PLEASE READ AND PASS ON

The Riverporter

COVERING THE NEWS FOR ST IVES AND AROUND

Issue 222: 27 November 2026

A TOTALLY INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER • UNCONNECTED WITH ANY GROUP OR ORGANISATION

Positive step forward for GOVT

After what feels like years of volunteer graft, the Great Ouse Valley Trust's dream of seeing the valley recognised as the Great Ouse Heritage Landscape has taken a huge step forward at the stakeholder delegates meeting in St Ives Corn Exchange on 18th November.

In a rousing finale to his speech at the event, the Combined Authority Mayor Paul Bristow, raised his completed Call to Action card in the air and shouted, *'Let's get it done*'!

The roomful of the Trust's stakeholder delegates from up and down the Valley responded in kind, and so it now has the evidence it needs to support the formation of a funded Partnership Board to manage and promote the region.

The Mayor (below addressing delegates) later endorsed his pledge on social media:

'The landscape is absolutely beautiful and a truly special part of our region. I fully support their (GOVT) efforts to self-designate . . . and the formation of the Partnership. I am putting my Mayoral Authority right behind these efforts'.

As this chimes perfectly with the Mayor's own Local Visitor Economy Partnership initiative for both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, it certainly looks as if the Trust's ambition for a Heritage Landscape designation could at last become a reality.



Above: *Christine Phillpotts, Chair of the Civic Society (centre) with GOVT Trustees from l-r Mark, Ian, Helen and Bridget.*

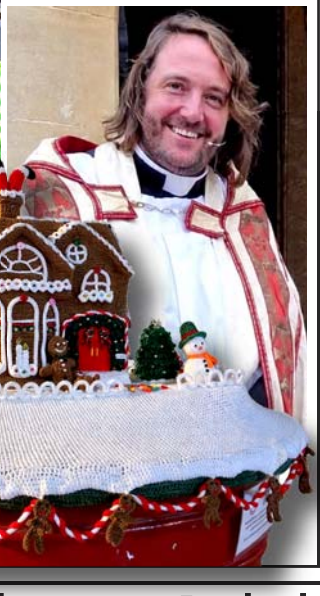


'It has taken a lot of volunteer work to get to this point, along with all our other projects. And so we were especially delighted to have these efforts recognised by the Civic Society just two days later, who presented us with their Heritage Conservation Award 2026, along with a certificate for each Trustee. So our thanks to the Civic Society – you have crowned an exciting week!' said the Trustees of GOVT.

All the fun of the Christmas Lights switch-on and a new Vicar

Crowds attended the lights switch-on and fair on Saturday 14th November and earlier in the month the Bishop of Ely announced that the Reverend Cornelis Quak (right), currently Vicar of Watford, is to be the Vicar of St Ives. Cornelis' induction is anticipated to take place early next year.





Pic above by Ben Obese-Jecty. Right: another wonderful creation from Star Crafters.

DIARY OF EVENTS

Please email: editor@theriverporter.uk

NOVEMBER

Friday 27th - **Margaret Scource and Frank Dudridge** playing Bach, Beethoven and Prokofiev 1pm St Ives Free Church.

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

Saturday 28/29 - **BHF Candle Lighting in the Bridge Chapel.** Light a candle for a loved one. 10am to 4pm both days.

DECEMBER

Wednesday 2nd - **Engage: Ukelele Christmas Sing-a-Long** Join us for a jolly event to round off our Engage year, Christmas hats optional!! - St Ives Library, 2pm (donations welcome).

Friday 4th-6th - **Christmas Tree Festival** - Fenstanton United Reformed Church from 1pm Friday, 10am Saturday and 11am Sunday.

Saturday 5th - **Meridian Singers Christmas concert** - 'A Jolly Holly Christmas' at 7.30pm the Baptist Church High St. Bluntisham.

Saturday 5th/6th - **BHF Candle Lighting in the Bridge Chapel.** Light a candle for a loved one. 10am to 4pm both days.

Saturday 5th - **'Sailing into Christmas' -** Concert by St Ives Community Choir 7.30 pm in the Free Church tickets are £10 adult, £5 children (over 5 yrs) available online or on the door.

Sunday 6th - **Christmas Craft and Gift Fair -** Burgess Hall 10am.

Saturday 19th - **Mayor's Christmas Charity Concert -** Royal Air Force Wyton Area Voluntary Band - Free Church 7.30pm, Tickets £12.

Sunday 20th - **Santa arrives at the St Ives Quay**. At 11am - either by boat or walking over The Bridge.

Sunday 20th & Monday 21st- **Santas SnowFESt event** St ives Corn Exchange. With Santas Grotto and Giant Snow Dome.

JANUARY 2027

Friday 15th - **St Ives Civic Society talk** - **Catchment approach to reducing flood risk** Corn Exchange 7.30pm, Visitors Welcome

Friday 29th January - **Chapel Arts Concert featuring**

Angie Collins & Johnny Wright



Angie's fine singing and piano playing and Johnny's superb guitar skills blend to provide an evening of music, featuring original compositions alongside stripped-back covers of artists like Tom Waits and Bob Dylan.

St Ives Corn Exchange 7.30pm. Tickets £10 from the venue or online at www.ticketsource.co.uk/cexevents

BREAKING NEWS BREAKING NEWS

On Wednesday evening just as this issue of *The Riverporter* was being finished the news broke that Poundland has gone into administration. Of course this is not good news for St Ives, following the immediate closure of Nero Hairdressers and the closure of Townrow due in the new year.

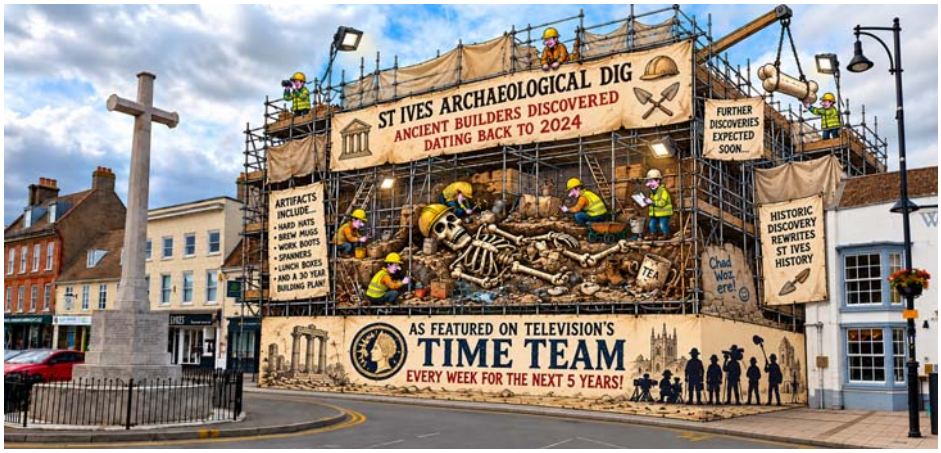
The hope is that the St Ives Poundland store might be snapped up from administration, although at the moment that seems unlikely. Both Poundland and Townrow are large stores and finding suitable businesses for them will be difficult in the current climate. It's not all bad news though as Limoncello has just opened and work is continuing on the Sushi Bar due to open in the old Lloyds Bank and work is now starting on the Barclays conversion (see p2).

 The publishers, Ron Westrip and John Souter, reserve the right to determine the content of the publication. © copyright reserved

Barclays Site Update:

Although little appears to be happening on site, a great deal of preparation is underway behind the scenes, says a spokesman for the developers. Materials are on order and security has been increased to prevent trespassing. Covert security measures are in place, and recorded evidence of criminal behaviour will be handed over to the police. The developers ask parents and local schools to remind children of the dangers of entering building sites, particularly after dark when visibility is poor. The developers are waiting for power and water authorities to confirm entry locations for utilities (a task left unresolved by the previous builder). Once these routes are agreed, applications for a road closure will be submitted, as this work will almost certainly require one.

Meanwhile *The Riverporter* has heard that TV's Time Team have eyes on the site!



St Ives news from the past



In the 1800s, St Ivians could be surprised by unusual displays. In 1851 The Parrot Inn showed the skeleton of an 18ft whale caught at King's Lynn, likely startling tipsy regulars. By 1887 publican Sarah Burbidge kept exotic parrots in the bar. In 1894 furniture dealer Joseph Radford displayed the skeleton of Joshua Slade, a notorious murderer hanged and dissected at Huntingdon in 1827.

When the preserved body of a man was found 14 inches below the surface in 1851 by workers enclosing land for the railway, there was a lack of curiosity about the find. Maybe just another pile of bones for St Ivians.

For more news from the past, go to St Ives 100 Years Ago at https://tinyurl.com/SI100YA

Don't be alone this Christmas

The St Ives Christmas Day Lunch will take place again at St Ives Free Church and is provided for those who would otherwise be alone on Christmas Day.

The lunch is provided by the St Ives office of Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre (HVC), in partnership with the Free Church, and often the Mayor of St Ives also attends to give a helping hand.

It has become a regular occurrence since 2011, when the first lunch was served, and guests enjoy a two-course meal followed by coffee, mince pies, mints and a raffle.

This celebration is made possible through generous contributions from individuals and local businesses. Volunteers decorate the hall and set the tables to create a festive atmosphere. Since Covid the numbers attending have never quite recovered, so if you would like to attend for free, please contact the Volunteer Office in St Ives Town Hall to fill in the form available before 18th December. **The office is open Monday to Friday from 12.30 to 3pm. Tel: 01480 301462**



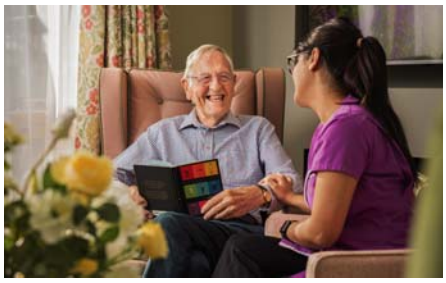
Pictured are HVC Chair Mike Baker with the then Mayor Julie Kerr at last year's event.

The Volunteer Centre also needs drivers on Christmas Day

If you could bring someone in and return to take them home after lunch then the Volunteer Centre would like to hear from you.

Live life the way you choose at Field Lodge care home

care UK



At Care UK's Field Lodge in St Ives, you can live each day your way. With our stunning café, hair and beauty salon, cinema, and bar, we have everything you'll need under one roof to enable you to continue enjoying a fulfilling lifestyle.

At Field Lodge, our dedicated lifestyle team will meet with you to get to know your unique interests and preferences. We'll support you to continue much-loved hobbies and try new activities - making plenty of new friends along the way!

Part of the community

At Field Lodge, we love to wave at passers-by on our many trips out in our minibus. Residents are able to enjoy trips to local places of interest.

On quieter days, residents are always welcome to enjoy afternoon tea in our café with friends and family or relax in our peaceful gardens with a chilled smoothie and a favourite book. Our cinema is perfect for movie-goers, and our hair and beauty salon is popular for those who love a pamper.

We recognise the importance of staying connected to local life. We're often visited by local schools, societies, and faith groups, who love to join in with our busy activities schedule.

Wish upon a star

Is there a wish or goal you've always wanted to achieve? Hang your wish on our wishing tree, big or small, and our team will do our best to make it happen. Care UK's Wishing Tree initiative allows residents to suggest ideas for new hobbies they'd like to try, places they'd like to visit or even activities linked to past careers. From skiing trips to a fish and chip supper, the programme is designed to help residents lead fulfilling lives.

Trust us to care

At Care UK, we've been delivering high quality, person-centred care for over 40 years. That's why over 16,000 families across the country trust us to care for their older loved one.

For more information about Field Lodge in St Ives, call 01480 710673 or visit careuk.com/field-lodge, London Road, St Ives, Cambridgeshire PE27 5EX.



The Riverporter

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



Milly & Tilly love your letters.

having your say . . .

Get it off your chest email Milly at:

editor@ theriverporter.uk

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,



Thank you for putting my dog Sylvie's poster in last week's edition. Sylvie is home after 12 days awol. She and we are so happy and relieved, and I know many folk in St Ives feel the same. We want to thank everyone who helped with sighting and doorbell information, which helped to find a pattern in her after dark movements, and finally led to a successful trapping by a professional. Sylvie is very tired, went straight to her bed, and slept and so did I.

Thank you again **Lin Farnell**

Dear Milly & Tilly,

At 3.3 in the September Transport Committee report of the Combined Authority is this statement - confirming the demise of the bus gate:

'Following the latest round of public consultation, an alternative approach to managing congestion in St Ives has been identified so both the bus gate on Meadow Lane and the banned right turn from the A1123 onto Needingworth Road have been removed.'

Yours **Anony Mouse**

Dear Milly & Tilly,

I live in North Road St Ives, next to the St Ives Clinic. My family have resided here, in this house since 1904 and have witnessed many changes over the years. A lot of St Ivians are now aware that there are proposed plans from 'Churchill living' for a retirement development on the old library and clinic.

My concerns are not for the development itself, I'm of the older generation and know how important it is that there is safe and secure accommodation, for the elderly. Upon inspection of the plans, I (alongside many others) am extremely saddened to see that the large Walnut tree will be removed to create space for the buildings.



The Bible orchard has been there for 350 Years (There is a plaque on the corner of that area giving all the information) and planting the Walnut tree was done at the very beginning of the project. There are Tree Preservation Orders on all 3 of the walnut trees that still stand. Admittedly, one nearest the residential fence looks like it has died but the other two on the roadside are still healthy.

After a conversation with the tree specialists when they were inspecting them, they said that the large one (that Churchill want to remove) needed a trim but was still in good health. I do know, that research shows a preservation order can be lifted for development reasons but I feel it's a great shame to do so, meaning our lovely town will therefore lose another important piece of History. **Anne Strong.**

Neotists secure funding for mystery season in libraries

Murder mysteries, escape challenges, author talks and youth sessions are coming to St Ives, St Neots and Huntingdon from Easter to the end of June 2027. St Neots creative community interest company, Neotists, has been awarded £30,000 from Arts Council England's National Lottery Project to deliver Mystery Fest, a programme of crime and mystery events for all ages. Delivered in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council's library service, the programme brings live performance, puzzle solving, reading and writing into libraries, bookshops and cultural venues across the county. Most events will be free to attend and coincides with the British Library's major Agatha Christie exhibition in London. Confirmed partners in St Ives include the Norris Museum and Riverport Books.

OTHER NEWS

A SHOW NOT TO BE MISSED

The Centre Theatre Players are busy rehearsing for their forthcoming seasonal production, the merriest panto of all, Robin Hood, which they will be performing in the Burgess Hall of One Leisure St Ives from 13th - 17th January.

Written especially for The Players by Will Waldren and Sam Burke, who will also be responsible for the direction, the show contains some great characters, fabulous plots, catchy music and plenty of comedy and audience participation. Musical director is Mark Checkley with choreography by Vicky Grant and Tara Wilson.

The Centre Theatre Players have gained quite a reputation for their standard of productions and have provided the town with a seasonal treat for the last fifty years.

Many of the performances for Robin Hood are full booked but there is availability for some of the weekday evening shows. Tickets can be purchased online from ticketsource.co.uk/burgesshall or from the One Leisure main reception. It is advisable to book now to avoid any disappointment.

Are you ready for winter?

If you need help keeping warm this winter, pop into the Corn Exchange on Monday 7th December, 10am 12noon for free tea and coffee, courtesy of the Coop.

Lots of local organisations will be there to offer warm home and energy advice - plus there is a free raffle and Sew, Mend and Save will be handing out homemade draught excluders!

UK Network of Age-friendly Communities

E-scooter warning from Cambs Police

With Black Friday deals under way and Christmas approaching, you may be considering buying an e-scooter for yourself or as a gift. **Police advice is simple: don't.**

Privately owned e-scooters are illegal to use on public roads, pavements and other public spaces. They can only legally be used on private land with the landowner's permission. The exception is e-scooters hired as part of an approved government rental scheme. The Police regularly receive reports from communities across Cambridgeshire about e-scooters being ridden illegally, and there have also been incidents where people have been injured.

Cambs officers will continue to take action where e-scooters are being used illegally. Riders risk having their e-scooter seized and destroyed, as well as receiving a fine and points on their driving license. If a child is caught riding an e-scooter illegally, action can be taken against their parent or guardian instead.

So, if an e-scooter is on your Black Friday or Christmas shopping list, please bear these restrictions in mind before spending your money.

You can find further information and advice about e-scooters on the Cambridgeshire Police website.

NHS issues call for blood donors

The NHS and blood services across the UK issued an urgent call to donors as more donations are needed to keep up with demand from hospitals and ensure stocks remain resilient to winter challenges. Winter illnesses impact the number of donations and mean more patients with lower immunity, including sickle cell and cancer, need extra blood to stay well. Stocks of certain blood groups are around half of what the NHS aims for – including around 2-3 days of O negative, less than half the usual six days target.

New and existing donors across are urged to book and fill over 150,000 appointments over coming days and weeks to tackle the shortfall. In Cambridge, the donor centre has 3,000 appointments still available to fill over coming weeks. Giving blood takes just an hour and each donation can save up to three lives. You can book a blood donation appointment today at: www.blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23.

Fenstanton Apprentice wins Award

A young Apprentice Engineer at Cambridgeshire bus operator, Stagecoach East, has been hailed as one of Britain's best at a glitzy awards ceremony. Leo Nesbitt, from the operator's Fenstanton depot, won the Stagecoach Spirit Award at its national Apprentice of the Year Awards after impressing his colleagues with his positivity, dedication and desire to learn. His prize includes a once in a lifetime trip to Zhengzhou in China, to visit one of the world's biggest bus-building plants, owned by Yutong.

Engineering Manager, Peter Collins, said of Leo: *'Nothing is ever too much trouble, and he consistently puts the needs of the team first.'*

SSI Screen St Ives Community Cinema

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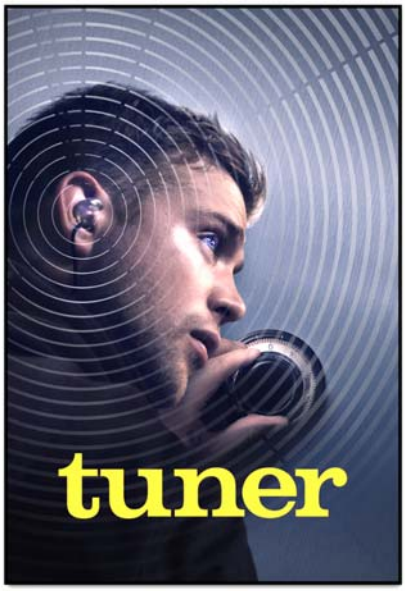

Tuner
Thursday 3 December 2026 at 7:30pm
Doors open 7:00pm. Tickets £7
Director: Daniel Roher (2025), 107m, Cert: 15

Tuner is a 2025 crime thriller about Niki White, a gifted piano tuner with Hyperacusis whose heightened hearing makes him a talented safe-cracker. He is drawn into a life of crime by a gang of thieves in order to pay his mentor's medical bills, which threatens his budding romance with a fellow musician. Stars *Leo Woodall* as Niki, *Dustin Hoffman* as his mentor Harry Horowitz, and *Havana Rose Liu* as Ruthie.

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

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It's present buying season

Winter is now here with wind, rain and icy nights. It's time to light the fire in the evenings and it is also the time to pick up some Christmas presents before the final rush over the next four weeks.

HYPERION 1960

The Christmas lights are on and the Courtyard is open - with up to 30 different traders it offers a wide range of goods to choose from.

Its cobbled courtyard is quirky and the unique market style offers a shopping experience with a difference.

There really is something for everyone!

You can also sit down at our coffee shop and relax and natter with a cup of artisan coffee and some homemade cake.

If you enjoy shopping, browsing or general mooching about then The Hyperion Courtyard is worth a visit. And if antiques are your thing, next door is The Hyperion Antique Centre, full of interesting items and even more potential presents for friends and relatives.

The Courtyard is open 7 days a week, so there is plenty of opportunity to get your shopping fix.

Here is the date for this year's final auction

12th Dec Interiors and Fine Art



The Courtyard
Picture by Chris Street