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April 2024 - Issue 382

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SALTASH MAY FAIR
CELEBRATE ON FORE STREET AND LONGSTONE PARK

**THE ABBA
REUNION**
TRIBUTE SHOW

Unanimous Agreement to Explore the Abolition of Tamar Tolls

In the same week where SE Cornwall MP Sheryll Murray raised the tolls as an issue in Prime Minister's Questions describing them as an extra tax for her residents which needs to go, the Joint Committee of the Tamar Crossings agreed to 'meaningfully explore the possibility of toll abolition'.

In an historic first, councillors from both Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council united behind a move to seek central funding for the crossings which are presently paid for via a 'user pays' principle.

The original motion by Cllr Colin Martin (Lostwithiel and Lanreath), deferred to the Joint Committee by Cornwall

Council, called for Cornwall Council to campaign for Government to provide central funding so the tolls can be abolished.

The motion was seconded by Councillor for Saltash Essa Hilary Frank who spoke at the meeting and said, "Tag holders of the SE Cornwall Community Area Partnership of which I am Vice Chair pay

£3.5 million every year to use the crossings. That's £3.5 million that could have been spent in our economy instead. I pay tribute to the Joint Committee's 2050 strategy but that's 36 years away.

Residents in my division and in SE Cornwall are calling for something much sooner than that."

The addition of the wording to 'meaningfully explore' to the motion left Cllr Martin perplexed. He said, "If I told my child that I will 'meaningfully explore the possibility' of taking them to McDonalds, would you think I was serious about that outcome, or simply

trying to keep them quiet?"

Mel Priston, Chair of Saltash-based TTAG (Tamar Toll Action Group), who are campaigning for a toll-free Tamar, however, welcomed the outcome. She said, "I was delighted that all attending members of the Joint Committee were in favour of the Tamar tolls being abolished, with Cllr Wakeham (Plymouth), Cllr Long (Cornwall), Cllr Coker (Plymouth) and Cllr Williams-Pears (Cornwall) all stressing the need for acting as soon as possible to increase the pressure on all of our local MPs during these pre-election

months, and all referencing the inequity in infrastructure funding for the Southwest compared to other regions of the UK.

"Cllr Long (Callington & St Dominic) stated that it is morally and ethically wrong for bridge and ferry users to be charged for using a necessity - a stance long taken by the Tamar Toll Action Group (TTAG). The passion shown by the councillors in supporting the motion was clear to see, and it is a large step in the right direction. TTAG are pleased to be included in the forthcoming stakeholder discussions to take this forward."

Transport Portfolio holder for Cornwall Cllr Richard Williams-Pears was celebrating on social media saying he was delighted to propose it to the committee.

In the meeting he said, "This recommendation for the first time states, as a matter of voted upon policy, that the Tamar Bridge Joint Committee is working towards toll abolition - that the joint committee and the parent authorities continue to work with government to secure funding for the crossings and to meaningfully explore toll abolition. That sends a very strong message."

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Town Messenger

Working for the People of Saltash

News from Saltash Town Council
Konsel an dre Essa



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Email: schooladmissions@cornwall.gov.uk

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educationwelfare@cornwall.gov.uk

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Social Services Department
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Cornwall Councillors/ Wards

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Saltash Tamar ED
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Saltash Trematon & Landrake ED
Cllr Martin Worth
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Tamar Bridge

From the Mayor of Saltash

My warmest congratulations to Councillor Julia Peggs who is now Mayor Elect. She thoroughly deserves the honour and will do a fantastic job. Councillor Rachel Bullock is now Deputy Mayor Elect, she will bring so much enthusiasm to the role. I am confident they will be a great team and will continue driving forward our plans.

So there it is, two years of meeting amazing people and trying to chair Town Council meetings. That's the simple version of being the Mayor, reality is a bit more complicated. There have been too many highlights to mention, but thanks to all the individuals and organisations that make our town, one of the best.

A newly appointed Chairman/Mayor of Saltash has to hit the ground running, their position is made official at the beginning of May and it means that a few days later they are welcomed to the Saltash May Fair weekend with all that it brings. There might be some judging duties, starting or finishing a race or two and some medals and trophies to hand out. In our first term, Sarah and I also had the pleasure of visiting the Rugby Club over that weekend too.

Saltash Town Council Adopt Business Plan

Saltash Town Council has formally adopted a Business Plan for the three-year period from April 2024 to March 2027. The overarching vision of the Business Plan is 'By 2030 Saltash will be an envied riverside town, being greener, more inclusive and prosperous in all aspects with a reinvigorated Town Centre and Waterfront, award-winning new housing, a diverse economy and an excellent quality of life and lifestyle for all ages.' The plan includes six strategic priorities which are:

Longstone Park Gate to be Reinstalled

Saltash Town Council are supporting Cornwall Councillors Hilary Frank and Sheila Lennox-Boyd to repair and reinstall a pedestrian gate at the lower end of Longstone Park.

Following feedback from residents to Councillor Frank regarding safety concerns about the missing gate, Saltash Town Council have confirmed it will apply for Cornwall Council Community Chest Funding. This funding is available to Cornwall Councillors to distribute to worthy causes in the town and the Town Council will act as the accountable body in applying for the fund.

I was privileged to be Mayor for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the celebrations that went on across Saltash. This was later followed by the sober events around the Queen's passing and the jubilation of the King's Coronation, events that will last long in the memory.

What has the Town Council achieved?

Well, let's start with a Strategic Vision, we now have one, this is largely down to our Town Clerk working with a handful of councillors who are part of our Town Vision Sub Committee. The team have now gone a step further producing our 3 year Business Plan that will hopefully allow us to better deliver the services in our town. This builds on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, and both will be key in ensuring that Saltash grows in the right way for years to come. These plans are available on our website if you wish to look at them.

One of Saltash's biggest challenges revolves around that for many years, investment in some areas has been sorely lacking. Healthcare is a prime example, St Barnabus Hospital still remains, but is underutilised which leads to underinvestment, worse still is that investment hasn't been directed elsewhere in the town. I thoroughly support the work of our Healthcare Action Group and proud to be part of the team fighting very hard to change minds in the complex world of healthcare provision. I must mention Peter Thistlethwaite and George Muirhead, respective chairs of the two



Patient Participation Groups in Saltash. I am very hopeful that the team who have now published their 'Patients First' vision will see some results in time.

Lack of investment goes further, our Waterside is underinvested as is the Town Centre. The Town Centre is good at reinventing itself, and the Waterside remains a lovely place to visit. Both are wonderful but could be so much more with a bit more care and attention from Cornwall Council.

Whilst bemoaning Cornwall Council, I would like to thank our Cornwall Councillors who are great advocates for Saltash. Many thanks to Hilary, Sheila and Martin for their lobbying and nudging of Cornwall Council officers in the background and their attendance at Town Council

meetings and being key partners in our plans for the future.

I enjoy working with partners to deliver benefit to Saltash, that is why we have been trying to meet more regularly with our Cornwall Councillors, our MP, and recently reaching out across the Tamar to Councillors from Plymouth, I hope this continues.

I am writing this just before our Transport Trial Day, and just after Beryl Bikes launched in Saltash. I hope the weather held and you all found it useful. The team worked so hard, and we should all be grateful we have a dedicated hard working Town

Clerk, who doesn't leave a stone unturned to deliver for our town.

After I hand over the Mayor's Chain and the responsibility of chairing the Town Council, I plan to redouble efforts on rail campaigning, especially around platform modifications to address Accessibility issues. I am busy writing a Rail Strategy document for our South East Cornwall CAP which I hope will help drive investment to the area.

I will be back next month for a few final comments and a hand over to Julia.

*Councillor Richard Bickford
Mayor of Saltash 2022-24*

Your Town Council & Wards

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Saltash to Commemorate D-Day 80

Saltash Town Council have approved plans, to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day which is taking place on 6th June.

Throughout the nation local communities are being invited to commemorate the day by lighting a beacon on the evening of 6th June. The Town Council will be inviting residents to attend a beacon lighting on Saltash Waterside at 9.15pm, to remember all those who took part in and were affected by D-Day 80 years ago. Everyone attending will be asked to shine a light in a display of peace.

Further details on the event will be released on the Town Council's website, social media and noticeboards in due course.

Contact the Observer

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Meet Your Councillor

*Cllr Brenda Samuels
Trematon Ward*

We are almost at the end of another busy year for Saltash Town Council. By the time this report goes to print we will probably know who our Mayor and Deputy Mayor are going to be for the next 12 months, starting in May. I wish them every success and know what an honour it is to represent Saltash, having enjoyed the position as Mayoress between 2020 and 2022 when my husband Pete was Mayor and Chairman of the Town Council. I will treasure those memories.

It has been my privilege in recent years to Chair the Planning and Licensing Committee at the Town Council and goodness me, we have seen a mass of applications coming into us for consultation. We have certainly had some tricky applications to consider but at the end of the day all we can do is try our best for our residents



and understand their objections and sometimes their frustrations. I am a great advocate of allowing residents to be heard at planning meetings. I have on occasions asked for my fellow Councillors to allow temporary suspension of our normal speaking rules, in order to fully allow participation by residents and interested parties in the discussions and considerations.

It was a bit of a daunting task when STC decided to refuse an application recently, although it was subsequently supported by the Cornwall Planning Officer, but I was able to attend the East Cornwall Planning meeting to put our point across and represent the concerns of residents from that particular area. The planning chamber in Cornwall was the fullest it has ever been, with the majority of Cornwall Councillors attending, supporting our refusal, but that just proves

that there is plenty of people power within our community and beyond.

Being part of various project teams within the Council has proved enjoyable and productive, alongside some of my fellow Councillors, all of us being volunteers, who are eager to enhance the various offerings we have in our Town. The connectivity project enabling us to trial different forms of transport to enable our residents to have more access to both the Waterside and beyond the Tamar into Plymouth. Of course, it will be great if that initiative proves successful as that transport will work both ways, bringing extra visitors to us whilst supporting our local business community.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a sum of money which is received from various planning applications. It is available to fund projects to enhance the community and we currently have a successful application running to provide more play facilities within the Pillmere area on the outskirts of the Town.

I thoroughly enjoy meeting with residents, not only those within the Trematon Ward which I represent, but all that I come into contact with, what a fantastic range of diversity we have in our Town. I can be contacted via the Town Council website or by email to b.samuels@saltash.gov.uk

A Rare Find Sold for £3,900



Cigarette Lighter sold for £2,600

Cornish antiques valuer and auctioneer, Richard Hamm, celebrates his 50th year as an art valuer. Richard is a frequent visitor to Saltash Library where he holds free valuation counters to identify and value family heirlooms. 'I've seen many thousands of items over the years, many of great sentimental value, but occasionally I am able to surprise the owner' says Richard. 'I noticed a couple of cheap looking perspex cigarette lighters which looked like 50p car boot sale purchases. They were produced by Dunhill as novelties, usually decorated with an aquarium design, but this time one was a rarer equestrian group which eventually sold for £3,900 and the aquarium one £2,600'

Richard is a general valuer for Bearnes Hampton & Littlewood, South-West's largest auctioneers and visits Saltash every fortnight. Next valuation days in Saltash Library are Thursday 11th April and Thursday 23rd May. Contact Richard on 01208 813593 for more information or to book a home appointment.

Pete's Point of View ...

I have lived long enough to almost assume that I have 'seen it all before' but that assumption is being cast aside by recent events. In the Holy Bible, Genesis 7:13 refers to it raining for forty days and forty nights, yet at the time of writing, it seems to have rained almost daily for months. By the time you read this, perhaps there might have been several days of fair weather and glorious sunshine. If that is the case, then beware, as no doubt the water companies will shortly be looking at a hosepipe ban!

Another area where my sense of what is normal, faces a challenge, is in the world of politics, where we seem to have entered a phase of massive negativity, rather than looking at positive and constructive policies, something which in itself dampens any optimism for the future. With a General Election looming, it is not beyond the realms of possibility that things will not be as clear cut as they might currently appear. Just remember the final UK

participation in European Elections back in 2019 when a huge number of voters temporarily abandoned their traditional affiliations and instead voted for the Brexit Party (Now Reform UK) turning most of England a turquoise colour on the political map. At least, in Britain we can be sure that the elections will be free and fair, something that we all know is not found in certain countries, where the result is known well in advance.

At a local level, the campaign against the bridge tolls is gathering momentum, another example of people-power, which I'm always in favour of. We have yet to see whether at some time in the future, the bridge becomes free to use, but if that does come to pass, it is absolutely essential that the existence of the Torpoint Ferry is fully guaranteed, as without the Ferry, there is only one place that the displaced traffic would go, which is across the bridge, adding both congestion and pollution to Saltash.

Many would see the bridge toll as an unfair tax, which in itself is difficult to argue with. There are, however, many unfair taxes which are levied on us. My TV viewing recently has been to watch a quiz show on ITV1, some drama repeats on ITV3, plus some documentaries on other satellite channels, yet I have to pay the BBC in order to watch these? Now, if anyone locally would like to start a campaign to scrap the Licence Fee, I will be there with you in Fore Street, to hand out leaflets.

Pete Samuels. *Pete is a former Mayor of Saltash and past President of Saltash Rotary. Any views expressed are personal views and not that of any organisation with which Pete is associated.*

TTAG Update from Chair Dr Mel Priston

As we approach the second anniversary of the formation of Tamar Toll Action Group (TTAG) with our supporter numbers approaching 4,000, it's interesting to look back and see how far we have come. Little did we know how much we were going to achieve in such a short space of time. It's also been a time for us to reconfirm the vision we had back then as conversations around the group's vision become more public and vocal.

We have had a busy March with a public meeting at Saltash Football Club to update our members on progress and to discuss potential ways forward, including actively seeking engagement with hauliers to help collect supporting data on the effects of increased tolls on businesses in SE Cornwall.

We are also planning on taking a closer look at traffic data over the last 20 years for all local roads to independently determine any increases or decreases, so please do let us know if you have any information that could help us out.

Saltash residents who have been keeping updated via the Observer will be aware that the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee will shortly be applying to the Secretary of State for Transport for permission to increase the Tamar tolls yet again, after approval was given by Cornwall Council and Plymouth City Council - the parent authorities.

We have been out collecting signatures for the petition by MP Sheryll Murray to stop any price hikes for this year. At the



last count there were 4000 signatures online.

A very exciting development was the motion to the latest Joint Committee meeting on the 19 March by Cornwall Councillor for Lostwithiel Colin Martin seconded by Saltash Cornwall Councillor Hilary Frank to seek government support to abolish the tolls. It was quite an historic moment as councillors voted unanimously in favour of 'meaningfully exploring' the abolition of the Tamar tolls. For us, it represents a seismic shift with cross party support to investigate not just funding help from the Government but to completely abolish the tolls, which has always been our aim.

So what else can we do to increase public pressure? Key to any possible success is building public support so please do sign both of the petitions with links from our website www.tamartollactiongroup.org, and contact the Secretary of State directly to register your objections to the proposed toll increase.

Find Tamar Toll Action Group online or on Facebook for more information and help on this.

A big push by all of us could make this happen. Please get involved at this crucial moment in time!



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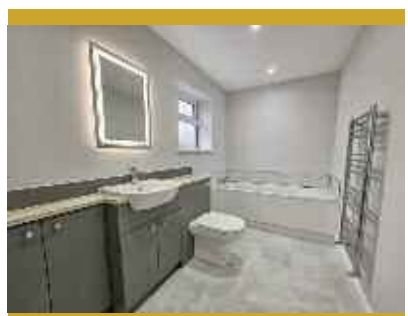
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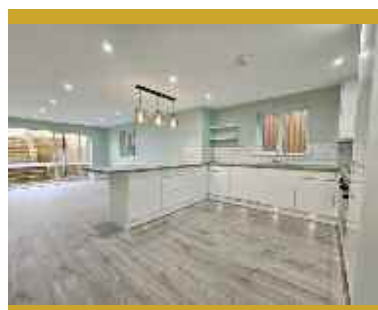
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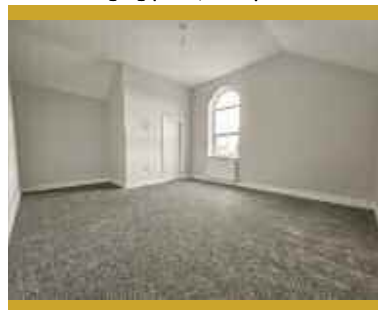


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Essa Voices

NHS Dentistry in Decay

There is an online tool where people can input their postcode to find their nearest NHS dentist. The only problem is that if you pop in PL12 you'll find there are no dentists in Saltash that are accepting new adult NHS patients. In fact, there are only two in Plymouth, and the nearest in Cornwall seems to be St Austell.

Sadly, the painful reality is that the scarcity of NHS dentists is not just a local issue. There have even been reports of people resorting to methods that belong in the Victorian era and pulling out their teeth in desperation.

In August 2022, the British Dental Association worked with the BBC to examine the crisis facing NHS dentistry. Called 'Disappearing Dentists,' the documentary is still available online and reveals that a staggering 9 out of 10 dental practices were unable to offer NHS appointments to new adult patients. The British Dental



Councillor Hilary Frank
cllr.hilary.frank@cornwall.gov.uk

Association was clear: "The backlogs are not just caused by Covid, but by systems that are unfit for purpose and funding that has simply not kept pace with demand or rising costs."

A nationwide NHS Dental Recovery Plan was released two months ago, introducing mobile dental vans and one-off payments of up to £20,000 for new NHS dentists in areas with the highest demand. Locally, NHS managers have said that although the Plan is helpful it does not provide sufficient support for patients across Cornwall. There will only be enough funding, for example, to

All the fun of the May Fair

On Saturday 4th May, Fore Street will come alive with the bustling energy of the town's annual May Fair. Closed to traffic, the street will host over 100 stalls showcasing local traders, artisans and community groups. It's an ideal time to search out unique treasures, meet up with friends and support community causes.

support just one mobile dental van in Cornwall.

In April 2013, responsibility for oral health improvement transferred from the NHS to local authorities. Cornwall Council's dental public health functions now include a requirement to develop oral health strategies. As a Cornwall Councillor, I am a member of our South East Cornwall Community Area Partnership, covering 29 town and parish councils across South East Cornwall. I chair the Partnership's Health and Wellbeing Working Group, where we have decided to focus on dentistry. This ties in with my involvement in the Health Action Group in Saltash, where our work has uncovered the worrying fact that Cornwall Council's oral health promotion programme 'Open Wide and Step Inside' will be delivered in just two Saltash primary schools. Apparently, if the other two schools want to offer the programme, they will need to pay £135 per class. This is clearly unfair.

Dental pain has always had a significant impact on physical and mental health, but widening health inequality is exacerbating the situation. Everyone should be able to smile without pain or worry, irrespective of their financial wealth, so please contact me with your views so we can gather anecdotal evidence and marry it with data to make meaningful improvements.

Meanwhile, in Victoria Gardens, the Saltash Youth Network will host the Youth Village, a space designed to empower and connect the next generation.

The festivities get underway with the Parade of Youth leaving Victoria Gardens at 10am, while the street market and Youth Village run from 10 am to 4 pm. The fun, food and inflatables on Longstone Park all start at 10am, too, but will continue until late in the evening.

All the festivities on Sunday 5th May are centred on Longstone Park, with inflatables, a dog show, and running races including the 40th edition of the Saltash Half Marathon. There are still a

few entry slots available for anyone who wants to grab themselves a medal, specially designed by students at Saltash Community School. Visit the Tamar Trotters website for more information, including maps of the courses and details of how to volunteer as a race marshal. All volunteers will be fed, and a donation will be made to a charity of your choice in recognition of your efforts. Come and celebrate our community, our talents and our vibrant town at Saltash May Fair—where memories are made and connections flourish. For up to date information check out the Saltash May Fair Facebook page.

Funding the Fun

The volunteer team organising May Fair works hard to minimise expenditure, but essentials like road closures, insurance and medical cover mean it still costs about £15,000 to deliver the event.

Against this backdrop, the team is extremely grateful to Saltash Town Council for recognising both the financial challenges and the positive impact of May Fair, and increasing the Town Council's funding allocation to £5000.

Revenue is also generated from the street market, but organisers still depend on sponsorship, and have produced a brochure giving details of sponsorship packages. If you're a local business and would like to support this community event, please contact the May Fair team via their Facebook page.

Organisers are also urging people to buy a raffle ticket in the cash prize draw or in the Fore Street / Lower Fore Street Raffle. You could win £150, or an amazing prize kindly donated by a local shop. Organisers stress that if every person at May Fair bought two tickets there would be enough to make the entertainment offer even better in 2025!

Dancing Queens and Indie Dreams at May Fair Music Fest

Get ready to boogie to the beats of multiple eras and styles at Saltash May Fair's music extravaganza! On Saturday 4th May, Longstone Park will be transformed into a vibrant amphitheatre celebrating musical talent, welcoming all generations for a day of pure fun and entertainment.

The music fest launches at 11am with the talented children of St Stephens Primary School setting the stage for a day packed with live performances from the local indie group Division to bands curated by Livewire.

But there is an extra special treat planned for you: the headline act in the evening is the sensational ABBA Reunion Tribute Show,

celebrating 50 years since the iconic group's Eurovision win. The show has been crafted by the choreographer and director of the West End show, ABBA Mania. Superbly accurate vocals and harmonies combined with iconic replica costumes and choreography produce the most authentic ABBA tribute show in the world today. And it is all free at May Fair.

So dress up in your best 1970s disco diva gear or don your favourite band t-shirt and join the crowds in celebrating the timeless appeal of music. There will be food and drink stalls on Longstone Park to give you the energy to dance the night away.

Thank you for the music and see you there!

Sustainability at May Fair

Sustainability is taking centre stage at May Fair. Organisers are collaborating with traders to implement various initiatives, including the banning of plastic straws, and requiring all meat and fish to be sustainably sourced.

All the bins brought in for May Fair will be colour-coded to help with waste separation, and there are plans for a Green Team of volunteers to give guidance on sustainable practices. Organisers are urging people to contribute by bringing their own reusable mugs, using the water refill stations, or taking their empty cans to the can crusher at the Saltash Environmental Action stall.

The hope is that these measures will foster behaviour change, and lead to an environment where people appreciate that every action, however small, contributes to a greener, more sustainable community.

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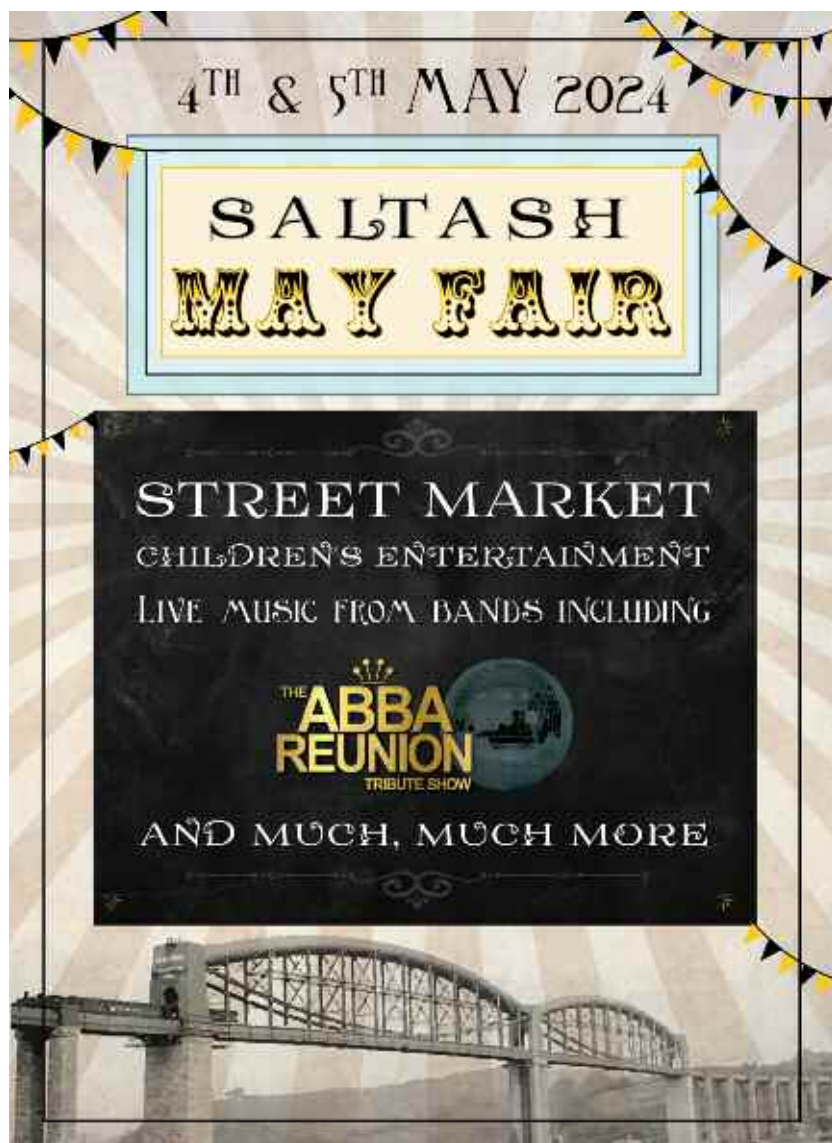
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Interval half time for ... Refreshments & Raffle

Entrance: £3.50 at the Door

Saltash Video Club would like to thank the Ashtorre Committee for the use of the centre over the years.

Saltash to be Christmas Ready for 2024

Saltash Town Council have approved a maximum budget of £28,500 to tender for Christmas Lighting Displays in Saltash Town Centre on a three-year contract.

As part of the tender, companies will be requested to include the design, supply, installation, maintenance, removal and storage of leased Christmas lights and decorations in their submission. Emphasis has been placed on Cornish themed eco-friendly designs that will enhance Fore Street, the top section of Lower Fore Street, Saltash Waterside and Victoria Gardens during the festive period.

The traditional Christmas trees located at the Waterside and in Victoria Gardens will continue to be delivered by Saltash Town Council in-house.

And the Band Plays On!

Saltash Town Band is continuing to celebrate outstanding success with the most recent success being at the Saltash Music Speech and Drama Festival staged at the Saltash Wesley Methodist Church during January and February this year, writes Sue Hooper, Band Vice President.

The senior band and training band both took the stage and received some encouraging comments from the adjudicator. The Saltash Town Band received an outstanding mark of 90 points to end the festival on a high.

The training band is growing and was commended for a great effort in their class too.

The Band also entered many solos and ensembles, taking silverware in all classes entered.

The band with many accomplished musicians in all sections and age groups goes from strength to strength and is now in preparation for their trip to Torquay to compete in the West of England area of the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain later in the year.

A spokesperson for the Band said: "Saltash Town Band is a well-established Band with outstanding musicality within its midst but would like to embrace new membership to encourage potential musicians of all ages to learn and enjoy brass band instrumental techniques. Therefore, as always, we welcome any new players to join us."

Anyone interested in joining the training band or the senior band should call band manager Ali on 07718906335.

Model Railway Exhibition

A model world will be created over an April weekend, when Saltash Rotary Club present their second model railway exhibition, to be held, appropriately, in Saltash's former station building Isambard House.

There will be free admission between 10am and 4pm on Saturday and Sunday 20th and 21st of April, with Saltash Red Bus running a shuttle service hourly from 10am between the Saltash Leisure Centre off Callington Road and the station.

The exhibition is anticipated to include at least five complete model railway layouts, in various scales to enchant visitors of all ages. There will be trade stands, encouraging those who wish to try their hands at modelling, and a display of railway-themed photographs by Saltash Camera Club. Other attractions include a display of railway heritage from Bere Ferrers-based Tamar Belle, and Plym Valley Railway will be offering real loco rides for younger visitors. And if this sounds exhausting there will be the opportunity to sit and relax over refreshments from the buffet bar.

A Heartfelt Thank You to the Volunteers

Community Enterprises PL12 in Saltash, Cornwall reflects with pride and gratitude as it announces the conclusion of its Community Hopper Minibus activities, a project initiated 13 years ago to enhance accessibility and community connectivity for Saltash residents.

Community Enterprise PL12 hosted a heartfelt Thank You evening to celebrate the outstanding success of the Hopper bus initiative. The event, held at the Community Kitchen, witnessed a fantastic turnout, with numerous drivers, directors, and administrative volunteers gathering to commemorate the accomplishments of the Transport Enterprise. The evening also welcomed Colin Brown and Graham Stone who first started Community Transport in Saltash.

Highlighting the evening was the presentation of a Room for Reward certification by Jo Grail, Community Enterprise PL12 Chairperson, to honour Roger Fursier for his unwavering dedication and



Chairperson Jo Grail presenting Roger Fursier with a 'Room for Reward' certification, acknowledging his support of the Transport Enterprise and for completing over 300 Hopper trips.

Photo Mary Crawford

significant contributions to the Transport Enterprise. Roger has done over 300 trips and played a pivotal role, especially in the last six months, ensured the seamless operation of the Enterprise in the absence of a Transport Director.

The journey began with the vision of providing a reliable and accessible transportation service for local residents, spearheaded by Colin Brown and the Saltash Gateway Community Interest Company. The iconic 'Hopper,' a Mercedes with wheelchair access, symbolised a commitment to inclusivity and support for all members of the community.

The addition of the 16-seat Peugeot minibus in 2016, through a Government scheme, demonstrated the commitment to continuously improve and expand services. The Hopper flourished, covering a staggering 167,000 miles and serving diverse needs within the Saltash community including over 100 groups. This would not have been possible without the hard work and support of all the organisers and of course the dedicated volunteers to whom we are very grateful.

Marketing Director Melanie Cowie reflects on the mission's accomplishment, stating, "The Community Hopper Minibus project was established to fill a crucial gap in our community, ensuring that no resident felt isolated due to mobility challenges. Today, as we announce its conclusion, we do so with immense pride, knowing that the mission was not only accomplished but surpassed expectations."

While the Transport Enterprise has been immensely successful over the years, the Saltash community is now well-served by other transport providers. The flourishing Red Bus operation, in particular, has become a cornerstone of local transportation, contributing to the realisation that the original mission of the Hopper has been fulfilled.

As CEPL12 Community Enterprises bids farewell to the Hopper, the focus remains on seeking new opportunities to continue to serve the community. The organisation is committed to continuing its positive impact and embracing fresh initiatives that address the evolving needs of Saltash residents.

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The Cornwall International Male Choral Festival returns over the May Bank Holiday weekend, as what began as a tribute to the miners who shared their musical legacy worldwide evolves into a spectacular showcase blending voices from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The voices of over 3,000 singers will resonate in venues ranging from the Minack Theatre to Saltash Wesley Church, making the event the largest of its kind in the world.

Hilary Frank, a Trustee of the festival, underscores the importance of the support of the Saltash community: "Burraton Male Voice Choir plays a pivotal role in making the festival a success. It's a Cornwall-wide community effort, and we're grateful for the support we receive from residents and local organisations, including Saltash Town Council who helped fund the concert and school workshop in Saltash."

The Saltash concert, hosted by Burraton Male Voice Choir at the Wesley Church on 2nd May, features the Mühlau Singers from Austria as well as Warrington Male Voice Choir and Rame Peninsula Male Voice Choir. Visit www.cimcf.uk for concert schedules. Tickets are available online through the Hall for Cornwall Box Office or by calling 01872 262466.

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Sustainable Saltash

A regular column on changes Saltash residents are making to confront climate and ecological breakdown.

Awareness of the importance of our role to combat climate change and ecological breakdown is a genuine concern. At Saltash Baptist we have embarked on becoming an Eco Church, a programme initiated by *A Rocha UK*, equipping churches to take practical action on caring for creation. There is an online Bronze, Silver and Gold award survey for which we have so far been awarded bronze.

I am part of a small dedicated Creation Care team, appointed within our congregation to educate ourselves and others about green issues. Progress is reflected through five categories:

Worship and Teaching - We are incorporating a creation theme into our worship, teaching and prayer, study groups and outreach. We have been awarded gold for this category. We have invited guest speakers to share knowledge and we have begun

hosting events promoting creation care.

Buildings - We have looked into possibilities of generating our own energy with solar panels or offsetting our carbon footprint. We have changed who we bank with and encouraged people to walk or cycle to services installing cycle racks. Since being awarded bronze for this category, our energy use and carbon footprint have been analysed; LED lighting has been installed; and thermostats have been placed in more appropriate positions. Amongst other initiatives we intend to improve our recycling facilities and the use of natural cleaning products.

Land - We have sought to review our use of the grounds under our stewardship promoting good maintenance, order and beauty. There has been adaption to encourage wildlife which has enabled us to, so far, achieve silver status in this category. We have installed a bug hotel and placed bird and bat boxes around our building. Our youth group has installed a bird garden. We have also been encouraging

Plantlife's 'No Mow May' campaign and we have plans to build a pond and prayer hut with a surrounding nature garden.

Community and Global Engagement - We support local initiatives such as shops which encourage reduction in plastic use, and projects which are driven by the ethos of repair, reuse, reduce, recycle and regeneration. We support Christian development work, fair-trade organisations, conservation and environmental charities as part of our outreach. We provide and encourage the use of local, organic, animal friendly and fairly traded goods in the church's meals and services.

Lifestyle - We are sharing a series of 'Eco Tips' through our weekly newsletter and on social media with the intention of launching a new series of 'Eco Challenges' to teach and encourage our members in the reducing of their carbon footprints. This includes tips on how to reduce waste, save energy, be resourceful, and appreciate our natural surroundings.

We are planning to organise more eco-friendly events and activities engaging more with the local community as we strive towards becoming a Silver or Gold awarded Eco Church.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth... God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" - Genesis 1:1,31
Nigel Roberts

This column is a conversation starter for our whole community. If you have comments on the subject, ideas of your own or suggestions for future content, please do get in touch at sustainable.saltash@protonmail.com

Saltash Town Council Awards Grant Funding

Saltash Town Council are delighted to have recently awarded grant funding to Saltash May Fair and Cornwall International Male Choral Festival.

Saltash May Fair have been awarded £5,000 from the Town Councils Festival Fund grant scheme, to support the volunteers in organising a safe and fun event for residents and visitors. This is the first event to be awarded a recently approved increased funding amount, which has been raised in recognition of increasing costs to event organisers.

The Cornwall International Male Choral Festival have been awarded £300 from the Town Councils Community Chest grant scheme in support of the festival. A Gala Concert will be held in Saltash on 2nd May 2024, hosted by the Burraton Male Voice Choir at Saltash Methodist Church, it will also feature an Austrian Choir and Warrington MVC.

Mayor of Saltash Councillor Richard Bickford is delighted the Town Council can support such a wide range of events "Each year the Community Chest and Festival Fund grant schemes support a widely diverse range of events and projects. The Town Council is often the lead funder and are pleased to support fun family events and projects that improve facilities in the town".

If you are interested in applying for a grant or want to know more about who has been supported, please see the Town Council's website <https://www.saltash.gov.uk/grants.php>

Five Ways to Look after your Mental Health ...

Money and mental health struggles often come as a package. When finances are difficult, our mental health can take a hit, and vice versa: poor mental health can lead to difficulty managing money. As many of us continue to face challenges when it comes to money, it's so important that we take steps to look after ourselves and prioritise mental wellbeing.

Talk it out
When it comes to our finances, we too often feel we must face the problem alone. Many people feel ashamed or embarrassed to seek help but find that when they finally reach out, things start to change! If you're struggling with money, open up to someone you trust, or get free help from an organisation like Christians Against Poverty (CAP). You're welcome to email me direct - timsquires@capuk.org.

Write it down
Our emotions can easily build up and become too much to bear. Putting your thoughts down on paper can help you process how you're feeling and provide a healthy outlet for anger, frustration, grief and lots of other emotions.

Sweat it off

According to the NHS, physical exercise causes chemical changes in the brain that help to improve our mood. However, you don't need an expensive gym membership or pricey equipment to do this; walking, running and playing games in the park are all great ways to get a bit more active - and they're free!

Cook it up

The food we eat affects not only our physical health, but our mental wellbeing too. Planning your meals before you head to the shop can help you choose healthier options and cut down on non-essential costs, bringing a little peace of mind. Look out for local courses or online help for guidance on shopping and cooking healthily on a budget.

Know it well

Whatever emotions you're feeling, it's important to know that they are valid and worth taking seriously. You can honour this by taking the time to get to know your emotions better, learning about what causes you to feel a certain way and why. This might include speaking to a trustworthy source such as **Samaritans (call 116123)** or **SHOUT (text 85258)** or asking your GP about counselling. Don't be afraid to take action!

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a UK charity working with over 800 affiliated churches to deliver debt help, budgeting guidance, support to find work, life skills education and more. Visit capuk.org to find out more.

Notice of Death

JACOBS -

Edward Samuel passed away peacefully at his home in Whitford, East Devon on Thursday 29th February 2024, aged 63 years.

Edward was an inspirational and talented guy with a wicked sense of humour to all that knew him closely. He touched the hearts and souls of those that worked closely with him throughout his musical and teaching career locally within the southwest and beyond. Edward was loved and cherished by all that knew him.

He will be sadly missed by all for his humour, comradery, and professionalism throughout his life. May his love, soul and spirit continue to live on forever in our hearts and not be forgotten. The funeral service has taken place.

Donations if desired to:

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Committee Puts Brakes on Campaign to Abolish Tamar Tolls

Campaigners calling for the abolition of the Tamar Tolls have been left disappointed by a half-hearted decision by the committee responsible for the crossings. Liberal Democrat Councillors Colin Martin and Hilary Frank brought a motion to Cornwall Council last November calling for a firm commitment to work towards the abolition of the Tamar Tolls. Such an outcome would only be possible with funding from Central Government, so Cllr Martin says that taking a strong position before the forthcoming General Election is vital: "We need every Councillor from every party in Cornwall and Plymouth to stand together in calling for Central Government to fund the crossings. This would force Parliamentary candidates to pick a side in the debate: Will they do what's right for Cornwall and Plymouth, or will they follow orders from party HQ?" Council rules required the motion to be referred to the Tamar Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Joint Committee, but rather than supporting the motion, committee members voted for a much weaker form of words, merely committing to "meaningfully explore the possibility of toll abolition".

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Martin likened the outcome to a parent whose child has asked to be taken to MacDonalds for dinner: "If I told my child that I will 'meaningfully explore the possibility', would you think I was serious about that outcome, or simply trying to keep them quiet?"

For thirteen years, South East Cornwall's MP Sheryll Murray has opposed the idea of abolishing the tolls, claiming that the Tamar Bridge Act makes it impossible for Government to fund the crossings. But now as the General Election approaches, she has suddenly changed her mind, claiming that abolishing the tolls would be "The greatest thing the government could do for levelling up and boosting the economy in this part of Cornwall." Unfortunately so

far she does not have the support of any other Conservative MP in Cornwall, let alone in Government. Meanwhile Labour's preferred policy is to rapidly increase tolls for pay-as-you-go users in order to increase them more slowly for tag users. Labour MPs, Councillors and Parliamentary Candidates have been given strict instructions not to campaign for anything which would require funding from Central Government.

Cllr Martin believes that the committee's decision to kick the proposal into the long-grass was a tactic to avoid uncomfortable votes for Conservative and Labour councillors, "This is a political stitch-up: Labour and Conservative MPs and Parliamentary Candidates

Tamar Reflections

Looking back ...

I just love delving through my old local newspapers, and in doing so, I recently came across a few copies of the old 'Saltash & District Journals' - one dating back to August 1974 (almost 50 years ago) - and it was so interesting and entertaining to read some of the items within.

I would like to share some of the really interesting written topics and discussions with you...

One contributor advised ... "Three new Councillors 'elected' at Saltash" - then went on to say: "At a recent special meeting of the Town Council, twenty-two candidates were interviewed for three seats. Only eleven Councillors were present and the vote was by ballot and resulted as follows: Miss. Hazel Greaves, former employee in the Surveyor's Department - Mr. Underhill, senior engineer at Rank Bush Murphy - Mr. A. G. Bellingham, former Town Clerk of Saltash."

It continued: "At the first

across Cornwall and Plymouth obviously don't think they can persuade their party leaders to fund the crossings, so they don't want Councillors to have the chance to vote for that policy before the General Election" The Liberal Democrat Party voted in November to formally adopt a policy of fully funding both crossings from Central Government so that the tolls can be abolished. The party is calling for anyone who supports this policy to sign their petition at www.seclibdems.uk/tamar-tolls

Colin Martin is the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Candidate for South East Cornwall.

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Council meeting after the co-option of the new members, Cllr. Davey created a precedent by calling for a round of applause for the new Councillors - extraordinary!" Followed by... "Comment by one well-known Saltash resident: "Now the Sailing Club *really* runs Saltash!"

Letters to the Editor of the Saltash & District Journal (1974)

The letters to the Editor were quite energetic too! Here are a few that I selected ...

"Sir, well I must say it's a bit thick. Just fancy being called 'horrible, accused of writing "rubbish" and peddling "blackmail". Not fair, you know; useless to attempt to get my own back, editor not playing ball. No feuds - he won't have that. Just could not understand Mrs. Lean's contribution in June month; for sure I am only concerned with the ratepayers' money, and she should feel grateful for that, even though generally I never expect a favourable press from the lady. Mrs. Lean's letters inevitably seem to be opinions somehow or another, delivered with the gravity of a sermon, and it is easy to imagine her giving one in the Council Chamber, accompanied by much finger wagging. This one was no different. It was all there - rancor, injustice, virulence, and some boot-licking for the "B s" of such calibre. We all "copped" it - me, Mrs. Stainer, and the Editor for not doling out huge doses of treacle towards those who retired at the break-up. But then, no doubt they found some comfort in the farewell celebrations, all held by kind courtesy of the Saltash ratepayers, costing (and I quote) ... "An amount commensurate with the dignity and the proceeding" - and that one even beat me. Oh, come on now, Mrs. Lean, people will work without pay. What about your guides, St John's, the Choirs, Lions Club, League of Friends? The town teems with such people, and there are those who will go to Liskeard, less the loot, and so much for the "old hat." Do please, Mrs. Lean, if you will take me on, remember you are still in public life, even if it is on the bottom rung, and responsibility is expected, and your letter was not responsible or worthy of one that sometime held high office in the town's administration. Finally I do forgive you for your use of that word outrageous. It was

wrong, but it would have been correct if it had appertained to the July effort. Yours etc., C.W Drew - St Stephen's Road, Saltash."

There was an added note to Alan Coleman - "You Boundah! What rubbish you write. Have you been roasted ... Or do you use "High Karate"? You started it anyhow! "

(A note from me on the above letter from Mr. Drew. Mrs. Lean was a Saltash Borough Councillor and former Mayor of the town, and was often outspoken, and thus well known for ruffling a few feathers! As seen above! After her retirement as a Councillor she continued to attend Council meetings and felt a need, rightly or wrongly to hold the Saltash Borough Councillors to account, often to their frustration as you may have guessed! - Bless!!) (Saltash Guildhall - where Councillors met and still meet. The Guildhall is a Grade II listed building. The Guildhall was built in 1775 as a Market House and Assembly Hall. It became the Guildhall in 1841)



More letters to the Editor

Another letter to the Editor was from John R. Andrew of Townsell Close, Trematon, which read ... "Dear Sir, as a regular user of the Tamar Bridge, I am wondering how the members of the Bridge and Torpoint Ferry Committee can justify their spending over £100,000 on the directional equipment which was recently installed on the Tamar Bridge. If I - like many other local users of the bridge - have to go on paying a bridge toll for years to come in order to offset the cost of this new 'toy' then those members of the committee should answer before a public enquiry what right they have in wasting public money on equipment which remains unused for most of the year and the installation of which was never justified in the first place."

My comment on this letter is that the Tamar Road Bridge, and Torpoint Ferry joint committee and stakeholders are still under constant scrutiny on behalf of the fee

paying local commuters after 50 years - what next!!

Then there was this letter from (Mrs.) E.A. Sharpe - Secretary of the Saltash Road Action Committee - Mrs. Sharpe wrote: "Dear Sir, the Saltash Road Action Committee would like to congratulate the Saltash Sailing Club Regatta Committee for putting on such a fine Carnival on Saturday 6th July last. Well done the Saltash Lions for the best float and congratulations to all those who worked so hard on their own floats and put up such a colourful procession. Many thanks to the Saltash Building supplies for lending the Road Action Committee their lorry and many thanks to everyone who helped build our own float, which had a special mention. Perhaps next year we shall see twice as many floats in the revival of the Saltash Carnival."

My added comments are that here we are 50 years on and still folks like Lizzy (Asprey) Sharpe - (Lizzy is such a good

New Banking Hub for Saltash

In welcome news for Saltash, Cash Access UK has confirmed it has signed a lease to open a banking hub in the old Merkur Slots building at the bottom of Fore Street.

Customers of all major banks will be able to carry out regular cash transactions on weekdays, from 9am to 5pm. The hub will also offer a community banker service on a rotational basis where customers can consult with their own bank about more complex issues.

egg!!) - are still working hard for dear old Saltash!

I have many more wonderful tales to tell from these old publications, which I will share with readers of Tamar Reflections in future issues.

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Just Thinking Aloud

Late in February I received an update from Electoral Calculus. It contained their forecast of what the General Election result would be if it was held in the immediate future. Naturally – with my keen interest in local matters – I sought out the prediction for SE Cornwall. It told me that the likely winner by percentage of votes cast would be Labour 32.6%, followed by Conservative 29.9%, Reform UK 16.5%, LibDem 15.4%, Green 5.2%, Other 0.3%. Eager to verify whether these figures were anywhere near to being reliable, I instantly made enquiries of local friends of varying political hues and involvement.

At this point I could begin boring you with my views on the different types of proportional representation, but there would be no point, as nothing is going to change

in that regard until it finally dawns on the public that first past the post deprives most of us of a meaningful vote – and that penny isn't going to drop anytime soon. Or, without much more hope that too many of you will heed me, I could press upon you my opinion that - if you don't vote – you have no right to criticise the result. You might not fancy any of the runners (and there is plenty of evidence that the eventual turnout nationally this year is going to reflect that), but you could at the very least go and spoil your ballot paper in whatever non-criminal way appeals to you, or you could vote "tactically".

The SE Cornwall Labour Party stuff online tells us that "Labour are the tactical vote in SE Cornwall". Well, perhaps once upon a time, but if just now your tactical aim is simply to unseat Mrs Murray, then Reform UK might make more sense. (Ouch!) Anyway, after my enquiries, on February 24th I emailed Alastair Tinto, the boss person of our local socialists, giving him the

above stats, wondering why his party did not yet have a candidate, and seeking his reaction. From his reply of March 12th: "These data tally with our canvassing returns. I imagine that Reform UK will be a headache for Sheryll. It is incredibly frustrating that our highly centralised & tightly controlled Party hasn't allowed us to have a candidate yet". Dear reader, I am gobsmacked. I wonder if the other runners are similarly unprepared for battle. But something may be in the wind. Mr Tinto and Co are advertising a Members Only Meeting Thursday 18th April 7.30 – 9.30 in the Emily Hobhouse Room Liskeard, with the agenda being sent out by email. Could they be unveiling a future MP? Or will they just be having a good old-fashioned Labour Party row?

But let us forget politics. I commend to you The Bookshelf on Saltash Fore St. A cheerful and warmly welcoming staff gang, a respectable choice of books new and not so new, and a varied menu for mostly light bites. I commend especially their salted caramel peanut brownies – naughty but moreish.

Bob Munro

Descendants of Local Artist Attend Preview of his Work

Descendants of a renowned 19th century artist who lived in Saltash and painted many local scenes gathered in Saltash Local History Centre to compare information on their ancestor Henry Martin RA and to examine the large collection of original paintings as well as sketches, press cuttings and other memorabilia that will form part of the museum's 2024 exhibition.

Born in Camberwell, London, Henry Martin went to sea as a midshipman and sailed the world before returning to tour Europe and study art in Antwerp. He then came to Cornwall and settled in Newlyn a decade before it became a famous haunt of artists and the Newlyn School became an established art form. Indeed, with the influx of artists Martin chose to move away and came to Saltash with a studio on Plymouth's Barbican.

He died in 1908 but his only child to survive infancy, Norah, lived to the age of 99 and was well remembered by family members who were guests of Saltash Heritage at a preview of their exhibition. Sadly, she did not value her father's works of art very highly. 'Gran chopped most of the pictures that she inherited up for firewood when times were

hard', Henry Martin's great grandchildren recalled. 'Most of the pictures that we own we had to buy.'

Family members as well as local residents and Saltash Town Council have been generous in loaning his paintings and sketches for what is to be the greatest ever exhibition of Henry Martin's work. It includes many fascinating pictures of late 19th century Saltash as well as others of Plymouth, Devonport, Newlyn and further afield.

It forms a major part of the art-themed exhibition 'Lost Arts and Skills' which opened on 6th April and will run through until December. Admission to the museum in Lower Fore Street is on Wednesday afternoons and all-day Saturdays and is free, though contributions are welcomed by the volunteer-run Saltash Heritage society.

All can Play a Part in Spring and Summer Bio Watch

An exciting and ambitious programme in which everyone of any age is invited to help map out the natural fauna and flora of Saltash is being launched at Saltash library in April to continue through the Summer.

In a project which will last over the Spring and Summer months, and which is ideal for all the family, research can be carried out anywhere from parks, woodlands and shoreline to roadside verges and gardens, large and small. The objective is to discover the ecology of the town and its surrounding countryside and consider how it can best be maintained.

The 2024 Spring Bio Watch launched in Saltash library on 5th April when Dr James Buckley of Plymouth University, a specialist in climate change as it affects our ecology, outlined the project and how all could help. On the same day there were two talks on how to help our local bird population, given by members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Suggested areas for the bio survey include Longstone Park, Coombe Woods, Tincombe Park and

Churchtown Farm, but equally valuable information can be gathered in front or back gardens - just pass on information on anything observed from the tiniest insect or smallest wild plant upwards. Together it should form a valuable scientific study that will help us understand our local ecology and preserve it for future generations.

Other events planned for Saltash Library to mark April's Spring Environmental month include the Tamar Grow Valley bee talk on 26th April, intended to show the importance of our bee population and how we can help it to flourish. An especially exciting project for local schoolchildren involves a live link to the National Marine Aquarium showing what may be found in our local waters and including a question and answer session.

Other events planned for the library in late April include a repeat of the highly successful Toy Swap on 20th April from 10.30 to 12.30, which aims to encourage plastic recycling. And children especially of primary school age will be entranced by children's environmental author Ellie Jackson's book reading followed by art workshop at 11 am on 20th April.

So, for the chance to become a part of Saltash's biggest Bio Watch and to help map out the wide variety of wildlife within our town and its environs call into Saltash Library at any time for details of how to record and report your findings.

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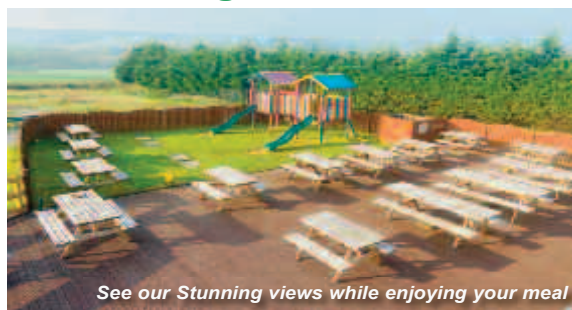
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