

# The Riverporter

ST IVES AWARD WINNING NEWSPAPER

Issue 85: 14 May 2021

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

## ELECTION SHOCKS FOR THE COUNTY BUT NOT IN ST IVES

Last week's local elections showed that you can take nothing for granted. With counts taking place over three days the big shock didn't reveal itself until Sunday afternoon when Nik Johnson was elected Mayor of the Combined Authority (CPCA).

There was a mixed bag of results. Here in St Ives the Conservatives secured the two County Council seats and the two District Council seats as was largely expected. However, unlike other parts of the country, the Tories lost control of the County Council, following gains by the Liberal Democrats and Labour. Overall the Conservatives lost eight seats while the Lib Dems gained five, Labour two and the independents gained one. Then, in one of the biggest upsets,

the sitting Combined Authority Mayor, Tory James Palmer, lost out to Labour's Nik Johnson.

### An Alternative Voting System

In our last issue (RP84) we suggested that the first past the post voting system can allow parties to dominate areas. Last week's results seem to demonstrate that. St Ives elected four Conservative councillors, two of whom had less than 50% of the vote and in Cambridge the opposite happened

as conservatives failed to win a single seat.

The CPCA Mayoral contest, held under the alternative voting system, confirmed this as a fairer form of election as the winner must get at least 50% of the votes.

Under this system Doctor Nik Johnson won despite coming from nearly 18,000 votes behind after the first round of votes. He gained 37,888 second choice votes to Palmer's 14,253 to snatch victory by 5,799 votes.

## ST IVES DEMENTIA AWARENESS DAY

To launch the upcoming National Dementia Awareness Week organised by the Alzheimer's Society.

If you have any questions regarding dementia and what support is available locally, or you have a related interest, please come and visit our stand at the

**Farmer's Market this Saturday 15th May**

The St Ives Dementia Friendly Community Group is a voluntary organisation founded in 2016 by Ian Jackson. In association with the Alzheimer's Society's initiatives the Group aims to increase awareness of the condition of dementia, and coordinates a number of activities which help improve the quality of life of those with dementia and their carers and families. However, due to the pandemic the activities are currently running online via Zoom. We will recommence increased and more diverse face-to-face meetings as soon as Government regulations and guidelines permit. If you're unable to come to the market but want more information please email Roger at: rnjkuch@gmail.com



## Bloomin' Marvellous Park & Ride

This week St Ives in Bloom members continued their excellent work brightening up the town by restoring three more flower beds in the Park & Ride site by planting 170 plants, which were kindly donated by Cuckoo Bridge Nursery.



## Pasco elected Mayor



**P**opular Town Councillor, Pasco Hussain was unanimously elected as Town Mayor for the year 2021/22 at last week's Town Council meeting.

Pasco, pictured in the Mayor's robes in the Council Chamber, succeeded Councillor Jonathan Pallant at the on-line Mayor Making ceremony held on 5th May.

The Town Council had decided to hold the meeting before a court case was held which determined that all council meetings must be in person after 6 May.

Because the 6th May was election day, the Council combined the Mayor Making ceremony with a full council meeting, which is normally held on the following evening. This resulted in a rather long meeting for all those who tuned in to see Pasco 'crowned'. Pasco told The Riverporter ... 'It is a privilege and an honour to be a mayor of the town that I love and lived in for over 50 years. I'm looking forward to the easing of restrictions

and will be working very hard with members, agencies, groups etc. for our town and residents to prosper.'

Pasco announced that he will be supporting the following charities during his time in office: St Ives Day Care Centre, The Royal British Legion, MAGPAS and St Ives Acorn Cancer support group.

The Council also confirmed that Councillor Philip Pope was elected as Deputy Mayor. Councillor Pope, who was Mayor in 2017/18, was endorsed by Councillor Fuller, who described him as 'the best Mayor the town had ever had'. This was a bit of a body blow to the four previous Mayors present, including Cllr Pallant, who had just received praise for doing an excellent job during the most demanding of times anyone can remember.

## 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 want to promote your organisation, you can email us at [theriverporter.uk](mailto:theriverporter.uk) and we will include it on the Message Forum.

## The St Ives Day Centre

The St Ives Day Centre is based on Ramsey Road and we are open Monday-Friday. We offer a welcoming and safe environment for elderly people within St Ives and the surrounding villages, giving their families and carers some much needed respite. We are currently open on a very limited basis due to Covid regulations but are hoping that by the end of June we will be fully operational again and will be able to reinstate the bus service, collecting and returning members to their homes.

In order to operate the bus service we need a team of volunteers who can act as bus escorts, helping the members on and off the bus and delivering them safely to their front door. The bus operates ten sessions per week running between 9.00-10.30 am and again 3.30-5.00 pm Monday - Friday.

If you feel that you would be able to offer your help for one or more of these sessions or would like to have a chat about the role with one of our friendly team, we would love to hear from you. Please contact us on 01480 463444 or [daycentre25@googlemail.com](mailto:daycentre25@googlemail.com)

## 'Pandemic' Mayor thanks those who helped in difficult year

The outgoing Mayor Jonathan Pallant, as is customary, gave his final speech at last week's council meeting before handing over his robes to the new Mayor, Pasco Hussain.

Jonathan said, 'It has been a huge honour to be your Town Mayor over the past year - one that has been extraordinary for so many reasons. But I did not do this alone, and so there are some people I must thank. First of all, the Mayoress and our children. They have been behind me 100% and sacrificed a lot, and I'm so grateful to them.'

'Secondly, the town hall staff - Alison, Christine, Karen, Linda and Sue, plus of course the GM team and everyone at the Norris. Despite the restrictions placed upon us there has been no let up in the service.'

'I must thank of course my Chaplain, Vanessa Corbishley of Humanists UK. She has provided wise guidance and support. Also, my fellow Councillors. It has been a honour to chair our meetings and I am convinced that this remains an excellent form of government because we make better decisions as a group than we can by ourselves. Thank you for all that you've done and for your support.'

'Finally I must thank the people of St Ives - a kind, considerate people who have been looking out for family, neighbours, friends and strangers alike. You all make St Ives the great place that it is.'

It was a difficult year for raising charitable donations, without events to attend but the donations for the time capsule and a small charity live stream helped. In an unusual move Jonathan added his Mayor's allowance, to make a total of just over £4800. The Mayor's allowance is usually provided to cover expenses incurred by the Mayor, who normally attends many functions throughout the year and although Jonathan may not have incurred any expenses it is still a generous gesture to use this money for local charities.

As a result the following four charities will each receive £1.200. Pinpoint, St Ives Food Bank, St Ives Day Care Centre and CALMtown. Jonathan's final act was to announce the Community award which went to Zoe at St Ives and Fenstanton Timebank and the Commerce in the Community award which went to The Courtyard.

## Election results

Elected councillors in bold.

### District Council

St Ives South Ward	Votes
Rianna D'Souza - Con.	970
Cath Gleadow - Labour	441
John R G Parkin - Green Party	246
Nic Wells - Liberal Democrat	599

St Ives East Ward	Votes
Ann Barnes - Green Party	302
Angela Richards - Labour	374
Craig Smith - Conservative	824

### County Council

St Ives North and Wyton	Votes
Ann Barnes - Green Party	337
Paul Bullen - Independent	179
James Catmur - Lib Dem	207
<b>Ryan Fuller - Conservative</b>	<b>1241</b>
Angela Richards - Labour	471

St Ives S. & Needingworth	Votes
Cath Gleadow - Labour	565
John R G Parkin - Green Party	305
Kevin Reynolds - Con.	1368
Nic Wells - Liberal Democrat	749

### Police & Crime Commissioner

Darryl Preston, Conservative was elected with 114,053 votes against Nicky Massey, Labour who gained 102,195 votes after the second choice votes were counted.

### Combined Authority Mayor

Nik Johnson, Labour was elected with 113,994 votes against James Palmer, Conservative who gained 108,195 votes after the second choice votes were counted.

## Riverporter - exclusive interview with Dr Nik

In one of the most surprising local election results for many years, Dr Nik Johnson the Labour and Co-operative party candidate, a children's doctor who works at Hinchingbrooke Hospital, beat the Conservative James Palmer to become the Mayor of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPA).

In his election bid he said, 'I want every single resident to know that their mayor puts the three Cs of compassion, co-operation and community at the heart of every single decision he makes.' He also said 'I'm not totally opposed to a Rapid System Project but this has all the hallmarks of being an expensive folly and a potential financial black hole.'

This approach clearly appealed to voters and it will now be interesting to see how much he can achieve in the next four years. Interviewed on TV, Nik said he wanted to concentrate his efforts on Peterborough and in the market towns, rather than the more affluent South of the county, which must be good for St Ives.

He confirmed that he was cancelling the Metro project and despite being incredibly busy Nik took time out to talk to *The Riverporter* and we took the opportunity to get his opinion on a number of issues, particularly those affecting St Ives.

### It's about Co-operation

In a frank discussion Nik confided exclusively to us that standing as a Labour and Co-operative candidate was important to him. He stressed that the Co-operative part wasn't just about working together but about a co-operative business model, which he hoped would become an absolute focus as a model for business in greater Cambridgeshire.

### What about the money already allocated to St Ives

We asked Nik if the significant amount of CPA money, which has been committed to Hunt's market towns will continue, particularly in St Ives?

His answer was an unequivocal yes. Any monies already allocated will continue to fund the programme of improvements.

### Flooding matters

Nik commented that he considered water management, not just flooding, a priority and he hoped that would become the focus of strategic infrastructure developments.

### Housing

Affordable housing has been a big issue in St Ives, with many young families unable to stay in the town they grew up in. So we were interested in hearing Nik's views on this subject.

Nik said this may be one of the more difficult issues to deal with, largely because housing needs vary throughout the region. He did say that he was looking for a housing programme that will focus on social housing. He cited



Nik Johnson appeared on local TV following his election.

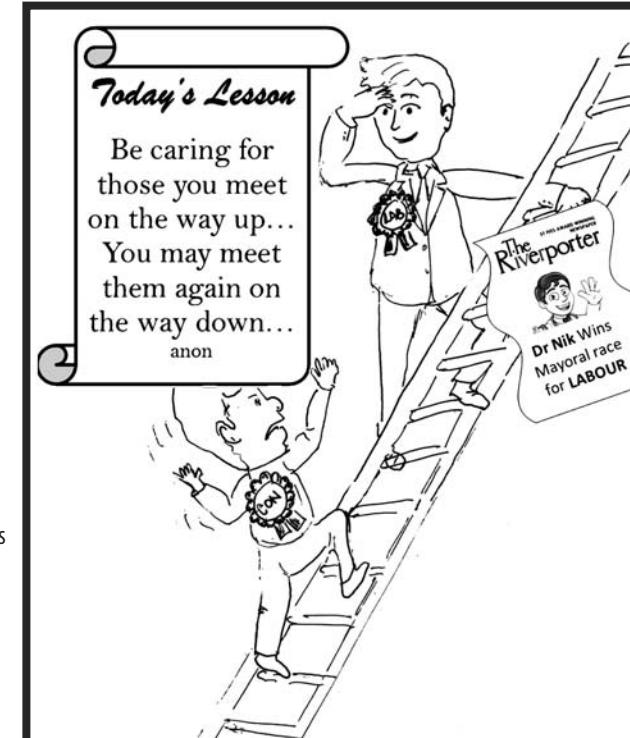
schemes that have been successful in Cambridge where 50% of developments are social housing along the lines of old style council houses. He did suggest that following the post-covid situation there may be opportunities to use commercial premises, no longer required, to develop high quality social housing.

### Going forward

There is no doubt that the new mayor has a difficult job to do and that much of his success will depend on just how well he can work with all the authorities. In that respect the fact that the County Council has no overall control may help, but Nik was very keen to say that he wants to work co-operatively with all groups, regardless of their political persuasion. He stressed that any previous differences were 'water under the bridge' (see RP 36).

He said that he and Ryan (Fuller) had exchanged congratulatory emails following both of their successes in the elections and that he was looking forward to working with Ryan on the projects that will improve the lives of everyone in his home district of Huntingdonshire.

It is understood that Nik intends to continue working as a doctor, possibly one session a week, as it is a job he loves. An indication of how he may bring everyone together is his praise for former Mayor James Palmer and his wish for him to be at the opening of Peterborough University, which Mr Palmer championed.





having your say ...

# The Riverporter

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

## COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE

### Future of Burgess Hall unknown



Rumours have been circulating for a while about the future of the Burgess Hall over the past few weeks. As is often the case some of the rumours seem far fetched but it is a fact that it has been closed during the pandemic and that all the staff have been 'let go', to use the popular jargon.

*The Riverporter* has been informed that those in charge say that the events, which were being planned for later this year, can go ahead, but keep your fingers crossed.

One suggestion is that it will remain open as a venue but without the same level of staffing. Users could hire it but would also be totally responsible for running their events, meaning that ticket sales, admin, preparation work, (such as seating arrangement) would no longer be done by the centre. A fee of £1,400 to use the hall for one event has been suggested and with the added workload for hirers this could severely reduce the amount of use it might see.

### Future of large venues uncertain in Huntingdonshire

What happens with the Burgess Hall could affect the whole district as the future of the other large venue, Hichingbrooke's Performing Arts Centre, is also unknown. Just as venues, pubs and attractions are reopening, many of which have used the lockdown break to improve and adapt their facilities, it is unfortunate that our biggest and most important civic facility is still pondering its future.

### Trollied!

Amazing really... Down on the quay we often get magnet fishers trying their luck to see what they can pull out of the river. You would think after years of these efforts there would not be much treasure left to find. So it was a bit of a surprise to see the latest hoard left on The Quayside this week. Residents ask that if you want to try your hand, please tidy up afterwards.



Just recently The Quay has been left strewn with bits of sharp rusty metal. Please remember many children visit to feed the ducks and sometimes picking stuff up off the ground. Some of the metal remnants are very dangerous.

## We're Back! THE FRIDAY INDOOR MARKET Back at the Corn Exchange Next Friday 21st May

### Keeping Our Town Clean ...



You may have noticed that our town is looking pretty litter free at present. This amazing feat is due to a combination of our awesome community, Huntingdon District Council's Litter Minimisation Team and support and interest from key St Ives Town Councillors. St Ives Against Rubbish (STAR), the campaign and Facebook group that was launched earlier this year by St Ives in Bloom, St Ives EcoAction, St Ives Rotary, St Ives Town Council and the Huntingdonshire Green Party, now has nearly 150 amazing members, including active pickers and cheer leaders, and we very much need both! **To find out more about Eco Action and how you can help go to [www.facebook.com/stivesecoaction](http://www.facebook.com/stivesecoaction)**



### Solar lights dispute leaves town council accused of being petty and unfeeling

Social media has been alight with a strange argument over lights being used on graves in our local cemetery. It appears that these small solar powered lights placed on graves contravene cemetery regulations and families are being asked to remove them by the 14th June.

A council notice has appeared notifying of the ruling but *The Riverporter* has learned that a petition has immediately been started in support of allowing the lights. The Town Council's amenities committee considers that the lights distract from the dignity of the cemetery. At time of writing some 230+ comments had been left on the social media site, all in favour of leaving the lights in place.



### Counting the cost of 'New Bridges'

Cambs County Council have confirmed that since the end of 2010 they have spent £1,588,000 strengthening the piers and arches of the New Bridges Causeway.

The remaining works, due to take place over 42 weeks, was originally supposed to start at the beginning of the year but there 'have been issues' gaining consent from HDC. These works, to refurbish the entire length of parapet wall at an approximate cost of £630,000, should complete the works at the Flood Arches and secure its future.

Dear Erik

I thought you might like to see these pictures of two new additions to the Globe Car Park area.



Dear Erik

When are the pavements in Abbots Crescent going to be repaired? They are a total disgrace.

St Iyan

**Eds reply** - Dear St Iyan to find out that information you probably need to contact one of your newly elected County Councillors. Either Cllr Kevin Reynolds or Cllr Ryan Fuller should be able to answer that question.

A charging point and a new bench which brightens the scene by the car park. **Scout**

**Entries Invited for Next  
Fine Art & Antiques Sale  
on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2021**



After an Auction reaching an international client base we saw a record sale with many prices over double estimate!



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

**Sold £650**



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

**Sold £600**



Good Quality George III Silver Regency Oval and Half Fluted Tea Set with Gadrooned and Shell borders

**Sold £800**

-Next Antiques & Later Sale on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May-

Hyperion Auctions, The Salerooms, Station Road, St Ives PE27 5BH  
[www.hyperionauctions.co.uk](http://www.hyperionauctions.co.uk) 01480 464140



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ADVERTORIAL

## IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT SELLING QUICKLY

**The market is booming and there are more buyers than there are houses available, something we haven't seen in the property market for quite some time, but that does bring up some interesting challenges.**

This lack of supply means that prices are rising which in turn makes buyers think they need to jump on the bandwagon as quickly as possible, which makes the prices go up even more, a vicious circle.

It may be easier to find a buyer but when it comes to finding your next home, oh dear, there's very little available, some chains are stalling because people can't find what they're looking for or when they do see something it's snapped up by other eager buyers.

We've also seen transaction times (the time it takes for the legal work to be done) increasing because solicitors are being overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of house sales going through.

This is where the best and most experienced estate agents come in to their own, we know it's not just about selling your house quickly, it's also about finding the right buyer, someone that's going to fit in with your timescale.

Yes of course they need to pay as much as possible but they also need to understand and appreciate your motivation for moving in the first place and be prepared to be a little more flexible. We have some clever ideas to help in your property search and to push you to the front of the queue when you're in competition with other buyers when you find a house that could be your forever home.

If you'd like to talk to us about this different approach in this stressful market call 01480 388 888.



**ellis winters & co**