

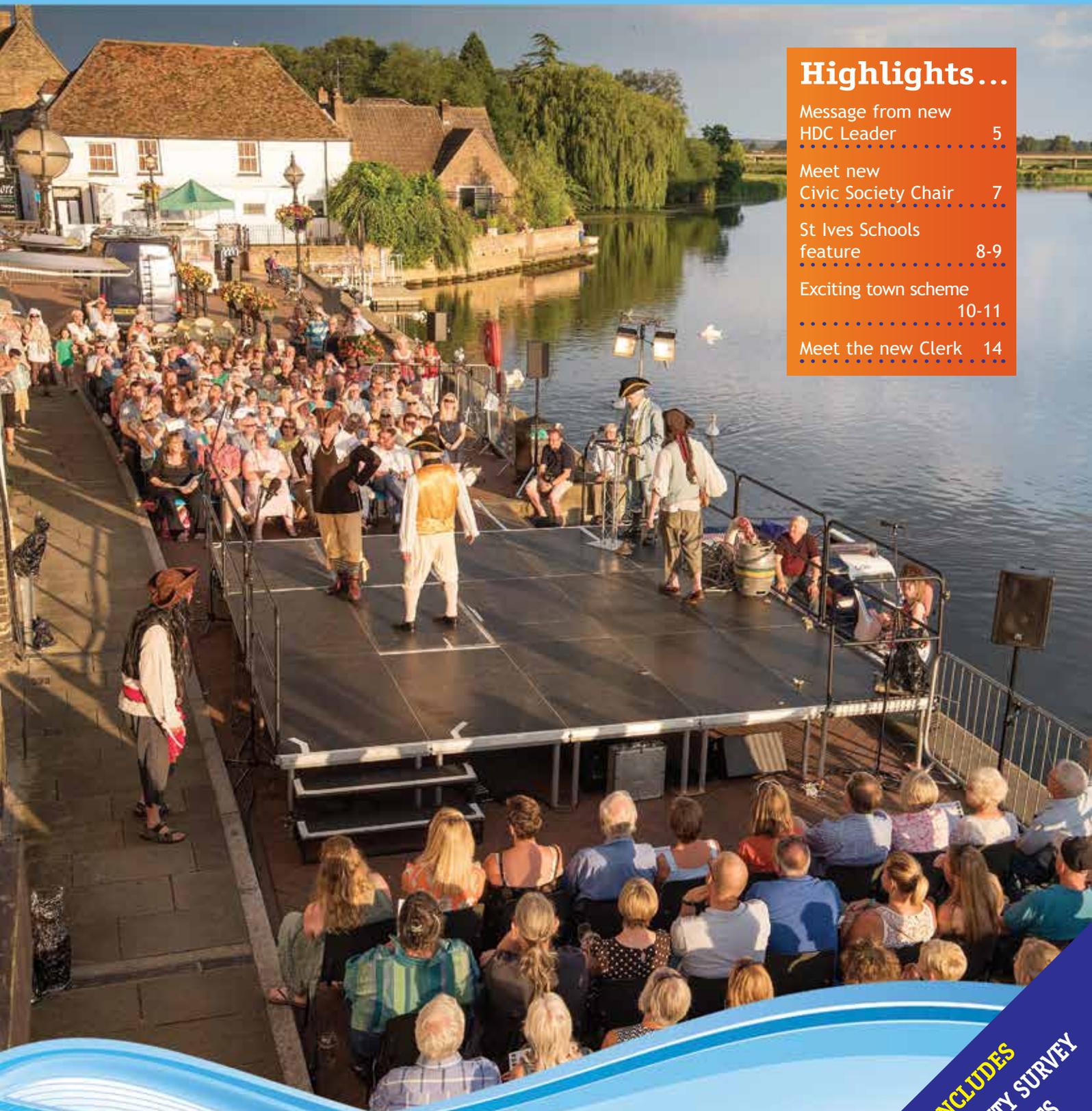
# The Bridge



News, views and events from your Town Council

February 2017

*St Ives Riverport heritage • Beautiful location • Community spirit • Exceptional shopping*



## Highlights...

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**INCLUDES  
COMMUNITY SURVEY  
RESULTS**

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**FRONT COVER**

Our Merrie Wives of St Ives day back in July was blessed with beautiful summer weather. After children's activities during the day the outdoor play was performed on The Quay in the evening to a sell-out audience basking in sunshine. This was a true community effort produced after months of rehearsals and preparation by the Town Team. The town itself provided its own perfect backdrop!

Photograph by Alan Bennett/Media Imaging Solutions

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# MAYOR'S MESSAGE

## THOUGHTS FOR FEBRUARY

The beginning of a New Year gives us time to reflect on the challenges of the previous year and the changes 2017 will bring for us all here in St Ives.

**Having more control**

In May we will see the completion of the new Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough under the control of an elected Mayor. On page 5 Cllr Robin Howe, the new Executive Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council, gives us further details on local devolution and how this could define our town with the creation of a Master Plan for St Ives.

What I am certain of is that St Ives is a vibrant, unique and beautiful market town but is facing the challenges that so many market towns in Cambridgeshire have faced over the last five to seven years - and particularly the demand for more housing and retail opportunities. I welcome the future co-operation between the



Photograph by Peter Townsend

Town and District Council promised by Cllr Howe to ensure that St Ives has a Master Plan to enable us to face these challenges together. We must pursue what is important for existing and new residents to St Ives but we must also preserve our uniqueness and heritage for generations to come.

**What you told us**

I want to thank everyone who completed our Community Survey in the last edition of *The Bridge* and online. The Town Council plans to carry out surveys like this on a



*My duties vary from the ceremonial to the fun. The town's Remembrance Day service and parade is always well attended, respectful and very moving ...*



*... while waiting for Santa with (l-r) Snowman Frost Rowlinson and Chair of Fun of excitement. Where is*

Photograph by Jason Archontides www.jasonphotos.com

regular basis so we can continue to understand your priorities for the town. On page 4 Cllr Dan Rowe provides a summary of the answers and the feed-back we received from you. We will use this invaluable information as we monitor our progress in delivering the services you expect from us - this is part of the consultation process we agreed when we drew up the Council's Strategic Plan in 2015.

**Memorable moments**

Christmas is a busy time for any Town Mayor and is probably my most enjoyable time of the year as I attend many carol services, plays and exhibitions. On Christmas Day I joined volunteers at the Free Church to help serve Christmas Dinner to residents who may otherwise have spent Christmas day on their own. I can whole-heartedly say it was a brilliant and happy day for everyone who helped and attended.

I also had two other memorable moments when I had the honour of officially welcoming Santa *twice* to St Ives! The first was at the Christmas lights switch-on. Then, a couple of weeks later, when Santa returned by boat with a

host of helpers, including 'Frostie the Snowman', I was there on The Quay to greet him when he arrived to help distribute presents at his grotto in the Corn Exchange. Key to all these notable moments are the voluntary groups in our town and so I want to thank them all very much for putting so many smiles on to so many faces - both children and adults!

**Other good news**

I'm delighted to report that in late December Cambridgeshire County Council, who own our Town Bridge, agreed that the Norris Museum should be responsible for managing the Chapel of St Leger (known as the Bridge Chapel) as a major heritage asset. I believe the Norris Museum is best placed to raise the profile of the Chapel on behalf of the town and so we look forward to the Museum Director Sarah Russell and her team finalising their plans with the County Council in January. You can find the latest news of the Museum's development project progress on page 13.

Lastly, I would like to welcome our new Town Clerk, Allan Siao Ming Witherick, to our Town Hall Team. Allan brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm to the

Town Council and we are looking forward to working with him - you can find out a bit more about him on page 14.

I wish you and our town a very happy and prosperous New Year!



CLLR MRS DEBBIE TOWNSEND,  
TOWN MAYOR



**MAYOR'S CHARITY QUIZ!**

I am fund-raising this year for the Macmillan Woodlands Centre Appeal. Please come along and join in the fun - or bring your own team! - at 7 pm on **Friday 24 February** in the Corn Exchange. Information and tickets can be obtained from the Town Hall on 01480 388929.



...to arrive on The Quay  
...ie, Mace Bearer Tom  
...EST Gilly Jackson is full  
...he?



Ah, at last - he's here again! What a relief.

Photograph by Jason Archontides [www.jasonaphotos.com](http://www.jasonaphotos.com)



More fun: a highlight of the festive season was a Christmas tea dance with a cockney theme at Rheola Care Home. This was organised by the Carers Trust and funded through the Big Lottery's Celebrate Fund. Young carers volunteered their time to help plan and deliver the party. This event was part of an intergenerational project developed in partnership with our own Norris Museum (see page 13).

Back row: l-r Ali Naylor (Norris Museum); Tania Bingham (Carers Trust); entertainers Mike Worthington and Ian Rosie Rose. Middle row: residents Betty Darnell and Florence Clarke. Front row: three young carers supported by Carers Trust Cambridgeshire.

Photograph by Gavin Carroll/Carers Trust



# WHAT YOU'VE BEEN SAYING

## RESULTS OF THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

In September 2015 the Town Council adopted a five-year strategic plan on how it should develop the services it provides. Three of the important actions included in the plan are:

- To consult residents using cost-effective methods proportionate to the importance of the issue
- To communicate with residents in a variety of ways to ensure they are informed of the Council's plans
- To provide, maintain and, where appropriate, enhance services in the town that are valued by the local community

To help achieve these aims we asked you to complete a Community Survey in the last issue of *The Bridge* in order to gather some feedback on issues relating to the Council's work within the town. The survey received a strong and welcome response, for which we thank you, and a summary of those responses is presented here. Most replies came back as hard copies from the magazine, but 41% of them were received through the online questionnaire. Please note that this summary is derived only from the responses received and is therefore based on the views of a sample of residents only. It nevertheless represents valuable feedback on how this sample regards the efforts of this Council to fulfil its duties to you, and for this we thank all of you who have taken the trouble to respond.

### Consultation and communication

The majority of responders felt that they should be consulted on Community Matters, Services and Future Strategies, while less than half were in favour of being asked about financial information. There was a preference indicated for consultation through *The Bridge* magazine, which was the main source of information, but also a strong indication that the use of online surveys, social media and the website may be appropriate. Whatever the method though the general feedback was that respondents are happy with the information they received from the Town Council.



### Play equipment

While the majority of respondents to the survey did not have children of the appropriate age to use the play equipment, and so did not make much use

of it, there was still some useful feedback from the survey. The range and condition of the play equipment received a favourable rating, with an average score of just below 7/10. Opportunities for improvement were raised, however, in suitability of equipment for different age ranges, which is reflected by an average score of 6.3/10, and in several of the comments made. There was also a strong feeling that the Town Council should continue to prioritise updating the equipment as funds allow, which could include the introduction of gym-style equipment that many respondents felt would be a good addition.

### Parks and green spaces

The use of the parks and green spaces showed a greater overall usage, with nearly 85% of respondents using them on at least a monthly basis, with the majority of use being for exercise and as a quiet place for relaxation. The quality of these spaces was mostly rated highly, with the average scores regarding the grass, flowerbeds/baskets and trees ranging between 7.7-8.2/10. There was a general feeling throughout this section, however, that the quality of the paths needed to be improved, gaining a score of only 6.5/10, coming out as the least value for money and being reflected in a large number of the comments as well. When asked about which areas could be improved, there were also strong feelings towards improving the number of litter bins, seats and improving the lighting facilities. There was less of a feeling regarding improvement to the planting, which received a number of favourable reviews and comments.



Photograph by Mike Wells

### Farmers' Market

With the farmers' market, 96.6% of respondents indicated that they attended the market on occasion, with over 40% suggesting they attended most of them. The quality of the produce being sold at the market was rated highly, although there was a feeling that improvement could be made with regard to the diversity of events linked to it. A large majority of respondents also felt that the market should be self-financing where possible.



Photograph by Tom Rawlinson/SITC

### Public toilets

The final section of the survey dealt with the public toilets, with most of the respondents indicating that they used them on occasion. While a very high percentage of the responses indicated that it was important for the Council to continue funding the toilets' use and availability, there was a general agreement that their quality is poor and in great need of improvement. The Council believes that the new specialist cleaning treatment now being applied to them (since the report in *The Bridge* of February last year) is beginning to have the much needed and desired result!



Photograph by Ian Jackson

### Conclusion

Overall, the survey provided positive reactions, giving members valuable guidance on how best to proceed when allocating priorities. Feedback like this is vital to the work of the Council and to see such a strong response is extremely encouraging. If you wish to make further comments regarding this survey, or about the business of the Council in general, please direct them to [clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk). And please watch out for more Community Surveys in the future!

CLLR DAN ROWE

# ST IVES, DEVOLUTION AND THE FUTURE

## A MESSAGE FROM CLLR ROBIN HOWE

We invited the Executive Leader of the District Council to comment on his new job, give us his views on the big local government changes we face and predict how these might affect our future.

Before I was elected as Leader of the District Council in May I had served for three years as Deputy Leader to Jason Ablewhite who became the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire in May.

Under Jason's leadership HDC underwent major structural change in order to address the serious economic challenges the recession budget cuts had produced. These changes have created the strong economic base upon which the Council now operates, unlike most of its peer Councils around the country. One of my main priorities therefore must be to maintain strong control over our finances.

### Improving efficiency

However, I am also committed to maintaining front line services as much as is reasonably possible, not by continuing to cut costs but instead to improve the efficiency of the whole Council with the primary aim of improving service levels and the satisfaction of our residents.

I firmly believe that an organisation like a District Council, as any successful business, must place its customers first and if the procedures which are operated do not give customers what they want, then they must be changed!

At the end of this year therefore, we will launch a major transformation programme which will involve more dialogue with the residents about what they expect, engage our staff in the re-engineering of their work processes and publishing measurement systems which monitor our progress.

The work will concentrate on major services such as planning, housing, licensing, waste collection and

grounds maintenance with the aim of improving quality levels, timescales and ultimately costs, as we drive inefficiency out of the system.

### New cabinet, new Mayor

In the last few months I and other Council leaders have been busy with the devolution deal proposed for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The formation of a new local government system in our area will involve the creation of a new cabinet under the direct control of an elected Mayor. This has been a controversial move as many people simply see the creation of another layer of government presided over by an irrelevant and costly figurehead. Nothing could be further from the truth!

I see the Mayor and the cabinet as a new, powerful decision-making body which, unlike the current system which relied upon anonymous Whitehall officials, will be based and work in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It will make decisions on key strategic issues which will aim to improve the prosperity and lifestyles of all our residents, current and future. Remember that Cambridgeshire has one of the highest economic growth levels in the country. It has an annual Gross Value Added total approaching £22bn and yet economists say it is capable of more than doubling this figure if the right kind of strategies are adopted.

To make this happen we must deliver a precisely targeted programme which links together the creation of jobs, the education and skilling of the labour force, transportation and the building of 29,000 new homes by 2021 and 72,000 over a longer period. Affordable homes must be the highest priority in the home-building programme to allow young people to come into the area to work and bring up families.

### St Ives Master Plan and new funding

At a local level, we are working upon programmes which

ensure local towns such as St Ives become part of this region-wide strategic plan and that residents and democratically elected members feel they are fully involved.

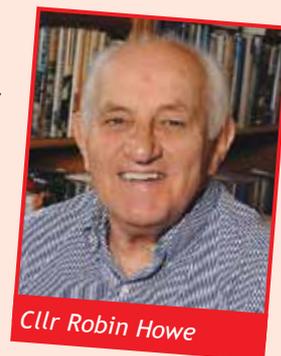
I have already announced our intention to create a Master Plan for St Ives which will define how St Ives will look, not just over the next five years or so, but also over the next twenty to thirty years.

We will engage specialists, residents and elected officials to build a plan which covers housing, commercial developments including the town centre, roads and transportation. It will include the upgrade of key strategic routes and parking, cultural and tourist pursuits and social development. This plan will be interfaced with the bigger programmes being developed by the new combined authority to ensure that the availability of funding can be assured and that residents' expectations can be met. We will also ensure the Master Plan fits into the Huntingdonshire Local Plan due for publication next year.

Devolution means the transfer of power away from

central government into local hands and offers us all an opportunity to better control our destiny. We must ensure that St Ives, and indeed the whole of Huntingdonshire, grasps this opportunity with both hands.

*If you would like to question Cllr Howe on any aspect of his article we shall be happy to pass on your comments. Please deliver letters to the Town Hall or email [clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk)*



Cllr Robin Howe

... an opportunity to better control our destiny.

# TOWN TEAM UPDATE

## PAST TRIUMPHS AND FUTURE PLANS

Last year Town Team activities, publications and events helped to keep the town lively, entertained our residents and their families and brought in the visitors. Here are just a few highlights.

### Art, calendars and cards

Remember the Old Riverport Art Competition? Local artists rose to the challenge to give us their impressions of The Old Riverport. The quality of the entries was excellent and the paintings were made available to everyone in *The Old Riverport Calendar 2017*. Along with the calendar, our second, we also created a set of St Ives Christmas Cards thanks to the generosity of local photographer Alan Bennett - we hope you managed to grab some.



### Bringing in the visitors

We also did more work promoting St Ives on the Internet, in the busy Cambridge Tourist Information Centre, in local newspapers, on the guided buses and on local television and radio. Data collected over the year shows that the St Ives pages on the Visit Cambridge website had over 23,000 visits. In addition over 7,000 St Ives leaflets were picked up - by tourists both national and international plus visitors from Cambridge itself. Our own website, [www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk](http://www.theoldriverportstives.co.uk), has had over 80,000 hits. Of course not every website visit results in an immediate visit to our town.



But we do know from talking to shopkeepers, skippers on the St Ives Electric Riverboats

and volunteers on Holt Island Nature

Reserve that we are receiving more and more visitors from Cambridge on the Guided Busway.

### The summer of 16

Last summer's programme was also memorable for three very special events that involved the wider community: the Mobility Grand Prix; the amazing Merrie Wives of St Ives day and outdoor play; and the second Old Riverport Jazz and Blues Festival. The Mobility races for both mature buggy drivers and children on scooters amused the crowd as well as highlighting issues that affect many; the play

was a true community production (and sell-out) with school children and local craft groups making some of the hundreds of cats that filled the town; and the Jazz and Blues Festival exceeded the previous year's venues, bands and attendances.



Back of this year's J&B T-shirt showing gig list.

Photograph by John Souter

Our town now has a reputation for year-round events of imagination, quality and value. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, the cooperation and assistance of other town groups and the commitment of our volunteers, our budget for the year's activities was well under £3,000. Sales of calendars, cards, knitted cats and T-shirts helped of course!

### What's next?

Following all that this year will be a tall order. But our group continues to meet monthly (see below). Ideas for new projects being considered include ways to brighten up our wheelie bins, alleyways and the sorting office in Bridge Street. We also want to improve signage for shopkeepers, improve our roundabouts with historic associations, identify and promote cycle ways and produce some new town leaflets. Oh, and introduce an Arts Season in the Bridge Chapel. Plus, of course, a repeat of last year's successes!

So there is plenty to plan, promote and produce. We want to ensure our lovely town lives up to its growing reputation for being the liveliest market town in Cambridgeshire. And we want you - our community - to continue to be involved in all we do and proud to enjoy with us the best that St Ives can offer.

Bring on the new season!

JOHN SOUTER, CHAIR TOWN TEAM

...the liveliest market town in Cambridgeshire.

The Town Team now meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the Town Hall at 7 pm. The Team is run on a drop-in basis and so you need not feel committed on an on-going basis. Come along to any meeting, listen to the project discussions and if one grabs your interest and you feel you can contribute let us know. We value all points of views, love welcoming new faces and working in small groups. It is fun and it works - look at what we do!

## COME ON YOU RANGERS! COMMUNITY GROUP SPOTLIGHT

Did you know we have a thriving girls' football team in the town? The Rangers Football Club includes over 40 teams for both boys and men and girls and women. But today the spotlight is the Under 11s girls. Coach-Manager Natalia Tucker tells us the score.

The St Ives Under 11s girls play seven-a-side in the S Tech Football League run by Cambridgeshire FA for girls and women in the area. They are an enthusiastic 12-strong bunch who always work hard. They have got off to a great start in the first half of the season and hope to carry this on in to the New Year. They have also managed to attract a few players who don't live in St Ives who travel to play for them.

Matches in the town are played on Saturday mornings at the One Leisure

Outdoor Centre on the 3G surface. We also play locally and can travel as far as Peterborough, Saffron Walden and Royston. The girls train every Tuesday between six and seven in the evening and you are welcome to pop along to watch.

The team is managed and coached by Natalia Tucker and Ian Reynolds. Both are qualified coaches and always keen to learn, which keeps the girls progressing. The leagues in which the girls play are non-competitive (until they reach the under 12s next season). This means they do not yet have any trophies to show and their scores are not published. But at this age playing is more about the enjoyment and participation in the game rather than the results!

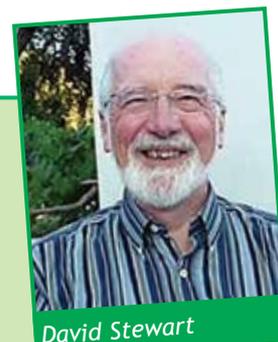
As a club the girls section has grown in the last two years and now has a



*Girl soccer power! Just look at the enthusiasm in the squad.*

girls' team in every age group from the under 9s to a new women's team. This shows just how far girls' and women's football has progressed in recent years - we are very proud to be part of this and to be able to offer competitive football to girls and women locally.

St Ives Rangers are a true community team that are keen to fundraise and support local events - you may have already cheered them on in the St Ives Carnival Parade!



*David Stewart*

## MEET THE NEW CIVIC SOCIETY CHAIR WELCOME DAVID STEWART

David recently assumed the Chair of this venerable local group and so we invited him to introduce himself to our readership and let us have his views on the role of the Society in today's challenging times.

The Civic Society exists because of a proposal in the late 1960s to construct a western bypass for St Ives. At that time St Ives Bridge was the only river crossing between Huntingdon and Earith, but it was a traffic-light controlled, single alternate lane bridge. The Civic Society was formed to fight the proposal and you can find much more about the early days and formation of the Society on our website [www.stivescivic.org.uk](http://www.stivescivic.org.uk).

Today St Ives has expanded considerably and I am sure the traffic problems are now more severe than they were before the bypass was built. But the centre of the town remains an attractive and vibrant market place. There are many reasons for that - the town is a conservation area and many of the buildings are 'listed'.

Development happens all the time and consequently more infrastructure is required if the town is to remain successful. The Civic Society continues to nudge and persuade the Local Authorities to recognise the special nature of the town and do better. It's not always easy or quick to have an effect however. I have been concerned about the fate of the black-painted 'decorative' street lights in the Town Centre for over two years, in the face of the County Council 'upgrades', and even now I'm still not sure about the final outcome! But we have come a very long way, because additional funds to upgrade 'decorative' lights across the county were previously not included in the original plans.

I have spent a lifetime in construction, working on flood prevention, motorway construction and specialist subcontracting. I often

“... to understand the now, it helps to understand the past.”

ask 'how did we get here?', that is: to understand the now, it helps to understand the past.

Like many residents I moved into the area but have lived here since 1975, and much of what I've learnt about the town comes from my wife, who was born here. I joined the committee around three years ago. I'm retired now so have the time to research and find answers to the 'how did we get here?' question.

As Chairman I lead a non-political committee, made up of residents who commit their time to consider the future of the town, and to influence the decision-making process towards ensuring St Ives remains attractive and vibrant. We also want to consider development in the residential areas beyond the conservation area, as well as large-scale proposals like Wyton-on-the-Hill and the possibility of a new river crossing. Maybe we will be back to where we started!

# SCHOOLS UPDATE HEAD TEACHER REPORTS

We set the primary and junior Heads a test: tell us how the new academic year is going and what is good about your school. Here are the results! We are proud of all the fantastic schools we have in the town.

## Thorndown Primary

Our school continues to go from strength to strength. Our belief is that every child should reach their full potential and we are continuing to develop our curriculum to ensure that our pupils make as much progress as possible, whilst engendering a curiosity in the world and love of learning.

We started our academic year teaching in single year groups, rather than in the mixed-aged classes that we have had for many years. Our new class structure has really helped to develop our pupils' progress and has ensured that we can focus better on each year group's age-related expectations.



Photographs courtesy of each school

In September, we started running Thorndown Pre-school. Our very experienced Early Years' Leader works within the pre-school setting and, by utilising her teaching expertise, we are ensuring that our pupils have a really good start to their learning career. Our children are encouraged to lead learning through play and exploration and we offer exciting opportunities to learn both indoors and out. Thorndown Pre-school is expanding, and we welcome new children.

We are currently very excited about what's happening in maths at Thorndown. We have been working with the Department for Education, through the Maths Hub programme, to develop a mastery curriculum. This has had a very positive impact on our pupils' understanding, reasoning and problem-solving skills. Along with 70 other Mastery Specialist Teachers from across the country, our

Deputy Head recently visited Shanghai to learn more about teaching for mastery approaches, which we have been successfully developing in school. In January we will be hosting two Chinese teachers on a return visit.

VICCI GODBOLD

Visit [www.thorndownprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.thorndownprimaryschool.co.uk)

## Eastfield Infant and Nursery

This year Eastfield Infant and Nursery School in Pig Lane is focusing on the promotion of reading. We would like every child to be able to read well enough to thoroughly enjoy a wide range of books on offer to them.

To help this along, the school is committed this year to buying as many new reading books as possible to support the growth in the children's reading skills. However, lots of books equates to lots and lots of money!

Fortunately the school is very well supported by the Parent Teacher Association (Eastfield School Association). This term the ESA have generously donated £3,000 for the purchase of new reading books and this has helped us to buy almost 600 brand new books for the children.

At a recent parent information evening about reading we shared the fact that we are on a journey with this project and that this is only the beginning of growing our new reading library. After the event, many of the parents came up to us and shared ideas of how they could support the school to gain more funding. We really are so lucky to have such a supportive parent body at the school.



During the last week of term, the school revealed the new books to the children for the first time and they were over the moon. Cara in Year 1 said, 'I'm so excited about the new books! I can't wait to share them with my family.' And Sebby from Reception class said, 'I like the pictures in the new books and I love reading!'

The children were told that they will be taking their first new reading book home for the Christmas holidays. What a lovely Christmas present!

LISA VALLA

Visit [www.eastfieldschool.co.uk](http://www.eastfieldschool.co.uk)

## Westfield Junior

We are a thriving junior school in the heart of St Ives. 'Aiming high, learning together and making the most of every opportunity' is at the heart of what we do. Our children are active participants in their learning, who enjoy challenging themselves and have a strong sense of community.

We benefit enormously from our close proximity to the town centre, enabling us to exploit the many opportunities available within St Ives to enrich our curriculum - from the river to Holt Island and The



Thicket, to the Norris Museum and the Library. This term our pupils have also undertaken trips further afield to the Space Centre in Leicester and Colchester Castle. They are now looking forward to residential visits in the West Midlands and Scarborough later in the year. In addition they have enjoyed

theme days in school including a Viking day and Roman day and a performance from the Young Shakespeare Company. Lower school has entertained us with its performances of *Ebenezer*.

Our children enjoy a rich curriculum which is enhanced by over 20 extra-curricular clubs each week. We are enormously proud of their sporting achievements with children regularly competing in sporting competitions with other schools and achieving much success. The school choir continues to be busy with four different engagements in the community over the last few weeks, including the turning on of the Christmas lights in St Ives. Westfield is a wonderful community which is proud to



offer a rich education to the children of St Ives.

LUCY ROBERTS

Visit [www.westfieldjunior.com](http://www.westfieldjunior.com)

## Wheatfields Primary



We are a large primary school of 420 pupils, with 2 classes in each year group, situated within the Burleigh Hill Estate in St Ives. Burleigh Hill Pre-School and Wheatfields Nursery share our school site, along with our Kids Club that provides excellent before- and after-school care. Although we are a large school, we come together at least twice a week to share successes in learning and celebrate our achievements.

At Wheatfields we have high standards and expectations which are set by our experienced, caring and effective staff, and we are very well supported and challenged by our Governing Body. Wheatfields expects pupils to be polite, work hard and take pride in both themselves and in their school's reputation. We constantly strive for the highest levels of achievement for our children, enabling them to succeed as life-long learners. We have Golden Rules that help us to be the best we can be.



Our development plan for this academic year includes work to help our children to be better at spelling and writing. Our outdoor area is being developed with the purchase of play equipment and the development of a Forest Schools Area with trained members of staff.

We are a Platinum 'Sing-Up' school. Many of our pupils are learning to play an instrument and their expertise is showcased at our Annual Music Evening. We are proud to have a choir that sings at the O2, plus a Biscuit Band and the Wednesday Boys choir.

We have just enjoyed an exciting (for the children) and exhausting (for the staff and parents!) Christmas season. Our very youngest children performed the Nativity and children in year 1 and 2 sang and danced their way through a Christmas play. This year, children in year 3-6 presented a Carol Concert with poetry and readings which ensured we were all in the festive mood.

THERESA THORNTON

Visit [www.wheatfields.cambs.sch.uk](http://www.wheatfields.cambs.sch.uk)

# THE SUN SHINES ON THE PARK AND RIDE A COUNTY COUNCIL INITIATIVE

An interesting project came before our Planning Committee recently. We thought you would appreciate an opportunity to see more details of this innovative and topical scheme and so we invited Ron D'Souza, Business Development Manager at the Energy Investment Unit at Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), to contribute this article. Let us know your comments.

St Ives could host the first mini Smart Energy Grid on its Park and Ride site and act as a demonstrator project for the rest of the country! CCC is working with St Ives Town Council, Bouygues Energies and Services Ltd (BE&S), the Greater Cambridgeshire and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership and Government to try to make this happen.

**What is a Smart Energy Grid?** It is an electrical grid which includes renewable energy, energy efficiency, battery storage and control of the production and distribution of electricity.

**What is being proposed for St Ives Park and Ride?** The idea is to generate renewable energy from the sun, store some of it in batteries and use it for street lights, electric vehicle (EV) charging and supply it to a local business customer in the immediate vicinity. State of the art technology will help manage the flow of the energy to all the right places at the right time. The smart grid will also reduce carbon emissions, which is good for our environment.

**Why do we need a smart grid?** Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing economies in the UK. Population and economic growth is expected to increase over the next 20 years. At the same time, the country is becoming increasingly dependent on imported energy, such as oil and gas. This is at a time when global demand for energy is increasing along with prices and many of our coal and old nuclear power stations are coming to the end of their useful lives. Without action to ensure reliable local supplies to replace power plants, there could be a shortfall in our energy supplies and risks to our businesses and lifestyles.



*An artist's impression of the canopies which will carry the solar panels and shelter parked vehicles.*

Image courtesy of Sunfixings



Photograph by Richard Shrubb

*An aerial view of the existing site (left) and two impressions of how the panels will look from the air (right).*



Image courtesy of Sunfixings

A clean, secure and sufficient supply of energy is essential for our economy. We need energy to heat and light our homes, to power our businesses and to transport people and goods. Without it, we could not function as an economy or a modern society. Even minor disruptions in supply can cause major problems for communities and businesses. Generating energy locally is part of the solution and can bring economic benefits to our community.

**Why St Ives?** Cambridgeshire has seven park and ride sites, five around Cambridge plus Longstanton and St Ives. St Ives was selected for a number of reasons: an enthusiastic response by St Ives Town Council; the County Council owns the land; the guided busway attracts people to the Park and Ride site; an increasing number of whom already drive electric vehicles (EVs); and there are nearby local businesses to which electricity can be supplied.

**What will it look like?** Photovoltaic (PV) Solar panels will be installed above the car spaces on canopies, high enough for cars to park comfortably beneath and be protected from the weather (see left). The sunnier St Ives remains, the more energy the panels will generate, although it will be at reduced levels during the winter. Markings will be applied to the panels (silver borders to each module) to deter birds alighting on what, from the air, they might perceive to be water. Advanced CCTV technology will be attached to the car canopies to monitor the site and the batteries will be stored inside a small unit along with the control system.

The Park and Ride already has some EV charging spaces and more will be added with this project. Government is encouraging electric vehicles and

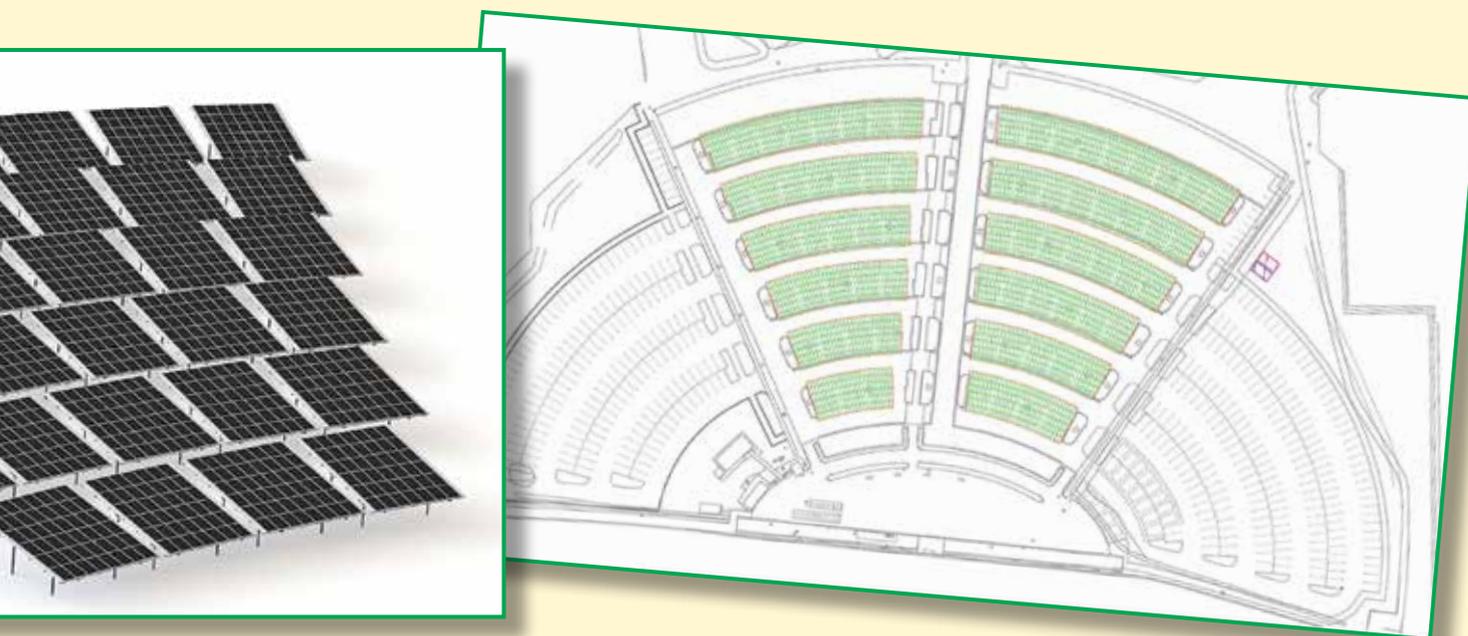
there is good evidence that EV sales are increasing across Cambridgeshire. EV drivers will be able to use the facilities at the Park and Ride to re-fuel with electricity.

**What has been done so far?** The business case for the project has been completed by Bouygues Energies and Services. This company provided detailed costs and technical designs which were subject to rigorous appraisal. Cambridgeshire County Council's Assets and Investment Committee agreed to loan 50% of the cost of the project with the expectation that the full cost of the loan and interest, plus a small return after maintenance costs, will be returned to the Council after sale of the electricity. Central Government is expected to fund the other 50% through a European Regional Development Fund grant. An application for grant funding was submitted in August and the project is successfully through the first round but is now subject to a more detailed second application.

**Your views are important to us.** A planning application has been submitted to Cambridgeshire County Council and can be found at the following link <http://www.planning.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/swift/apas/run/wchvarylogin.display>. During December, two publicity events were held to raise awareness of the project with residents and to receive feedback. If you would like to have a chat about the project or share your ideas please email or ring [ron.dsouza@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:ron.dsouza@cambridgeshire.gov.uk), 01223 699448/07775 220311.

#### **When is the project taking place?**

It is hoped that the development will start by autumn 2017 and take up to ten months to deliver. It could be up and running during 2018.



# PLANNING POINTS NICK DIBBEN REPORTS

**New application** Supermarket chain Morrisons have submitted a revised planning application for a store just off the St Ives by-pass. A previous application for a store on stilts with parking underneath was submitted and approved in 2014. The new application is for a smaller store



Customer café outdoor seating.

at ground level that according to the submission reflects changes in the way people do their shopping. The application now includes a

second large non-food retail unit, although no details are given as to who might operate the store and what sort of products would be sold.

The site is actually in Needingworth Parish, but the Town Council's Planning Committee has submitted similar comments to those of our neighbour. We had no problem with the Morrisons store but raised questions regarding the additional store. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides guidance on the siting of new retail outlets outside the town centre, and the

Town Council has concerns that the process might not have been followed correctly, especially if no occupier has been specified.

As with all planning applications, the final decision will be made by Huntingdonshire District Council.

**Local Plan 2036 update** Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) has provided local parish and town councils with an update on their progress in producing a new Local Plan. Work on the final major element of the plan, the transport assessment, is underway which will establish the transport infrastructure needed to support plans for new housing and jobs. Different options are being studied and the final number and location of new houses is likely to be adjusted to ensure that the plan is deliverable. Updates to other key documents such as retail and leisure provision and the environmental impact assessment are also being undertaken.

Once this work is complete the next version of the Local Plan will be issued for consultation sometime in spring 2017. Final changes to reflect comments will be made before the document is submitted towards the end of 2017 and well before the Government deadline of March 2018.

## NOTICE BOARD

### HARRISON WAY VIADUCT TO CLOSE



The Bridge Engineer at Cambridgeshire County Council has informed us that the bypass bridge will close overnight from 8 pm to 6 am on Monday to Friday from **13 February** until **24 February** 2017.

The essential works being carried out are to replace the failing expansion joints. In case of difficulties please contact Stephen McGee at CCC on 03450 455212.

### LOW ROAD TO CLOSE

Here we go again! This time it's the road linking St Ives and Fenstanton to be closed for three weeks between **22 April** and **14 May** 2017 for the replacement of Turnpike Bridge, with works expected to take about 26 weeks. This is obviously a major project involving piling and beam installation. Other weekend closures either side of these dates are possible. The main works are planned to start on or around 6 February. As with Harrison Way, in case of difficulties please contact Stephen McGee on 03450 455212.

### OUSE VALLEY WAY MAINTENANCE

This popular long-distance footpath set up 26 years ago by HDC, CCC and land owners runs through Huntingdonshire including our town and has significant amenity value. It also supports much flora and fauna. The County Council is responsible for the maintenance of the path and a Management Group has been formed to help them ensure that the path is fit for use. The Group is made up of representatives from Towns and Parishes along the Ouse Valley Way. Its primary task will be to monitor maintenance standards along the path. Parish and Town Councils are encouraged to help identify issues that require potential action by the landowners, under enforcement if necessary by the CCC.

We would like you to be involved. An OVW Audit Sheet has been devised so that as you use the path you will be able to accurately record your maintenance concerns. The sheet will be available as hard copies from outlets in the town and online and once completed it can be returned to the Town Hall or online. All forms will be noted and then passed on to CCC for action. We will keep you posted as these plans develop. In the meantime, keep your eyes - and feet - on the Ouse Valley Way!

# NORRIS MUSEUM UPDATE

## DEVELOPMENT PROJECT PROGRESS

As many of you will have seen the Norris Museum Development is well underway. After several months of site investigations and preparatory work Andy Knott Construction took control of the museum site in September 2016 and began the major refurbishment and construction works which will transform the museum. Work is on track for a completion and grand opening in summer 2017.

### What is happening behind the hoardings?

In the attic store, the new trusses have been put in along with improved insulation plus a new floor. Now, when we move back in, our collections can be stored in a safe, accessible and environmentally stable space.



*Colourful hoardings decorated with historic murals from volunteers and hand prints from school children shield our eyes from the extensive works going on in the museum garden.*

In the main museum gallery the oak screens have been carefully dismantled and set aside ready to reuse in the new extension. Taking the screens down has really transformed the space and for the first time we can see how much extra display room we will have when we reopen.

The new extension is perhaps the most significant piece of work taking place on site. So far it has involved taking off the roof at the far end of the museum (above the old temporary exhibition area) and reducing the walls ready to 'knit' the old and new buildings together. The ground at the end of the museum site has been prepared by installing a new flood wall, inserting deep piling and setting the foundations ready for the workshop space to be built.

### What else has the museum been up to?

Ali Naylor, Community Projects Officer, has been busy building relationships and partnerships across Huntingdonshire. Projects are starting to take shape. Here are just two:

- **The Young Carers Intergenerational Project**

Young Carers (young people who care for a family member at home) are making grand-friends in three local care homes, in partnership with the Carers Trust. The care homes involved are Redhouse in Ramsey, Ringshill in Huntingdon and Rheola in St Ives (see page 3). This project is year-long, with the young people meeting with their grand-friend once a month. The aim is to create a piece of artwork collaboratively to showcase intergenerational learning, to be displayed in the care home. However, last Christmas the Young Carers also organised tea dances for the residents, and used museum objects to spark conversations. The young people planned each event themselves, including the food we enjoyed which resembled Christmases in the past.

- **The Tactile Museum**

A section of the museum collection has been taken out to Woodlands Lodge in Huntingdon, a respite centre for disabled children from across Huntingdonshire, run by Action for Children. We have delivered five sessions. Through choosing objects that are tactile the young people feel and experience the museum in a sensory way. Working with local artist Rickki Outis, we have created mobiles and interactives with the young people around the texture, colour and materials they have experienced with the objects. The joy on the faces of the participants is wonderful, especially when they cannot communicate verbally.

There are more projects on the verge of execution planned for the New Year. These involve Young Carers working



*Behind the scenes, however, three pictures reveal (1) the 1970s extension still intact, then (2) partially removed and (3) finally gone.*

with adults with learning disabilities and difficulties based in St Ives, and are in partnership with Cambridge County Council Youth Services. Those with the communities on the Oxmoor Estate and in Little Paxton are in partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council.

So, we may be closed in the town while work on the development project gathers apace, but as you can see we are still very active with taking the museum out into Huntingdonshire in various shapes and forms where it is greatly appreciated.

SARAH RUSSELL, DIRECTOR

Here's Ali helping with the hoardings paintwork. She joined us in September from the Recruitment and Outreach department at the University of East Anglia and says, 'I'm



*really excited to be part of the team at The Norris - I have a great role with lots of opportunities to engage the wonderful people of Huntingdonshire!'*

## MEET THE NEW TOWN CLERK ALLAN SIAO MING WITHERICK

We are delighted to welcome our new Town Clerk to the Town Hall. We invited him to tell us a little about himself before he begins contributing regular columns to the Clerk's Corner in future issues.

A new year, a new Clerk and Second Citizen of St Ives - Allan Siao Ming Witherick.

I'm a Shires lad, born and bred within an hour of St Ives (with a brief foray to UCL in London for my degree but hopefully you'll forgive me for that one). The full name derives from my Chinese mother who came to this country to work as a Health Visitor, whereas my father was brought up in London - before he too escaped.

Coming fresh to the town it's incredible to see the range of people involved in the community and also the achievements. The Town Council can be proud of having supported work towards wins for the Farmers' Market, Anglia in Bloom and providing support to

those with dementia in the community. It really demonstrates the level of commitment made by those who've come before me. My duty will be to continue this legacy.

This is my second council as Clerk but before that I've worked on performance management and community safety for district and county councils, as well as teaching democracy overseas. This is why I'm passionate about giving your councillors real choices and supporting their work.

So whilst following in the huge shoes of the previous Clerk is no mean feat(!), I will do my best to serve the Council and the burghers of St Ives in the coming years.



Allan enjoying a brisk walk in the countryside, one of his favourite pastimes.

Photograph copyright ©Allan Siao Ming Witherick

... I'm passionate about giving your councillors real choices and supporting their work. ”

## MEET YOUR NEW COUNCILLOR ROGER KUCH

Elected in May 2016 in the east ward, Roger tells us why he felt the time had come for him to serve his community.

My formative years were spent in Royston, Herts, followed by further education in Newcastle. I moved to Hardwick and was subsequently transferred to Africa by my company. I worked there for many years, following a career as a chemical engineer working in metals and minerals related enterprises. I retired to St Ives in 2013.

My wife and I moved here partly because it is central

to friends and family, aside from our son in Sydney, and our daughter in Singapore, complete with three delightful grandchildren. We immediately felt a good 'vibe' about St Ives and have swiftly grown to love this

beautiful town and its people. The enthusiasm of the community was immediately apparent with its high proportion of volunteers.

I feel honoured and privileged to be elected as a Councillor and I'm proud to be able to serve local citizens and tackle local issues free from the constraints of party politics. St Ives is a special place, and I am doing my best to ensure that the status of the town is not only maintained but also developed sensibly, for the overall benefit of the community.

In my working life, I travelled fairly widely and experienced many facets of business, so I hope the skills I have gained along the way are useful to the Council and the town. In support of the formal workings of the Council, I am vice-chair of the Personnel Committee, a member both the Property and Planning Committees and a trustee of the Norris Museum. There are many other areas in which I am involved, keeping abreast of events which affect the community. A Councillor's life is busy but very fulfilling!

... I'm proud to be able to serve local citizens and tackle local issues ... ”



Photograph by Janette Kuch

# WHAT'S ON?

## TOWN COUNCIL, CIVIC AND RELATED EVENTS

All details of the events listed were correct at the time The Bridge went to press.

Please check organisers/venues for final details.

Corn Exchange 01480 496454 info@thecornexchange.org.uk

• Free Church 01480 468535 • Methodist Church 01480 462293 • Screen St Ives www.screenstives.org.uk

### February

- 4 **Farmers' Market** Sheep Market 8.30 am until 2 pm
- 15 **Gardening Club** Talk on Walled Garden at Wimpole. Free Church 7.30 pm  
www.sigc.weebly.com
- 16 **Step into Storyland** Two interactive and hands-on tales by Marion Leeper each with a craft activity. Norris Museum at the Methodist Church 11 am for under-fives and 1 pm for ages 5-12 year olds
- 17 **Fabulous Fen Skaters** Make a mini fen skater and decorate your own fabulous skate. Norris Museum at St Ives Library 10 am until 12 pm
- 17 **Screen St Ives *Bride and Prejudice*** Corn Exchange 8 pm. Tickets £5
- 18 **Farmers' Market** Sheep Market 8.30 am until 2 pm
- 24 **Mayor's Charity Quiz** Corn Exchange 7 pm. Tickets from Town Hall
- 25 **Huntingdonshire Philatelic Society Stamp Fair** Corn Exchange 10 am until 3 pm Refreshments. Free

### March

- 1 **Annual Town Meeting** Corn Exchange 7 pm
- 4 **Farmers' Market** Sheep Market 8.30 am until 2 pm
- 15 **Gardening Club** Talk on Cottage Gardens. Free Church 7.30 pm www.sigc.weebly.com
- 17 **Screen St Ives I, *Daniel Blake*** Corn Exchange 8 pm. Tickets £5
- 18 **Farmers' Market** Sheep Market 8.30 am until 2 pm
- 25 **Hobson's Voice Concert** A Living Tradition and contemporary acoustic folk band. Methodist Church 7.30 pm Proceeds towards refurbishment of Church with 5% to charity. Tickets £10 01480 370185

### April

- 1 **Farmers' Market** Sheep Market 8.30 am until 2 pm
- 4 **Marvellous Mammoths** Handle teeth and tusks, Stone Age

tools, make a mini mammoth and add to a cave wall canvas. Norris Museum at Buckden Library 2.15 until 4.15 pm

- 11 **Fun and Historic Games** Meet people and play games from the Romans to the 1940s, plus 17th Century dancing! Norris Museum at the Corn Exchange 11 am until 3 pm
- 15 **Farmers' Market** Sheep Market 8.30 am until 2 pm
- 19 **Gardening Club** Gardeners' Question Time. Free Church 7.30 pm www.sigc.weebly.com

### May

- 6 **Farmers' Market** Sheep Market 8.30 am until 2 pm
- 20 **Farmers' Market** Sheep Market 8.30 am until 2 pm
- 20 **Book Jam** Annual children's celebration of literacy with workshops and story competition Corn Exchange 9.30 am until 4.30 pm. An ACE event

## COUNCIL MEETINGS DIARY

### FEBRUARY

- 8 Planning Committee and Town Council Meeting
- 22 Planning and Amenities Committees

### MARCH

- 1 Annual Town Meeting - see above
- 8 Planning Committee and Town Council Meeting
- 22 Planning and Amenities Committees

### APRIL

- 12 Planning Committee and Town Council Meeting
- 19 Norris, Property, Promotion and Publicity and Personnel Committees

### MAY

- 10 Annual Meeting of the Council
- 11 Reconvened Town Council Meeting
- 31 Planning and Amenities Committees

PLEASE NOTE You are welcome to address any Council or Committee Meeting as long as you are on the Electoral Register for St Ives. Meetings normally start at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber. You may speak for up to three minutes, subject to the maximum provision of 15 minutes for all speakers. Your questions at meetings must be relevant to matters in which the Town Council has powers or duties, or matters relating to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the town.

# WHO DOES WHAT? YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Has your local street light gone out? It is sometimes difficult to remember which level of our local government - Town, District or County Council - deals with each particular

responsibility. We hope that this guide steers you in the right direction. We take this opportunity to also list which of your local Councillors serve on which council.

## ST IVES TOWN COUNCIL

Responsible for The Waits, Warner's Park, Slepe Hall Field, Children's play equipment, Allotments, Seats, Cemeteries, Corn Exchange, Town Hall, Norris Museum, Public toilets, Statutory consultee for planning matters. Sponsor of the Town Team, actively supporting the economic development

and community well-being of St Ives.

SITC is currently composed of 17 Councillors who represent three wards. The composition of the Council is Independents 15, Conservatives 2.

**Your Councillors** Please note that all Town Councillors' email addresses are in the following style Angela.Ayers-wilson@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk



Angela Ayers-Wilson   John Davies   Nick Dibben   Ian Dobson   Rianna DSouza   Tim Drye   Ryan Fuller   Jon Hunt   Ian Jackson



Roger Kuch   Brian Luter   Jonathan Pallant   Phil Pope   Daniel Rowe   Jen Spencer   John Tiddy   Debbie Townsend   Allan Witherick  
Deputy Town Mayor   Town Mayor   Town Clerk

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Responsible for Rubbish collection, Street cleaning, Planning and planning enforcement, Housing improvement grants, Environmental health, Licensing, Elections, Parks and open spaces, One Leisure Centre and Burgess Hall, Housing, Economic development, Car parks, CCTV, Tax collection, Standards Board, Countryside Services (Holt Island,

Wilhorn Meadow and the Thicket), Building control, Voluntary sector. Telephone 01480 388388 or visit [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

HDC is composed of 52 Councillors who represent 29 wards across the District. The current composition of the Council is Conservatives 34, UKIP 3, Liberal Democrats 6, Independents 6, Independent Conservative 1, Labour 2.

### Your Councillors

Jason Ablewhite  
Jason.Ablewhite@huntingdonshire.gov.uk  
John Davies  
John.Davies@huntingdonshire.gov.uk  
Angela Dickinson  
Angela.Dickinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk  
Ryan Fuller  
Ryan.Fuller@huntingdonshire.gov.uk  
Deborah Reynolds  
Deborah.Reynolds@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Responsible for Education, Roads and traffic, Footpaths, Libraries, Social Services, Park and ride, Recycling, Street Lighting, Trading standards.

Telephone 0345 045 5200 or visit [www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

**Your Councillors** Paul Bullen Paul.Bullen@cambridgeshire.gov.uk  
Kevin Reynolds Kevin.Reynolds@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

CCC is composed of 69 councillors who represent five Districts across Cambridgeshire. The current composition of the council is Conservatives 32, Liberal Democrats 14, UKIP 10, Labour 8, Independents 5.

The Bridge is published four times a year by St Ives Town Council. If your free copy isn't delivered to your home you can collect it from the Town Hall in Market Hill. The next Bridge will be published in May 2017. If you would like to suggest an item for publication please contact the Town Hall.

### St Ives Town Council

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