

# The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Issue 82: 1 April 2021

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

FIRST FOR THE NEWS IN ST IVES

## St Ives to be put on the map with amazing Garden Bridge

The Riverporter has been made aware in a leaked document of a recent council meeting when there was an agenda item tabled to discuss the positioning of the new 'Parklet' areas here in St Ives.



View from the Chapel – an artists impression of how the new Garden Bridge could look.

During the meeting, a suggestion was made that due to the issues with the appalling parking problems in Bridge Street and the continued flouting of the restriction of cars using the town bridge that the problem can be solved by not only fully pedestrianising Bridge Street but using the opportunity to convert our bridge into a 'Garden Bridge'. Surprisingly the idea received unanimous approval and plans are being drawn up as we write. The scheme will incorporate a beautiful arboretum area adjacent to the chapel with planted areas and raised seating giving visitors

unrestricted views of our beautiful river and meadow.

Pedestrians and cyclist will, however, still be able to use it along with the Ferrets, Badgers and other wildlife, which will be able to reach the meadow in safety, without the likelihood of being squashed by a speeding boy racer.

These proposals will also give scope for the old chapel in the centre of the Bridge to be used for Gardeners Question Time on a regular basis and for experts to provide the public on tips about the fascinating 'Art' of Bonsai.

The scheme has so delighted

councillors, even at county level, that the Conservative led council have notified Downing Street of the idea in order to garner any advice the Prime Minister may have in organising the work, considering his extensive prior experience in this sort of project.

At the time of printing we have not heard back from Downing Street however a staff member at number 10 has offered a substantial number of plants, trees, and materials from a previous project in London. Plans are being drawn up and will be made available for public viewing very soon.

## All together for Good Friday?

The usual Good Friday procession through St Ives isn't able to take place this year due to the Corona virus. Instead, Churches Together in St Ives, who usually organise the procession, are putting together a joint virtual service which will be available on the Free Church website on Good Friday and over the Easter period. It features contributors from several St Ives churches, and also the Somersham Town Band.

If you are interested in taking a look then visit [www.stivesfreechurch.org/](http://www.stivesfreechurch.org/)

Another new act for this year's Old Riverport Jazz & Blues festival



Cambridgeshire based singer and songwriter Solomon Smith will perform on the opening day of this year's Festival in September. His songs (on guitar and mandocello) are of the moment and cover a range of subjects and genres. Influenced by folk, soul, blues, jazz, funk, country and more his style isn't easy to pin down. That said, running through his songs is a coolness and groove that is hard to resist. He has spent a lifetime playing shows in the UK and has appeared on national and local radio/media. He will team up with Festival favourites Chris Newman and Myke Clifford to perform at The Nelson's Head at 8pm Thursday 16 September.

According to Sue Marchant of BBC East Regional Radio 'Solomon has a soulful voice and heart of conscience that are easy on the ear, his songs relate to the moment yet there is an essence of romance and a 'dunk' of jazz.'

## Oh No! Not another one . . .

It seems that the job of Town Councillor in St Ives is not what it used to be, as yet another councillor resigns. Angela Ayres Wilson resigned from the Town Council on 26 March.

Councillor Angela Ayres Wilson became the fifth councillor to depart the Council since last May. Three of the councillors, Richard Bellamy, Lynn Davies and now Angela have told *The Riverporter* that they were unhappy with how the Council is run, citing a lack of support from colleagues.

Angela had been a Town Councillor for nearly 9 years and for 8 years was Centre Manager at the Burleigh Hill Community Centre, a position she resigned from on 2 March.

Angela's contract as Centre Manager, which is the responsibility of the Burleigh Hill Community Centre Management Committee, may have been at the heart of the problems. Angela said that not only had she not been supported but had actually felt bullied. *The Riverporter* has previously reported criticism of the management committee of the Burleigh Centre, which is mainly run by Town Councillors and is now chaired by Councillor Angela Dickinson, who took over the role from Councillor Tim Drye.



Interestingly the Charity Commission website still shows that the Centre Management Committee accounts and annual returns are still overdue.

Angela Ayres Wilson told us that attempts were being made to change her contract at the Centre and that there was nothing professional about how the matters were handled and no duty of care, as her paid role at the centre and her Town Council position became entwined. She was very upset that having given her all to the centre, she felt the only way out of the situation, and to get peace, was to resign from the Town Council as well.

## 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](mailto:theriverporter.uk) and we will include it on the Message Forum.

Dear Editor,

I'm writing on behalf of the choir to ask if you could please put the following in your next edition as we are hoping to enroll singers! Thanks Carol Jennings.

## Hemingford Ladies' Choir welcomes fresh voices!

It is a well-known fact that singing is so good for your health and well-being! We've been going for 25 years now and over the years have held concerts for many local charities. Every Wednesday morning throughout Lockdown we have had fun Zoom singing, even having virtual concerts. Now we are looking forward to the time when we all meet again to sing together.

If you love singing and would like to be part of a friendly ladies choir, please contact **Viv Oxley, 01480 417925** for more information.

## Anywhere for Boules?

Dear Sir,

I represent a group of people who are members of the St Ives u3a who enjoy a weekly game of pétanque (boules). Until the lockdown last year, we were able to play locally every Tuesday morning, playing on a gravel surface or grass with facilities for a coffee and a natter at half time. The pandemic has changed everything and we are no longer able to use these facilities. We are looking for an alternative host in St Ives or in one of the surrounding villages who would put up with a group of 30 - 40 retired citizens, and wondered if the readers of your paper have any ideas to help.

**Many thanks, Andy Galtrey 07818 200517**

From our environmental correspondent Heidi N. de Tries

## HEIDI AND THE BEES' KNEES

Now then dears, listen up. This week I've something terribly important, and interesting, to tell you. You see, as I remark to Ed Gasket frequently, I'm not just a pretty face you know. He just smiles knowingly ...

Well, as it happens, another gentleman of my acquaintance – yes, I know, another – is a lovely, truly gentle, beekeeper.

He is so love in with his bees he calls them his 'ladies', and as they buzz happily around him they seem as gentle and relaxed as he is. Ah.... However, they don't seem to like me so much because as he was introducing me to them, I peered too closely and one stung me. It was my own fault and apparently they may not have liked my pheromones [big word alert Heidi? – Ed].

Well alright then, my smell! I have to say it's never had that effect before – in fact, usually quite the opposite. [Get to the point Heidi – Ed].

Right then. As you all know, bees are in trouble from chemicals in fertilisers, and yet we depend on them to make sure all our food plants are pollinated naturally. So they are very important for our continued health and well-being. So here comes the point. This month is the time of year when things are getting crowded in the hives, as the queen increases her egg laying. So, what happens? They swarm of course, taking off to find a new home where a new queen can settle and raise her own colony.



How wonderful! The thing is the first thing they do is gather in the open air, to make sure they are all present and correct and to get their bearings. And that's when we usually notice them, looking like this:

Now, most people's reaction is to shriek OMG, hide the children, and rush to ring 101. But my dears I am here to tell you, yes, do go to the phone but instead ring the lovely David Hetherington. He lives in the town, he knows what to do, and in two ticks he'll be round to remove your swarm safely. If he doesn't re-home the swarm himself he knows plenty of beekeepers who will.

There. Job done. Aren't I the bees' knees?  
Byeee!  
Heidi xx

**SEEN A SWARM?  
Call David Hetherington  
01480 393262  
or  
07481 543011**



From our history correspondent Daniel Wiseman.

## AFTER THE RAILWAY LEFT ST IVES – Part 4

In October 1970, more than 120 years after it had opened, British Rail closed the line from St Ives to Cambridge to passengers. Ten years later, the St Ives bypass opened, some of which followed the route of the old St Ives to March line. The construction of the bypass brought an end to the queues at the traffic lights to cross our famous medieval stone bridge, but it also meant the demolition of St Ives' abandoned railway station.

However, this didn't stop people hoping that one day we could get our railway back!

In May 1981, a solution to transport problems in our villages, in the shape of a bus that could run on railway lines, was proposed.

In August 1986, a county transportation spokesman said he'd like to see the St Ives to Cambridge line re-opened (although the county council had turned down the suggestion of funding for this only a few months earlier and were proposing to turn it into a new road instead). The re-opening of the line was mooted again a year later, this time in connection with a new project to link up passengers with Stansted.

In October 1987, the Willingham-based Alternative Transport Society suggested an overhead cable car system from St Ives to Cambridge, eliminating the need for cars to wait at level crossings!

In 1989, South East Cambridgeshire MP Jim Paice backed the re-opening of the Cambridge to St Ives line, proposing to extend it to Huntingdon, to reduce congestion on the A604 (now the A14).

But what we ended up with instead was the world's longest guided busway. The railway tracks were replaced with sections of concrete beams for modified buses to run on. The recommendation to build a busway (and widen the A14) was made in 2001, but construction didn't begin until 2007. We were promised the service would be up and running in February 2009, but it took until August 2011 before the route finally opened, some forty years after St Ives railway station closed.

Some still believe the busway was 'misguided' and that the re-instatement of the railway would have been quicker and cheaper. But most consider it has been a success, with millions of journeys being made for commuting to work, travelling to college, hospital visits and shopping.

Although there is a proposal by the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to replace the busway as part of a future 'CAM' metro, with self-driving vehicles.

## New Director of The Norris Museum appointed



St Ives Town Council has appointed Claire Hardy (above), as the new Director of The Norris Museum. Claire who takes up her post on 7th April having worked across museums, libraries, archives and the arts for almost 15 years. Her work has taken her to Cornwall, Hampshire and Gloucestershire, but for the past 8 years back to Cambridgeshire, her home county.

Claire told The Riverporter ... 'I am delighted and feel privileged to join the team at The Norris, and look forward to sharing our plans and ambitions for the future with the residents of St Ives in due course. In the meantime, we will be working hard behind the scenes to open the doors of The Norris and welcoming visitors back once again as soon as we can.'

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



Sub Editor Milly Moon Dog, standing in for Erik while he inspects the arches, is looking forward to a hair cut when hairdressers re-open later this month!

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

Dear Erik,

**Subject: Parish Church Hall**

All Saints' Parish Church has submitted a planning application to Huntingdonshire District Council to convert the Church's Parish Hall into four residential units. The reason given for the application is that there is no reasonable prospect of the Parish Hall being retained and restored. It is said that in the last decade only occasional dance classes and keep fit activities have taken place, and that works estimated at £150,000 are needed to reinstate the condition and facilities of the building. Previously, the hall was run very successfully, both in terms of benefit for the wider community and a financial surplus for All Saints' Church. Many people contend that the building has been neglected intentionally. Otherwise, why were works not undertaken gradually over time, spreading the cost, as any prudent property owner would have done, and why were external grants not applied for? A chief reason for this application to convert the building into residential units is because an earlier application to demolish and redevelop the site was rejected by Huntingdonshire District Council. Now, once change of use has been achieved, it will be far easier to secure permission to demolish the building. Behind this unchurchlike manoeuvring is the real

reason for the application, which is now stated in the application: cash funds are craved in order to finance wholesale internal re-ordering of the magnificent All Saints' Church, a Grade One listed building and one of Simon Jenkins' *'England's Thousand Best Churches'*.

Some time ago, All Saints' Church conducted a public consultation about re-ordering the Church. I took part in this consultation but, as far as I know, the results have not been published. Why is that? I wonder.

Why has All Saints' not conducted a public consultation about the Parish Hall? Church of England Vicars, particularly here in St Ives, continually tell their townspeople and villagers that they should regard their churches as serving and belonging to all of us, not only the congregations. Why then have we not been consulted about the Parish Hall?

I hope that your readers will make known their views about this planning application to the District Councillors for St Ives and to the Planning Officers at Huntingdonshire District Council. HDC's 'Standard Consultation Expiry Date' is very soon, Friday 16th April. The Link on HDC's Planning Portal is:

<https://publicaccess.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=Q0XU30IKJIC00&activeTab=summary>  
Ian Dobson

Dear Erik,

**Subject: Waste of Our Money**

I have emailed the Council asking why the hedge on the green in Chestnut Road was removed.

No reply.

It doesn't make sense for the Council to waste our money cutting a hedge to the ground when it was not in anyone's way besides being perfect for wildlife.

Anonymous Wildlife Lover of St Ives

Dear Erik,

**Subject: CTSI Good Friday**

Firstly, many thanks for your always interesting publication keeping us up to date with what is going on in St Ives. As you'll know, Churches Together in St Ives usually organise a procession through town on Good Friday culminating with a service outside the Free Church. This year that won't be possible and so they have organised a virtual service. **Pete** [Have put details on Page 1 ED]

## Getting Eggciting

So here we are Easter again. And still we must take precautions under the Covid restrictions, so we have come up with an Easter weekend bit of fun for the family that is a totally outdoor pursuit but will lead to hours of fun! ... [You're going to hate us for this!].

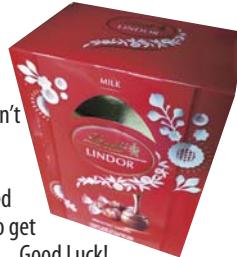
Now we are all used to the idea of Easter egg hunts but in the warm weather [hopefully] the chocky goes all squishy, so we have a new target for a search, certain to become a St Ives favourite. Did you know that the Causeway in London road that starts by the Dolphin car park with all its many arches is the longest of its kind in the country? What's more this amazing structure, that we so take for granted, hides a little secret.

Among the millions of bricks that goes into the bridge construction is a single brick that carries the name of the bridge designer and the date of the works 1822. So anybody daft enough to search out this secret treasure and photograph themselves beside it should send us the picture and the first one received will get our

Riverporter egg. But 'Be Careful' don't go near the water and keep young children supervised there is no need to get under the arches.... Good Luck!



Erik pictured in front of some of the arches.



and overall significance of this unique causeway for the future.

But one very important brick is marked out on the repair schedule drawings. And it is imperative that this brick be conserved. The New Bridges were built in 1822 with 1.2 million bricks from The How brickyards. Following many repairs over the years the number of original bricks is much reduced. There's quite an assortment of newer bricks of varying colours and sizes – hence the grumbles from Historic England.

The special brick carries the date of 1822 with the signature of John Turner, the man in charge of building the New Bridges. It is the maker's mark. You can find it on the internal face of the western parapet, close to the Dolphin Hotel end of the causeway. In September next year this brick and the New Bridges will be 200 years old. A very special part of St Ives' heritage. **Bridget Flanagan**

## COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE

### Be aware of the elections next month

Following the delay of elections last year there is a lot of voting for all of us to do on 6 May. These include voting for a Police and Crime Commissioner, a Combined Authority Mayor and Cambridgeshire County Councillors.

There are also elections for some Town councillors, however these will not appear on your polling cards as according to the people at HDC, who organise the elections, there was 'not enough space' on the cards to print them!

There is no requirement for Town or Parish elections to have poll cards issued but HDC did offer to print those details if the Town Council paid for them. Mayor Jonathan Pallant told The Riverporter that the Town Council will advertise the details of what Town Council seats will be up for election on their website and on social media as well as on their 5 notice boards.

**Just to do our bit these are the Town Council seats that you can vote for: one councillor for St Ives South Ward and one for St Ives East Ward.**

**NB.** There are currently four vacancies for the Town Council however the two seats, previously held by Cllrs Davies and Ayers Wilson will not be contested until after 6 May. These vacancies came too late to be included on 6 May and a separate by-election will be held later.

### Town Centre Enhancements

As part of a wider programme of community engagement about the Town Centre enhancements, residents will be able to see pop-up information stands about some of the proposals on Friday, 16 April between 8.30am and 2pm at St Ives Market.

### Mayor Palmer loses funding

The combined authority, which is supposed to deliver 2,000 affordable homes by 2022, has lost £100m of government funding after a minister said "insufficient progress" was made. Luke Hall, minister for regional growth and local government, told the authority 'the programme has made insufficient delivery progress and the value for money being achieved is below our expectations', according to the Local Democracy Reporting Service.

He said his department would not continue 'to fund the programme on its current basis' but would consider making future funding available 'subject to further work on the details'.

This is clearly a blow for Mayor Palmer whose job is up for election next month. He said 'Government delays, the impact of Covid-19 and a toughening financial situation had not helped the authority deliver its housing target'.

The combined authority said it had so far received £55m, with the remaining £45 million being withheld. Cambridge Labour MP Daniel Zeichner described the situation as 'a shambles', adding there was a 'desperate need for affordable housing in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough'.

The Liberal Democrat mayoral candidate Aidan Van de Weyer said it was 'disastrous news for the people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough', while the Labour candidate, Nik Johnson, called for an investigation.

### A brick in a million – or thereabouts

Historic England are now satisfied with the CCC's revised schedule for repair of the parapets of the New Bridges Causeway. But in October 2020 they rejected initial proposals not wishing to see wholesale replacement of large sections of the parapets due to the impact that the cumulative loss of historic fabric would have on the overall significance of this unique causeway.

Historic England pointed out that the New Bridges causeway is Listed at Grade II\* which places it in the top 5.5% of listed buildings nationally. They went on to comment that comprehensive works involving repair and replacement of sections of the brick arches carried out in 2013 have already had a detrimental impact on the overall character and appearance of the bridge.

However the parapets are in a dangerous condition and need repair if the causeway is to remain open to the public. So it's very good to see that agreement has now been reached: The proposed parapet remediation works are now a proportionate response to the requirement for the New Bridges to be operationally fit for purpose. The revised proposals involve a less intrusive, conservation-based solution to the issues, thereby safeguarding the historic fabric

**Next Fine Art &  
Antiques Sale on  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020**



Fine Art & Antiques Sale to Include A Fine Collection of Silver, Militaria inc Cambridgeshire & Hunts Cyclists Regiments & Ceramics inc Moorcroft, Royal Worcester etc



Cambridgeshire Regiment Interest; Parker-McGee Family, medals to three brothers, all died on the same day 12th October 1916.

Estimate £500 - £800



Rare Large Moorcroft Toadstool Vase dated 1991. Renamed from the original fairy rings design this was only produced in very low numbers by Phillip Richardson

Estimate £550-650



A Royal Worcester fruit painted Pot Pourri vase/jar and cover, basket molded with interior cover, signed J. Bowman,

Estimate £1200-1500

Hyperion Auctions, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH



[www.hyperionauctions.co.uk](http://www.hyperionauctions.co.uk)



01480 464140



*Some of the 22 colleagues from Meadow Lane who have taken on the challenge and have so far raised an incredible total of over £2000. - picture Jenny Oldham*

Meadow Lane Nursery in St Ives is taking on a one million steps challenge to raise money for the Arthur Rank Hospice Charity. The challenge began on January 11 and runs until April 20 with the aim of walking one million steps over 100 days.

Jenny Oldham, lead educational co-ordinator said: 'As we are always on our feet at nursery, we thought we would be able to rise to the challenge. We didn't actually know how many staff would get on board or how much money we would actually raise but it has been a huge success and acted as a very motivating challenge for us all. It is a proud feeling knowing we have raised such an amazing amount of money for a local charity during this difficult time.'

'At Meadow Lane, we always want to promote positive physical & mental well-being which is why we were thrilled when so many staff members decided to join in. COVID has affected people's lives in so many different ways. 'Step a

Million' has kept us motivated everyday as well as raising money for such a worthy charity. We are very fortunate to work in such a unique setting with animals, Kitchen Garden and vast outdoor play spaces. This enables our children to explore, experiment and be creative. We see the children become confident, happy learners who are inspired and encouraged to love and respect nature.'

Emma Bray, corporate fundraiser at Arthur Rank Hospice Charity said: 'We were thrilled to gain the support of the team at Meadow Lane Children's Nursery and have been blown away by their commitment to raise funds for the charity and keep stepping their way until April 20.'

If you would like to sponsor the Meadow Lane Children's Nursery's efforts, you can visit their fundraising page at:

<https://arhc.enthuse.com/pf/meadow-lane-in-the-game-dc5a2>.

ADVERTORIAL

## There's light at the end of the tunnel and this time it's not a train...

With the easing of lockdown restrictions and life beginning to look a little more positive, we've certainly seen much more activity in the property market.

March will have been one of our busiest months in more than ten years and we can see this lasting for a while yet.

There are a number of factors that have contributed to this activity, the first stamp duty deadline, 31st March 2021, encouraged sellers and buyers last year and the saving of up to £15,000 was too good an incentive to miss.

There's also been a shortage of properties with many sellers holding off putting their houses up for sale until there was better news about the corona virus, with fewer people being infected, because of lockdown and the vaccination program, there's much more to feel positive about.

All sectors of the market are busy, from the first time buyer and investor range, through the executive homes and up to the exclusive properties, we're seeing interest right across the board.

We've also seeing buyers coming into the area from further afield, looking for a quieter life in the country and trying to get their work/life balance into some sort of perspective, the new "working from home" trend is here to stay.

News from Rightmove, Zoopla and On The Market confirms that internet property searches are at an all-time high and this bodes well for the sales over the next six months.

The house price index for March has seen an average price rise of 0.8% (+£2,484) as buyer demand reaches record levels and we anticipate further price rises during the traditional spring selling season.

For those owners who are thinking of coming to market this could be one of the best ever Easters to sell.

**ellis&co  
winters**

It's child's play to get  
FINANCIALLY & LEGALLY  
PREPARED (FLP)

