

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

What a complete farce!

Over 1,000 people queued along The Pavement in St Ives to attend Wednesday's 'consultation' in the Corn Exchange and give their opinion of the proposals to 'regenerate' the town's Cattle Market.



Very rarely do things happen that result in almost everyone in a community agreeing. But this does seem to be the case with Capital&Centric's (C&C) totally inept proposals to build on car parks in Huntingdonshire. The St Ives' consultation was the last of the three and like the other two, in Huntingdon and St Neots, saw very large numbers of angry residents attending. The whole process, which was only announced two weeks ago, has been a complete farce from the

start. *The Riverporter* discovered that HDC's engagement with C&C began in 2024 with discussions about regeneration opportunities for the Market Towns. This led to a report being presented to Cabinet and HDC engaging C&C to propose projects in the district. Many questions have been asked about this arrangement, not least about the costs (up to £2m). Why wasn't this put out to tender? Was C&C capable of understanding how market towns work? And

importantly how the consultation process has been handled? This has resulted in turmoil at HDC (see page 2) and St Neots plans being scrapped before the close of consultation on 4th September. In view of the poor quality and obvious failure of the C&C proposals it seems fair to ask councillors to cancel the contract with C&C and demand they pay our money back. A full report on how this debacle played out will be in the next issue of *The Riverporter*.

A total waste of money? You bet!

It is likely that several hundred thousand pounds has been spent over the past few years on consultants with nothing to show for it. None of it was necessary as there have been several sensible proposals over the past 25 years to improve the town centre. Plans were submitted around 2000 that saw Bridge Street altered in 2002, but HDC councillors then took the money away (around £1m) for the Market Hill area. More recently St Ives Town Team, produced a discussion document, *A Vision of St Ives*, back in 2019 that was sent to all councillors and was totally ignored. Those proposals came out of consultation with the public, traders and visitors. The document has been upgraded recently and includes ideas for the town centre including the area around Station/Market Road, without removing the car parking (see below). You can see the Vision of St Ives document on the Town Team website at www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk



DIARY OF EVENTS

Please email: editor@theriverporter.uk

AUGUST

Every Sunday throughout August -

Music on the Waits at The Bandstand from 2pm to 4pm

Wednesday 26th - Acappella Men's Barbershop Chorus Free Open Rehearsal in St Ives Free Church at 7.30pm.

Friday 28th - Percussion evening - Derek Scurl in The Chapel.

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 2nd - 'Exploring the Gut-Brain Connection' Engage Talk with Dr Marta Camacho - 2pm, St Ives Library (donations welcome).

Thursday 10th - Sunday 13th - THE OLD RIVERPORT JAZZ & BLUES FESTIVAL - for details: www.stivescambridgeshire.co.uk.

Friday 11th - Anglesy Abbey - St Ives Free Church 2pm. A talk by Helen Ackroyd with tea and cake. Free entry with retiring collection.

Saturday 12th - Heritage Open Day - visit St Ives historic buildings.

Saturday 12th - Hobbies Craft and Collections - Fenstanton United Reformed Church 10am - 4pm. If you have a classic/vintage car you would like to show off please come along.

Saturday 12th - Battle of Britain concert Free Church see page 3.

Sunday 13th - Flea on The Quay - 10am until 12pm.

Friday 18th and Saturday 19th - The Centre Theatre Players in **Shining Stars for Young Lives** at the Burgess Hall 7.30pm. Tickets £12 available by telephone on 01480 756555 between 6pm and 9pm weekdays or from www.ticketsource.co.uk/starliteroadshow.

Saturday 19th - Fournissimo - Four singers perform songs from shows to opera. The Free Church. Tickets £10 from the Office or website.

Sunday 20th - Civic Sunday - Service followed by Parade.

Friday 25th - C&C lunchtime concert with Nene Voices - St Ives Free Church 1ppm Free entry.

Friday 25th - Summer Proms at St Ives Corn Exchange with the Somersham Town Band 7.30pm. Tickets £10

Friday 25th - Chapel Arts Concert - Richard Exall & Art Toper - An evening classic Jazz (Benny Goodman etc.) St Ives Free Church at 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from venue or www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Sunday 27th - Last Flea on The Quay for 2026 - 10am until 1pm.

OCTOBER

Wednesday 7th - 'Home Energy - Conservation and Advice' Engage Talk - 2pm, St Ives Library (donations welcome).

Monday 12th - Michaelmas Fair - in the town centre.

Saturday 17th - Repair Café - St Ives Methodist Church 1-4pm.

Friday 30th - Chapel Arts Concert - Stella's Musical Amigos Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

NOVEMBER

Sunday 8th - Remembrance Sunday service - Market Hill.

Monday 12th - Michaelmas Fair - in the town centre.

Saturday 14th - Christmas Lights Switch On - Market Hill.

Friday 27th - Chapel Arts Concert - The Lightwaves - St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents.

Flea on the Quay

FROM 10AM THIS SUNDAY and 2nd & 4th Sunday of each month May to September

To reserve a table for just £5 call 07913 346845 or email: townteam@stivescambridgeshire.co.uk

More sheep required . . . well sort of!

A well deserved honour

There are some people in a town whose contribution is easy to identify. They organise an event, support a particular organisation or give their time to a particular cause. And then there are those rather rarer people who seem to have left their fingerprints almost everywhere.

John Souter is most certainly one of the latter.

It therefore gives me enormous pleasure to report that my friend and colleague John is to be admitted to the Freedom of the Town of St Ives, one of the highest honours that the Town Council can bestow. For John, the award has come as both a surprise and a very great honour. Those who know him will not be surprised to learn that he is genuinely humbled by it.

For those of us who have worked alongside him it is rather less surprising. Over many years John has given an extraordinary amount of his time, experience, enthusiasm and considerable creative talent to St Ives. Indeed, it is probably not unreasonable to say that if you have attended a major event in the town, enjoyed one of its community projects, picked up a programme, read a publication or admired some piece of publicity promoting St Ives, there is a fair chance that John has been involved somewhere along the way.

One of the most visible reminders of that contribution is the St Ives Bandstand. Turning an idea into something real that generations of people can enjoy requires rather more than enthusiasm. It needs persistence, organisation, the ability to bring people together and, occasionally, the determination not to take no for an answer. John brought those qualities to the project and helped create something which has become an established part of the town. Then, of course, there is the St Ives Jazz & Blues Festival. What has developed into an enormously successful annual event now attracts huge crowds into St Ives and has become an important date in the town's cultural calendar. Organising an event of that scale is a formidable undertaking, much of it happening long before the first musician plays a note.

John has been one of the driving forces behind its success, bringing together performers, venues, publicity, organisation and all the countless details required to turn an ambitious idea into a weekend that brings thousands of people into our town. It is particularly fitting, therefore, that the Town Council is considering making the formal presentation during this year's Jazz & Blues Festival on Saturday 12 September. John also played an important role in the St Ives 600 celebrations, helping the community celebrate six centuries of the town's remarkable history, and his continuing involvement with the St Ives Town Team has allowed him to contribute his business experience and creative abilities to projects intended to strengthen and promote the town. And then of course there is *The Riverporter*.

I have the pleasure of publishing *The Riverporter* alongside John, so I have

perhaps had a better opportunity than most to see just how much work goes on behind the scenes.

John's abilities in design and publishing have helped make *The Riverporter* what it is today, but his contribution goes much further than simply producing pages. At its heart, our newspaper exists to connect people: local organisations, businesses, charities, events and, above all, the people who make St Ives the community that it is.

John understands that instinctively. He has always been generous with his professional knowledge and skills, particularly when they can be used to help somebody else. Sometimes that contribution is highly visible. On many other occasions it happens quietly, with little fuss and no expectation of recognition. Perhaps that is why this recognition is so appropriate. In his invitation to John, Town Mayor, Cllr Alex Thompson, described the Freedom of the Town as a sincere expression of the gratitude and appreciation of the people of St Ives for everything John has done, and continues to do, for the town. I think that sums it up rather well.

The modern Freedom of the Town is, of course, a ceremonial honour, accompanied by a formal presentation and scroll.

Personally, I think this is something of a shame. Historically, being made a Freeman could apparently come with some much more entertaining privileges.

Depending upon where you lived, these could include driving sheep or cattle across local bridges without paying a toll, carrying a drawn sword in public and, perhaps most usefully, receiving certain privileges should you find yourself arrested.

Sadly, John has been advised that none of these benefits appears to form part of the St Ives package.

I do, however, think there may be room for negotiation.

Perhaps a Freeman of St Ives should be entitled to a permanently reserved seat at the bandstand, the occasional free cup of coffee, the right to tell anyone blocking the bridge to move along, and unlimited permission to complain about the weather during the Jazz & Blues Festival. I shall raise these important constitutional matters with the Town Council in due course.

Joking aside, this is a significant honour and one that recognises many years of work on behalf of the town John cares so much about.

I know John sees receiving the Freedom of St Ives as a tremendous privilege.

For those of us who know how much he has contributed over the years, it is also an opportunity simply to say: Congratulations, John - and very well deserved.

Ron



Green's quit HDC coalition

One consequence of the disastrous Capital&Centric Car Park plans is that the Lib Dem led joint administration no longer has a majority at HDC.

Huntingdonshire's two Green Party councillors, Lara Davenport-Ray and Stephen Ferguson, have withdrawn from the Liberal Democrat-led Joint Administration. Cllr Stephen Ferguson said 'Lara and I no longer have confidence in the Liberal Democrat-led administration.'

One of the reasons for the Greens' withdrawal is the council's handling of regeneration proposals for St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives.

Both Green councillors were members of

the Cabinet at that time. They say that no specific proposals were presented or voted upon and that Tebbutts Road (St Neots) and other Council-owned sites in St Ives and Huntingdon were not identified in the Cabinet report.

Meanwhile it has been reported that Capital&Centric have scrapped the Tebbutts Road plans and Conservative opposition Leader, Ross Martin has called for a **No Confidence** vote on Liberal Democrat Leader of the Council, Sarah Conboy.



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Sentimental Value
Thursday 3 September 2026 at 7:30pm
Doors open 7:00pm. Tickets £7
Director: Joachim Trier (2025), 135m, Cert: 15

Directed by Joachim Trier, *Sentimental Value* follows successful stage actress Nora (*Renate Reinsve*) and her sister Agnes as they reunite with their estranged father, Gustav, a once-renowned film director. Following their mother's death, Gustav returns to the family's ancestral home in Oslo, hoping to reclaim his former glory by directing a deeply personal comeback film. When Nora declines the lead role, Gustav casts an eager young Hollywood starlet instead. This forces the sisters to navigate their complicated family dynamics while confronting generational trauma and the uneasy tension between artistic expression and personal connection.



The Christophers
Thursday 1 October 2026 at 7:30pm
Doors open 7:00pm. Tickets £7
Director: Steven Soderbergh (2025), 100m, Cert: 15

The *Christophers* (2025) is directed by Steven Soderbergh and written by Ed Solomon, starring Ian McKellen and Michaela Coel. Julian Sklar is a well-known painter based in London, elderly and eccentric, whose reputation has faded with age. His estranged children hire a skilled art forger to complete an abandoned series of paintings so they can sell them for profit once he dies. A sharp, character-driven black comedy blending art, family dysfunction, and deception, anchored by a standout McKellen performance.

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



having your say . . .

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

Milly & Tilly are very interested in your letters.

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.

Dear Milly & Tilly,

I fear all the excellent reporting about our town centre monstrosity will fade into insignificance against the plans to develop the Cattle Market. Such short notice of a measly 3 hour consultation on something which would change the face of the town for ever. The Waitrose car park is needed day and evenings to keep our town alive. We want small shops, eating and entertainment in our historic town centre. It is hard enough for them to compete in the current economic climate as it is. Please let's do what we can to ensure there is full and realistic consultation (several days and proper canvassing) on this before any decisions are taken.

Best wishes **Heather Walker**

Dear Milly & Tilly,

Ref Barclays Bank development

When someone engages with the relevant powers ref above can they ask to see the weekly inspection records required by law?

<https://bobscaffolding.co.uk/scaffolding-inspection/>

Regards **Ian Williams**

Dear Milly & Tilly,

On 24 October 2025 Capital&Centric 'proudly announced a series of 'Meet the Neighbours across Huntingdonshire'. In fact there were just three meets - St Ives, Huntingdon and St Neots. 24 October was also publication day for *The Riverporter*, so your editor had no chance of publicising the meet before it happened, which was on Monday 3 November. Now, it seems that by the skin of your editor's teeth, you were able to tell us all about the forthcoming consultation on 19 August. Thank you for keeping the town informed. I conclude there is a pattern, maybe the plan is to keep the public in the dark, get the plans approved asap, and when parking is pushed onto the streets the Parking Wardens will start writing lots more Penalty Notices!

Kind regards

David

Dear Milly & Tilly,

Down here in the depths of Sussex we were dining this evening with a long-standing St Ivisian who knew someone who went to school with Ryan Fuller. Apparently, he was known then as Fuller-Bullshit. One couldn't possibly comment.

Peter Ex St Ives

ADVERTORIAL

It's important to live your life your way

At Care UK's Field Lodge in St Ives, every resident is supported to live their life the way they choose. Our experienced team takes pride in offering quality residential, nursing, dementia and respite care.

Eric, a Care UK care home resident, shares how the home's highly-trained teams support him to live comfortably and safely in a friendly environment.

'I don't have to worry'

Before moving into a Care UK care home, Eric had several falls. 'On one occasion, it was four hours before I was found,' he says. Now, team members are always there to help him move around as independently as possible. 'It's marvellous. I don't have to worry anymore.'

Living in a Care UK care home, Eric feels safe and reassured, Eric says, because the care and nursing teams are highly trained. 'They solve problems for me just like that,' he says. When Eric has been taken ill, the team acted quickly. 'I sometimes think they pick up on things before I do,' he says.

If a team member sees him doing something that could be unsafe, they let him know without speaking down to him.

'We have a laugh. But at the back of it, it's care. They're telling me I'm overstretching in a very nice way.'

Each Care UK home offers different activities based on residents' interests and abilities, and Eric says the team has gone over and above to encourage him to mobilise out of his room. 'They design activities for me which I enjoy and can still complete despite my limitations.'

Team members talk to him as an equal, he adds. 'And it's not unusual for one of them to sit down beside me and say, 'What have you been up to today?' They take an interest.'

From activities to care, the care home outperforms any other Eric has seen. 'I'm very happy here,' he says. 'I would much sooner stay here than move to hospital when my needs get greater. Here, I'm with people that I know and I'm sure I'll be looked after.'



Trust us to care

We work hard to support residents to keep connected with their loved ones. We help families and friends to continue sharing special experiences whether that's in the home, through special trips and outings, or maximising technology so that distance is no longer an issue. Care UK is a leading independent care home provider with some of the highest quality ratings of the UK's larger care providers, and over 40 years' experience of delivering high-quality care to older people.

For more information about Field Lodge in St Ives, call 01480 710673 or visit careuk.com/field-lodge

The Riverporter

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

OTHER NEWS

Annual day out puts smiles on faces

Rotary St Ives were once again delighted to fund a day out at the Grahame Water Centre for a coachful of local young carers. President Iain Martin has been organising this event for many years and is passionate to keep supporting events like these with the funds that the club raise.

Melissa Moore, Young Carer Lead for the Caring Together Charity, said 'It was a brilliant day - as always thank you to Rotary for making the trip happen! Every year we see young carers have the time of their lives and the opportunity to just be kids!'



The young carers themselves were full of praise. One said 'This was my best trip; it's my third time coming here and it's my favourite trip of the summer.' Another joined in 'I liked sailing; it was the most fun. We don't do things like this, 'cos my brother's in a wheelchair and he can't get into boats and stuff like this. So mum took him out today and I got to have fun without thinking about him for once!'

One of the young carers' parents wrote 'Thank you so much for this opportunity for my son; he's not stopped talking about it. It's been so lovely hearing his stories and seeing him so happy. It's been a hard year and he deserves to have breaks like this. Thank you everyone for creating such special memories.'

The best quote of the day must go to this young man though - after taking part in sailing, climbing and archery he said 'I felt like a super hero for the day!'

If you would like to be a super hero too, why not contact the Rotary Club to find out more about joining? We don't wear capes, but you might see us in a hi-vis tabard or a Santa suit! Email membership@stivesrotarycamb.org.uk to find out more.

Battle of Britain Wings Appeal

Huntingdonshire Concert Band is giving a musical evening in aid of the RAF Association Huntingdon and District branch 'Wings Appeal' on Saturday 12th September in the Free Church St Ives. Tickets £15 are available from ticketsource.co.uk/rafa-wings-concert and limited amounts from St Ives Free Church office. Doors open 6.64pm concert starts 7.30pm. Last year's Concert was a great success in raising funds for the RAFA Charity. The branch Committee hopes you will come along, enjoy the music and support the charity that supports the RAF family.

Have you got what it takes to be quiz champs?

Field Lodge Care Home on London Road are delighted to invite you to their next **Community Pub Quiz on Tuesday 8th September from 4:30pm to 6pm.**

Bring your friends, family, neighbours, or colleagues and enjoy a fun-filled afternoon of friendly competition. Teams of up to four people can take part, and there will be plenty of opportunities to socialise and meet members of the community. As you put your knowledge to the test, enjoy complimentary drinks and nibbles, freshly prepared by their chef.

To book your team's place, contact beverley.tyrrell@careuk.com or call: 01480 877630 They would love to see you there!

Ref: **Men.Walk.Chat** - 20 volunteers needed to help deliver a leaflet see RP214.



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ADVERTORIAL

History in the making

The famous cattle market that was once held in the streets moved to a new Cattle Market in 1884 and in 1940 a new auctions room was built, The Octagon which remained in use until the 1970s.

Hyperion is a business that carries on the tradition of holding auctions in the town centre although The Octagon is now only used for storing HDC bins.

There have been several proposals to restart auctions in The Octagon but these, so far, have not been supported by HDC.

Never-the-less Hyperion Auctions have become very successful and continue to raise good prices for sellers.

Today it is about antiques, rather than the selling and buying of cattle.

Of course the auction business has changed considerably over the years and has been transformed with on-line bidding, meaning buyers can be anywhere in the world and of course more bids usually means better prices.

This year's remaining auction dates.

29th Aug Antiques & Interiors
19th Sept Antiques & Interiors
10th Oct Antiques & Interiors
21st Nov Antiques & Interiors
28th Nov Fine Art & Design
12th Dec Antiques & Interiors.



The seems to be the only picture in existence of a cattle auction in The Octagon. There may be some people who remember them and may know some of the people pictured. Please let us know if you do by emailing: editor@theriverporter.co.uk

