensure you use the correct box (trolley), especially if you wish to give to the St Ives Food Bank. We contacted Morrisons for comment but at the time of going to press we had not received a reply.



2,000 years old genital carving found in the road



The team examining finds unearthed on the A14 road project had a surprise when they found one millstone engraved with a large phallus. The millstone had been reversed to be used as a saddle quern, hiding the genital carving. Decorated querns and millstones of any date are extremely rare, with only four such Roman millstones discovered from around 20,000 nationwide. The image is similar to those found in Pompeii – one inscribed with 'Hic habitat felicitas' – 'You will find happiness here'. Romans saw the phallus as an important image of strength and virility, with legionaries wearing a phallus amulet, to give them good luck before battle. Rumours that the stone was found at a site known as Ablewhite Villas proved untrue.

Something to look forward to

St Ives Town Team is planning to start holding events again later this year. Here are three events that we can look forward to seeing from mid September onwards.

Government plans to ease lockdown, which Boris Johnson said was 'cautious but irreversible', has encouraged the Town Team to feel confident that some events will be able to take place later this year. Plans are being made to hold these three events, starting with the 2021 Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival from 16th to 19th September. As usual there will be around 20+ gigs in a variety of locations. Details will be advertised soon.



16th to 19th September



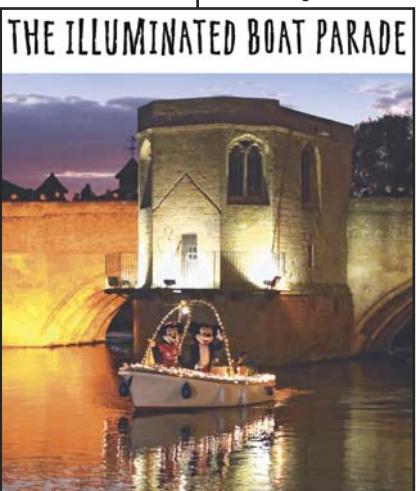
SATURDAY 2ND OCTOBER

A new event is The Old Riverport Ukelele Festival to be held on Saturday 2nd October.

The programme for the day, featuring children sessions, is being finalised and will be available soon.

This should prove a very popular event with nationally recognised artists performing and giving workshops and masterclasses.

The day will end with a wonderful concert in the evening.



THE ILLUMINATED BOAT PARADE

Two weeks later on 16 October, the very popular Illuminated Boat Parade should be back.

Places for boats to take part in this Halloween themed event are limited.

If you would like to enter your boat in the parade please email the organisers via us at: editor@theriverporter.uk

You will be able to see more details in April at the following website: www.stivesboatparade.co.uk

16th October 2021

GETTING EXCITED AT THE CORN EXCHANGE

An open letter from The Chairman

This past year has been tough on everyone and the Corn Exchange has had its share of obstacles. But now as we start to look at the dates put forward by government the excitement is starting to build.

Over the past few months we have heard the rumours that we have closed down and won't re-open which was never the case. Last year, once it became apparent that the Covid issue was not going away the directors took the tough decision to mothball the business and protect the building as much as possible from the financial pressures that so many venues and hospitality companies have had to face. Our deepest fears were realised once our many faithful hirers and visitors were forced to shut down and we sadly decided to close our doors.

But we have not been idle, as of this week we have started a programme of interior changes and a touch of re-decoration and over the next weeks, up to re-opening, we will be undergoing repairs and planning a diary of exciting new events and opportunities to bring a few smiles back to the town and we'll soon be releasing all the details. Socially distanced of course. But for now our booking desk is back working and if you want to reserve space for your club or event now is the time to get on the phone and check in with us. If you have been a past hirer of rooms and are now worried about how to get re-started let us know and we'll see what we can perhaps do to help. We hope that now is the time to start thinking ahead and we look forward to welcoming everyone back to the Corn Exchange as soon as Boris says so.

Chairman – St Ives Corn Exchange

How does St Ives look to you?

We received some comments from Luka, one of our readers, about how our town centre is looking shabby. Of course we all want to live in a nice place and it will be an increasingly important thing for St Ives to be clean and tidy as we again welcome visitors and compete for their custom.

We felt he had a point so here are his observations.

I don't know about you but as soon as I arrive in a new town or village, I get an immediate impression – favourable, or not so impressed. And what does this depend on? Well, it might be litter (present or not), paving (cracked or not) or signage (tidy or not). So, recently, as I strolled around what many people refer to as our 'lovely' town, I imagined I had just got off the bus here for the first time. These are just some of my observations.

Nice historic photo in the bus station but shame about the hazard tape.



On the back it's even worse!



HDC banner not secured properly at entrance to car park, now a sad comment on our District Council.



Left: Parking ticket machine in Market Hill with two tatty wrap-around and out-of-date notices.



Right: A main St Ives Town Council sign empty apart from some kind of growth

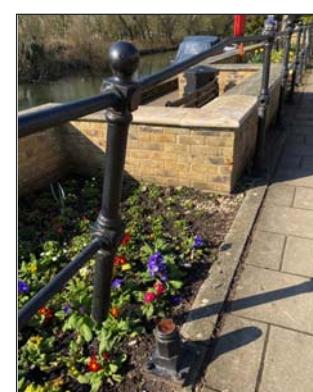
Below left: Visual eye-sore on gum notice board in Bridge Street.



Below: Damaged heritage-style railings, also on The Waits – been like that for weeks apparently.



Below right: Just over the Parish Church wall by the backwater – a folding bed complete with cushions.



Come on Town Council - and Councillors!

What kind of impression do these shameful examples of neglect and lack of action give visitors?

I'll tell you. They say we don't care in this town. And as a resident they sure as hell depress me.

This is a lovely town. We are lucky to live here but why can't our Town and District Council, which has ultimate responsibility for these examples, simply organise proper temporary signage in the first place, and remove it when it has expired?

The town needs to look cared-for to help make us all feel a bit happier at times like these. And, with a bit of luck, we'll be seeing visitors again soon.

From Luka That



THE RAILWAY COMES TO ST IVES

Part 2 from our history correspondent Daniel Wiseman.

When steam locomotives came to St Ives, on August 17th, 1847, there were no cars and no telephones. But railways changed the way we lived, bringing the mass transportation of goods and passengers, mail order catalogues, standardisation of buildings and materials, a shift from local time to standard time and even a change to the way we cooked (as we moved from wood to coal).

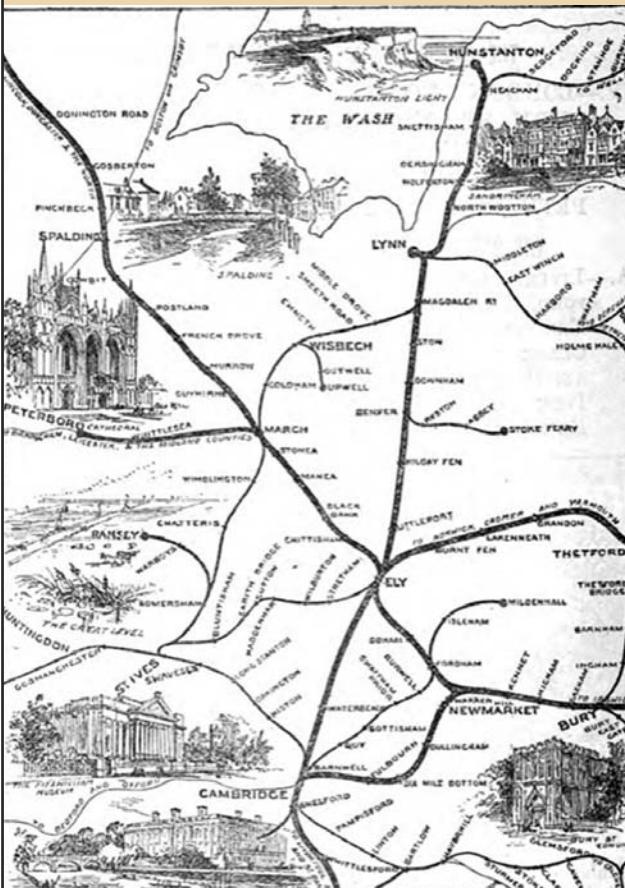
Our station gave us access to two lines: one to Cambridge and one to Huntingdon station (in Godmanchester), where to keep costs down, carriages were pulled by horses. A third line, to March, connecting us to Wisbech, was added in 1848. Most days there were only three trains to Cambridge, including the affordable train mandated by parliament.

Lines were run by the Eastern Counties Railway, which had a poor reputation for cutting costs, dodgy financial dealings and late-running services. A report in the Cambridge Chronicle & Journal in 1856 revealed the St Ives to Cambridge line appeared to have surreptitiously been converted from double to single track operation. This meant less track to maintain, but also that you had to have a way of guaranteeing each section of track didn't have trains traveling towards each other, to avoid fatal collisions. In his report, the Secretary of the Railway Dept Board judged the action to be a dangerous economy, stating it was unworthy behaviour of a company of such great character.

On August 17th, 1862, a bill passed in parliament, creating the Great Eastern Railway from the amalgamation of Eastern Counties and several smaller railways. In the 1870s, the Cambridge line returned to double track operation. More connections were to come.

- On March 1st, 1866, the Midland Railway opened to passengers an extension of its line, from Kettering to Huntingdon, running four trains each way between Kettering and Cambridge, with new stations at Brampton, Grafton, Kimbolton, Raunds, Thrapston, Twywell and Crawford.
- On May 10th, 1878, a line from St Ives to Sutton opened with new stations at Bluntisham and Earith Bridge and a relocated Sutton station. Trains would head out of St Ives on the March line but then branch off at Needingworth. The new line connected us to Ely with stops at Haddenham, Wilburton and Stretham. The journey time was about 45 minutes.
- On July 1st, 1882, the Huntingdon station in Godmanchester became Godmanchester station. Passengers from St Ives could then use a new Huntingdon station, opened on May 1st, 1883, built next door to the existing Huntingdon station served by the Great Northern line.
- On September 16th, 1889, a branch line from Somersham to Ramsey High Street (later Ramsey East) opened.

The railways also changed the way we went on holiday. In 1893, The Official Guide to the Great Eastern Railway, showed St Ives' citizens could now reach the seaside towns of Hunstanton, Cromer and Yarmouth.





having your say ...



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

Dear Erik, Hedge - Gone AWOL

Everyone knows that wildlife is in sharp decline and desperately needs our help in order to survive. Now the hedge on the small green in Chestnut Road has been totally cut to the ground. It was a good mix of wildlife-friendly species and there were always birds on it. Does the Council ever plant new trees and hedges as I have never seen any, just the little wildlife havens removed.

Anonymous Wildlife Lover of St Ives



Girls Football Teams Race Across Europe - Despite Lockdown

A competition between St Ives Rangers FC girls' teams was set up by their coaches to keep players fit while they cannot play matches – and to raise money for a local charity in the process. It involves U12 to U16s teams and their families running, walking, cycling, or taking part in other fitness activities for their team. Their total distances help them progress along a virtual race route marked out by some of Europe's main football stadiums. The race is being run over 10 stages and is expected to last throughout March. Clare Lorman-Hall, Welfare Officer at St Ives Rangers FC, and co-coach of the U16 girls' team, said: 'We set this challenge up as a fun way to get our players moving during lockdown. We could see that they were not getting enough exercise. This was not good for their mental



health - or fitness ready for when games begin again.' Jan Davis, Chair of Hunts Community Cancer Network CIO, added:

'All funds raised by local people will stay in the Huntingdonshire area. We can't wait to follow the progress of the team!'

To support the challenge go to JustGiving at: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/st-ives-rangers-fc-girls-u12-to-u16s

Council set Budget

HDC Councillors approved a 2021/22 budget of £20.7m million to spend on services and to freeze the Council Tax. The budget commits to progress Civil Parking Enforcement in response to requests for better on-street parking. The Council is also committed to installing electric vehicle charging points in HDC car parks, improved road and cycleways and the brand new park on the old St Ives golf course.

HDC has begun realigning the services of its One Leisure sites to enable the greatest positive impact on health and wellbeing.

With the centres likely to reopen on 12 April there may be some changes at St Ives with some functions not possible to reopen once Government restrictions on leisure operations are relaxed, for example, changes to Zest Café and events at Burgess Hall.

As yet details are sketchy.

Volunteer Groups Message Forum

If you are a member of a community group that wishes to let others know what you do, or needs specific help, or just wants to promote your organisation, you can email us at theriverporter.uk and we will include it on the Message Forum.

VACANCY

The Acorn Cancer Support Group

Acorn is seeking a new volunteer to act as Secretary for the group. Are you able to give up a little time to help this very worthwhile local charity? Acorn's mission is to try and alleviate the emotional and physical distress of cancer patients and their carers, and in normal times operates monthly from three venues, St Ives, Huntingdon, and Ramsey, when relaxation therapies, occasional talks and general networking take place, with coffee biscuits and nice lunches provided.

Duties will include the presentation of the Agenda for quarterly meetings of the Trustees (including the AGM) and setting up zoom meetings during the Pandemic and taking minutes and the preparation of an Annual Report.

After a suitable period of induction, there are opportunities to be involved with other aspects of the charity. For more information please get in touch via Facebook, www.facebook.com/siaccsg or via our website: <http://acornsupportgroup.org.uk/contact-us>



The Riverporter

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

NEWS UPDATE

Parklet [park-let] a sort of a small rural setting that looks like it belongs in a park but it's not!

We recently ran a story applauding an award to St Ives of cash to boost our town centre with several initiatives, which are welcome in these strange times. However, one of those nice ideas for our town was the inclusion of parklets in our streets. It would not be an exaggeration to say that I have now been asked dozens of times ... 'What exactly is a parklet?' So we thought we'd follow up on that and supply a definitive explanation. Wikipedia says, (and I quote) 'A parklet is a sidewalk extension that provides more space and amenities for people using the street. [So it's an American thing then.] Parklets typically extend out from the sidewalk to the width of the adjacent parking space.' And those nice Wiki people also supplied us a picture.



While we can see the initial appeal of adding these scenes to our St Ives streets, it would certainly look nice down Bridge St and The Quay and a few on Market hill would be a nice place to sit for a coffee but once in place the council must maintain these spaces or they could quickly become an eyesore.

Erik has been quick to point out that if I think this would suffice as a walk to the park then I need to think again ...

HDC have said they want to know what local people think of the idea and give the public a chance to comment. They are therefore holding a digital drop in community event, on 10 March at 7pm. This event will be hosted on zoom and the details to join are:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88657930274?pwd=Ni9KTjVFMHBURctySEFZWks2cHhrUT09>
Meeting ID: 886 5793 0274 - Passcode: 638626

St Ives murder: victim named

In the early hours of Monday 22 February a woman was murdered at premises in Norris Road, near the old Police station. Detectives investigating the death have now named the victim as Wieslawa Mierzejewska, 59. A post-mortem was inconclusive and police are awaiting the results of further tests. A Ernest Grusza, 40, of the same address has been charged with murder and remanded in custody, due to appear at Cambridge Crown Court on 26 March.

Options for improving A141 made public

The options include: 1. A new bypass from Spittals Interchange to Sawtry Way roundabout with no connections to existing roads. 2. A new bypass from Spittals Interchange to Sawtry Way roundabout with three junctions to the existing road network. 3. A new bypass from Spittals Interchange to the Tesco Roundabout. Widening of the existing A141 from the Tesco Roundabout to the Hartford Roundabout.

To see all of the six options visit the microsite at www.youra141.co.uk

The doom of Zoom!

Well our prime minister has spoken, and we have our ever-hopeful road map out of lockdown. Going through the national papers this morning I had to smile at a piece titled 'Mirror of zoom makes callers crack' so true I thought, if this whole year at home has taught me anything it has to be, I hate zoom! And it seems I'm not alone the Times reports that research has proven that Zoom fatigue is real. It appears that those of us regularly using zoom experience a feeling of exhaustion and being emotionally drained, more so after a zoom meeting rather than a face to face meeting. It seems the main issue is that we can't stand seeing ourselves on screen. So I for one have decided to adopt the idea that Erik has drawn up here...



The COURTYARD St Ives

Open-air boutique market. run by independents



Support Local everyone!
We are selling all our goods on a Click and Collect basis, for a preview of all the items we have just check out our Facebook @hyperioncourtyard



Food and Takeaway Coffee are open as usual 10am – 4pm Monday through to Saturday in St Ives, also coming soon we will be having homemade bread and fresh eggs daily!

Happy Earth Refills the Eco friendly, Zero waste Refill Shop. Vegetarian, Vegan High-Quality Foods, Cleaning, Toiletries and more. Helping reduce plastic pollution for a cleaner planet



Need a coffee break? Lorenzo's Coffee
Serving Coffee, tea, and hot chocolate. We also sell our coffee beans which can be ground to your specification to enjoy within your own home

We are inviting New Dealers for our expanding Courtyard ready for coming out of Lockdown, please call 07983 527733 or [@hyperioncourtyard](https://www.facebook.com/hyperioncourtyard)

The Courtyard, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH
www.hyperionauCTIONS.co.uk/the-courtyard-shopping Tel: 01480 464140

From our environmental correspondent Heidi N. de Tries

HEIDI SAYS WATCH YOUR TACKLE!

Dears, this week I've had another adventure!

Ed said, 'Heidi, fancy a trip up the river to see some tackle?' Well my heart leapt. Just like the old days I thought. But wait, it's not really the weather is it? I was right. What he showed me was something else. In a particular place, and hanging from the trees over the river, were several of those colourful fish lures all bristling with viciously sharp hooks.

But, worst of all, each was trailing yards and yards of monofilament fishing line. Even I know that I was looking at death-traps for wildlife. Now I know how popular fishing has become. I've even been known to do a bit myself (nudge!). But it was clear what had happened.

More than one budding angler had cast their lures without due care and attention, and probably also experience. So, instead of accurately landing on the water in the intended place, the lures had shot straight up into the trees. When this happens, there is no way to retrieve them, and so the line is inevitably broken leaving the lethal litter.

Well, I was so proud of Ed. With a long pole with a big hook on the end, he prodded and prodded, pulled and twisted. I had to admire his athleticism (oooh, big word) as he extricated the lures and the lines. He then proclaimed, 'Now I'm in the mood!', but once again I was disappointed. He proceeded to haul from the water a traffic cone, a bike wheel and numerous tin cans, bottles and take-away cartons. My breast filled with pride. My hero!

Seriously though darlings, if you know of any young fisherman keen to cast, do ask them to aim low. A bird, or any animal, caught in fishing line has a very uncomfortable slow death – and none of us want that to happen do we? Bless you all. Love Heidi xx

Heidi's lethal litter – see the hooks and the deadly line?



ADVERTORIAL

Stamp Duty Holiday Extension: What does it mean?

On Wednesday the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, unveiled his crucial economic plan to aid the UK's recovery from the COVID pandemic.

In his announcement, the Chancellor referenced the substantial contribution the housing market has played in supporting the UK's economy and set out measures to ensure this continues.

Sales of properties have boomed across Cambridgeshire since the nil rate stamp duty threshold was increased to £500,000.

With the deadline fast approaching, many buyers will be relieved to learn that the nil rate band will remain at £500,000 until 30th June, providing valuable time to ensure their sale completes in time.

To smooth the transition back to the normal, the Chancellor has announced an interim period between 1st July to 30th September where the nil rate stamp duty band will be £250,000, twice the standard level.

This second phase will ensure the property market remains buoyant, avoiding a downturn in activity that some had feared.

Homeowners considering a move in 2021 now have even more incentive to secure a sale and purchase as soon as possible.

In addition, the Chancellor announced that first-time buyers will benefit from a "government guarantee" on mortgages, with a deposit of 5%.

The scheme should help a wider number of first-time buyers onto the

property ladder, further aiding the overall property market which is heavily reliant on first-time buyers to start the initial link in a property purchase chain.

If you're considering a move in 2021 now is the time to take action. Call your local Ellis Winters team today. St Ives: 01480 388888, Somersham: 01487 808888, March: 01354 701000, Chatteris: 01354 694900.



ellis&co winters