

The Riverporter

PLEASE READ AND PASS ON

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue 203: 27 February 2026

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

The good, the bad and the eyesore

As we approach spring with the rain stopping and the weather warming up just a little, can we all feel a bit better? St Ives is about to wake from its winter slumbers but concerns for the future of our town still remain, despite a lot being planned for 2026.

St Ives is a lovely town as most residents will agree but some things are getting worse. Sure there have been successes. Parking is one of them. For years the annual Town Meeting heard complaints about a lack of parking enforcement and now, with HDC taking control and regular visits by Civil Enforcement Officers that problem is all but eliminated. It is now possible to park in the centre for free for an hour, enough time to nip to the shops.

There have also been a number of new businesses opening and although many have been cafés at least they're better than empty shops. Many of the concerns we hear voiced include the possible building of large numbers of new housing and its effect on the creaking infrastructure. The slow progress of projects such as the conversion of the old Barclays Bank building - an eyesore for too long. The long awaited Toucan crossing near Morrisons has also caused some comments (see letters p3).

It seems despite the best efforts of local councillors, improvements can be a long way off. *The Riverporter* has been made aware that local County Councillor Alex Bulat has raised the issue of potholes and the

standard of the road repairs. In a reply to a resident on the matter, Alex said 'This year, the council has an opportunity to change or modify the 10-year contract they have for highways. Central government allocated £188 million over 3 years for Cambs and Peterborough's road maintenance and the County Council added an additional £20million per year. The amount for maintenance is increasing year on year but some of the works are getting worse.' she said. 'I will continue to raise the issue in the highways committee.'

The Riverporter hopes she is successful for this issue among the many facing the country sums up why we are losing faith in local and central authorities. If elected politicians can't get roads repaired properly, what hope is there for the country?

Incidentally our MP Ben Obese-Jecty just posted that 'potholes are not the responsibility of an MP' after receiving 'huge amounts of posts on the topic.'

On the positive side St Ives is still busy with groups putting on events and pubs and bars providing live music throughout the year. Also we hear that at long, long last there are plans to turn the old post office in Bridge Street into flats and a retail unit.

Tickets for Mayor's Ball available

The Mayor of St Ives, Councillor Julie Kerr, would be delighted if you could join her for a truly special evening at her Sparkling Charity Ball. The event will take place at the Corn Exchange on 21st March at 7.30pm. Guests will be welcomed with Prosecco and canapés, followed by music to dance the night away and enjoy a wonderful evening. Tickets can be purchased in several ways: in person at the Town Hall or Online via the venue www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents or Online via St Ives Town Council www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk/pay All money raised will go towards supporting our schools in St Ives.



What a difference a day makes

Holt Island Friends have posted these two pictures of a tree blown down overnight on Friday. Clearly there is still a lot of water on the island. They say that clearance will begin this week but can't be 100% sure

about the state of the boardwalk, which seems to look okay. They are still planning to open at the beginning of April. . . as long as there are no more calamities .



DIARY OF EVENTS

Please email: editor@theriverporter.uk

MARCH

Sunday 1st - Hemingford Ladies Choir at 3.00.p.m. St Ives Free Church. Tea, cake and song. Free - collection for Church Refurbishment.

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

Wednesday 11th - Saturday 14th - St Ives Youth Theatre presents Cluedo at the Free Church. Doors open 7pm. £12 general admission, £8 concessions, £32 family (2 adults + 2 concessions). Tickets from www.siyt.co.uk/box-office.

Saturday 14th - St Ives Eco Café is hosting a talk by the charity 'Climate Change Gardening'. Come along to the Free Church, 10am to 12pm, refreshments from Tookeys Café, entry by donation (sug. £3).

Friday 20 March - ADHD + AutiStic Ives Neurodiversity Celebration week St Ives Corn Exchange 10.30am. Panel discussion and Q & A from the audience 11am. No need to book just turn up.

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

Saturday 21 March - Table-top Sale in Free Church. From 10am to 3pm. Tables available from £7 (set-up from 8am). Visit church office or office@stivesfreechurch.org to book.

Saturday 21 - St Ives Choral Society concert - Schubert Mass in G and Rutter Magnificat, Free Church 7.30pm. Tickets from www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-ives-choral-society.

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

APRIL

Wednesday 1st - Engage Talk: The Watermills and Landscape of the River Great Ouse - 2pm, St Ives Library (donations welcome).

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

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

Friday 24th - Chapel Arts Concert - Lift Music Collective. U2, Talking Heads, Stranglers re-imagined as movie themes - Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the venue or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Saturday 25th - St Ives Corn Exchange - Ceilidh Night SOLD OUT

Saturday 25th - Tapestry Singers at 7pm St Ives Free Church. A local Mixed voice a cappella choir Sacred to contemporary music.

Saturday 30th - FourTissimo at 7pm St Ives Free Church. 4 talented performers whose repertoire ranges from Opera to Starlight Express.

MAY

Friday 15 May - Civic Society - The Life of Lord Fairhaven: 7.30pm at the Free Church. Members free, visitors £3.

Friday 29 May - THE HOUNDGOS

Fundraising concert for The Old Riverport Jazz & Blues Festival. 8pm St Ives Corn Exchange. Tickets £15 from the venue or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents



Read on-line at www.theriverporter.uk or see our Facebook page. Email: editor@theriverporter.uk

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Another of the new bands is

Richard Exall's Benny Goodman Quartet

We really are lucky to have some wonderful musicians at our Jazz & Blues Festival including the fabulous Richard Exall and his Benny Goodman Quartet. You only have to read Richard's CV to see what a major player in the world of Jazz he is and together with the superb keyboard skills of Art Toper, who we already know from the Myke Clifford Quartet, this should be one of the standout shows this September.

Richard studied clarinet at the Royal College of Music with international soloist Michael Collins. Self-taught on saxophone, he formed his own jazz quartet and big band while still at college and became a familiar figure on the London jazz scene, playing with a wide range of bands from the National Youth Jazz Orchestra to the Ink Spots. After leaving college Richard juggled a career in the classical and jazz worlds, playing with the London Symphonietta among others. Joining forces with American trombone player Rob Killips, Richard was a founder member of the jazz quintet 'Root Position', which soon established

itself as one of Europe's best young jazz groups by winning awards at both the Getxo and Leverkusen international Jazz Festivals. In 1997 Richard toured the United States and Europe with Jesus Alemany's renowned band Cubanismo, in which he had the honour of being the only non-Cuban member. Richard has worked alongside many of the great names in the Latin music world and with most of the established big bands, such as The Glenn Miller Orchestra (UK), the London Swing Orchestra and The Nelson Riddle Orchestra (UK). In the late 1990's Richard became a more regular name in the vintage jazz fraternity playing

regularly with the Pasadena Roof Orchestra. He became a regular member of the Big Chris Barber Band in 2004, touring throughout Europe, leaving at the end of 2014 to focus on his own career. As a composer and arranger, Richard has produced work for many groups and ensembles. More recently he has worked with Kenny Ball, The Syd Lawrence Orchestra and is currently performing with Dave Browning's Jazz Cats, the Richard Exall Trio and Quartet and regularly appears at festivals throughout the UK and Europe, including the Whitley Bay International Classic Jazz Party and the Upton Jazz Festival among others.

Reverend Alison Davis Inducted

An Inauguration Service for the Mid-Cambridgeshire Mission Partnership and the Induction Service of Reverend Alison Davis took place recently.

The establishment of the Mid-Cambridgeshire Mission Partnership took place on 14th February 2026. The service, led by the Eastern Synod Moderator, Reverend Lythan Nevard, at The Free Church (United Reformed) St Ives, formalized the partnership

across seven churches. Reverend Alison Davis will be the minister for the three single United Reformed Churches at Fenstanton, St Ives and St Neots. She will also chair the Mid-Cambridgeshire Mission Partnership Steering Group. Each

church is already active in responding to needs within their local communities. This initiative enables these churches to engage in the wider community and the nurturing of faith building connections outside of their regular worshipping communities. This also enhances the ecumenical nature of the collaboration.

The Mid Cambridgeshire Mission Partnership (MCMP) includes: 4 Local Ecumenical Partnerships: Bar Hill Church, Cambourne Church, Love's Farm Church, Northstowe Church Network and 3 single United Reformed Churches; Fenstanton, St Neots United, The Free Church St Ives.

The Local Ecumenical Partnerships were all set up in new housing developments at various times in the past. Bar Hill around 1970, Cambourne from around 2000, Love's Farm from 2015 and Northstowe from 2018.

In contrast the three single URC churches have been in existence for a long time and are located in long-established communities.



From left to right: Reverend Lythan Nevard - Moderator of the Eastern Synod of the United Reformed Church, Revd Wendy Wale - Bar Hill Church, Revd Alison Davis - Minister Mid Cambridgeshire Mission Partnership Serving the United Reformed Churches of Fenstanton, St Ives and St Neots, Revd Bill Miller Cambourne Church, Revd Beth Cope - Northstowe Church Network.

FRIDAY 27TH MARCH
MARINA & JOHNNY



A first appearance for singer Marina Bush, accompanied by the always brilliant Johnny 'Magic Boy' Wright. Get ready for feisty country songs about heartache, rage & vengeance, as well as classics to sing along with.

Concert starts at 7.30pm in The Riverport Bar, St Ives Corn Exchange. Tickets just £10 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents or the venue.

They're jumping out of a plane for a great cause, and now there is one more!

Mayor Julie Kerr, Cllr Michael Burke, and now the fabulous Sheila Stones, Chair of the Town Team, are all 'Taking the Leap' to support mental health in our local schools!

SPONSORED SKYDIVE

Taking the Leap for Mental Health support in our local schools

MAYOR KERR
We'd like to welcome Sheila Stones, for joining the Mayor to raise money for our schools...
What a brilliant thing to do! Please show your support for this great cause.

SHEILA STONES
Chair of the Town Team

COUNCILLOR BURKE
Please sponsor us! Scan here

How to donate to this great cause:
www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk/pay/
Ref: Skydive and surname
Or scan the QR Code

Saturday 14th March 2026

Sheila has enthusiastically stepped forward to join the skydiving squad and help boost the Mayor's fundraising mission. On Saturday 14th March 2026, Julie, Michael, and Sheila will be taking to the skies for a thrilling charity skydive in aid of the Mayor's charities for 2025-26. This bold and exciting event aims to raise vital funds for mental health projects across all schools in our town. Mayor Kerr's chosen charities this year focus on supporting student mental health and well-being. Funds raised will help provide resources for counselling services, safe spaces and initiatives that promote emotional resilience among young people. We invite everyone to get involved by donating whatever they can. Every contribution will go directly towards improving mental health support in our schools. How to Donate: Donations can be made via the Town Council website via secure link : www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk/pay/ with reference Skydive and name Your generosity will help create a brighter, healthier future for our students. If you have already donated, A HUGE THANK YOU!



having your say . . .

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

Jeffery, our new News Hound. Milly and Tilly are busy training him.

PLEASE NOTE: Letters are reproduced as presented by the writer. Editing is confined to grammatical corrections or minor trimming to fit the space. *The Riverporter* neither condones nor condemns the opinions expressed.

Hi good morning Milly & Tilly,

Walking along our badly maintained and cracked pavement in Abbots Crescent, St Ives, I came to this perfectly parked van. I thought parking on the pavement had finally been made an offence?



As we never see a police car around here, unless they are using the chip shop, then it can stay forcing wheelchair and pram users into the road and blind people can cheerfully walk into the back or front of it.

Regards **Mike Smith**

Dear Milly & Tilly,

Whatever happened to common sense? For a couple of decades, we have had industrial sites to the north of St Ives. Indeed, off Stocks Bridge Way there is the Compass Point and a nursery. At this same roundabout Morrisons was built and also McDonald's restaurant, Costa etc. No one

ever thought to put in pedestrian crossings, so anyone walking to Morrisons took their life in their hands when they crossed the top of Harrison Way, which is busy most of the day.

Never fear, our Councillors/Cambridgeshire Highways have decided to put in a crossing at the junction. Sorry for those travelling on the south of St Audrey's Lane, as you still have to cross the busy Harrison Way. However, those of us who manage to cross the Somersham Road will only go a short distance before we can cross into the 'restaurant area.'

I would like to know how planners decided the best location for this crossing?

'Right, we have a very busy 4/5 way junction. There is a very short gap, across an old bridge, between two busy roundabouts; let's build it there!'

You already have to keep looking to your right, as you manoeuvre on to that bridge between Somersham Road and Stocks Bridge Way and almost brake instantly, as cars back up from the Morrison's roundabout. [There's a] similar problem coming from Harrison Way over that bridge towards Tesco Express.

My guess is that putting a crossing at this location will increase road accidents, as one car pulls up and another goes into the back of it. I hope I am wrong!

When will the people in charge of our roads realise, they need to increase the number of roads, rather than put more cars and more obstacles on the existing ones! **K Wilson**

The Riverporter

To listen to the latest **Riverport Radio Podcast** go to <https://riverportradiopodcast.buzzsprout.com>

OTHER NEWS

Flats refused planning permission

A planning application to build six apartments, on land on Meadow Park has been refused. The land currently hosts an electrical substation and car parking for around 50 vehicles serving the office and residential units there.



Blocks 5-6 and 7-8 at Meadow Park, as well as Lancaster House, are all used as offices and properties at The Wilderness and blocks 1-4 at Meadow Park are residential.

The applicant Mr Jeff Fenton wanted to create six one-bedroom apartments, with two having a private patio each, two others having a terrace and balcony, and the other two sharing a communal garden.

Concerns were raised by St Ives Town Council regarding the potential for congestion and delays going through the town via the river crossing at the A1307, and the impact on the street scene of neighbouring properties at The Wilderness.

A group response from residents of The Wilderness also saw concerns raised about the height and frontage of the proposed block, which the group felt was 'out of character'. They said that the design of the flats was 'unsympathetic' to the predominantly Victorian character of the nearby homes.

Another objection was received by the Cambridgeshire Community Services NHS Trust, which operates out of a unit at Meadow Park, who raised concerns about the loss of 30 'well-used' parking spaces which serve NHS staff and visitors. They said the development would lead to off-road parking as there is no nearby alternatives.

Planning officers at the council recommended that the plans be refused as they were of 'poor design' and would result in the loss of 31 parking spaces and 'unacceptable harm' to neighbouring properties and they were duly refused on February 17.

Are you fed up with too much rain?

Are you fed up of either too much rain or drought alternately ruining your garden and the plans you had for it?

Come along to the next Climate Café on Sat 14 March at The Free Church, 10.00 – 12.00, when Clive Boase from Climate Change Gardening will help us understand the impact of climate change on gardens and how to maintain an enjoyable, productive and resilient garden despite the challenges.

Learn how to feel empowered to use our gardens to mitigate the impact of climate change - and begin to love them again. Everyone welcome, whatever state your garden might be in! **Enquiries: stivesecocafe@gmail.com**



Old Riverport Beer & Cider Festival

On Good Friday & Saturday 3/4th April The Old Riverport Beer & Cider Festival comes to the Corn Exchange

Look out for a brilliant weekend celebrating great independent drinks across two days.

- 30 beers from independent brewers across the UK
- A wine, gin & spirits bar
- 10 ciders
- Tasty food options
- Live music to keep the atmosphere buzzing.

Whether you're a craft beer fan, a cider lover, or just looking for a relaxed weekend event with friends, this is one to get in the diary.

Two days of great drinks, good company and a lively Corn Exchange atmosphere.

PLUS on the Saturday - Morris Dancing in the streets.



SPRING CONCERT

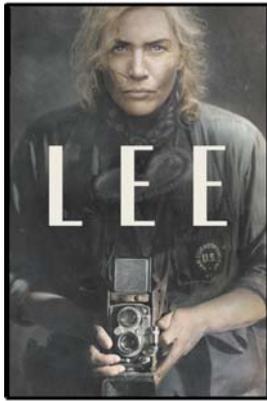
BURY & RAMSEY CONCERT BAND

SATURDAY 7TH MARCH 2026 7PM
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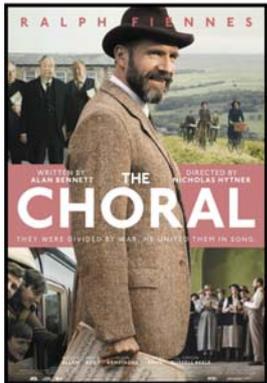
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BURY & RAMSEY CONCERT BAND



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

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



The Choral
Thursday 9 April 2026 at 7:30pm
Doors open 6:30pm. Tickets £7
Director: Nicholas Hytner (2025), 108m, Cert: 15

The Choral is set in a fictional Yorkshire town in 1916. The Choral follows a local choral society depleted by men leaving to fight in World War I. The ambitious committee hires the demanding Dr. Henry Guthrie (*Ralph Fiennes*) as the new chorus master. Despite suspicions about his time in Germany, Guthrie recruits local teenagers to fill the ranks. The group prepares for a performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, chosen because it wasn't composed by a German. The film explores themes of community, resilience, and the power of music as the young men face impending conscription and the community grapples with wartime loss.

Tickets at screenstives.org.uk or in the Corn Exchange

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PARKING AVAILABLE



The COURTYARD St Ives

Boutique Market featuring over 30 independent traders

Located in the cobbled courtyard of Hyperion Auctions in St Ives, you will find our unique market style shopping experience.

30 independent local businesses, selling everything from crafts to home wares, furniture, trinkets, gifts, baby clothes, refurbished items, retro chic, books, artisan jewellery and much much more.

While you're browsing why not take a seat in our outdoor café for coffees and snacks made by our excellent Barista here in the Courtyard.

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Come and visit!!

Opening times:
Mon - Sat : 9am - 5pm
Sun: 10am - 4pm



Station road, St Ives, Cambs, PE27 5BH1



Awarded the "Business in the Community Award" from the Mayor of St Ives

